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ON
LABOUR IN INDIA.

EVIDENCE.

Vol. I.—Part 2.

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
(including SIND).

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TERMS OF REFERENCE.

“To inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers, and on the relations between employers and employed, and to make recommendations.”

NOTE.—“Industrial undertaking” for the purpose of the Commission is interpreted as in Article I of the Washington Hours Convention, which is as follows:—

“For the purpose of this Convention, the term ‘industrial undertaking’ includes particularly:—

- “(a) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.
- “(b) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.
- “(c) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.
- “(d) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand.”

* * * * *
The competent authority in each country shall define the line of division which separates industry from commerce and agriculture.

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* This word should be read as indicating generally the changes in composition of the labour staff of an undertaking.

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE THE
ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR
IN INDIA

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

FIRST MEETING

KARACHI

Wednesday, 16th October 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. Sir IBRAHIM RAHMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lieut.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, O.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).
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Mrs. HOMAI F. J. KARAKA.
Mrs. HURDEVIBAI A. MASAND. } *Lady Assessors.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
Mr. A. DIBDIN. }

Mr. C. S. C. HARRISON, C.I.E., I.S.E., Chief Engineer,
Lloyd Barrage and Canals Construction.

A-1. *The Chairman* : Mr. Harrison, you are the Chief Engineer of the Lloyd Barrage and Canals Construction ?—Yes.

A-2. You have been good enough to submit to us a very clear statement on the subjects with which we are concerned relating to the work for which you are responsible. We shall shortly pay a visit to see for ourselves something about your work, and I imagine, therefore, that we would not be detaining you at any length to-day. You have told us very clearly in your memorandum the various streams of migration from which your labour is recruited and it appears that for the most part it is contract labour ?—Yes.

A-3. I take it therefore that you do not keep a register of the workers on your scheme?—No, not nominal registers. We keep a record of daily attendance of the total number of people, and monthly we try to group them into different castes and nationalities and with reference to the different parts of the Presidency from which they come and the different classes of labour.

A-4. Have you any tabulated statement ?—Yes, I have got it in a rough form ; but I can give you a statement of the various kinds of employees coming from different localities, if you would like to have it.

A-5. That will be in explanation of what you have told us ?—Yes ; I will give you the actual figures.

A-6. There is one point I should particularly like to ask you whether that record shows the number of people who return over and over again to your work?—No.

A-7. Then at each re-engagement after they have been back home they are, as far as you are concerned, new labour?—Yes, that is right. The only thing we are interested in is the increase in the numbers. We want numbers, if we can get them.

A-8. Would you tell us how you pay the contractors? Are they paid monthly?—The contractors are paid as often as we can possibly measure up their work. The work is measured up once a month if the contractor is a man with big capital; otherwise if he is a man with small capital we measure up once a week if necessary. Our aim is to keep the small contractor if possible, and measure his work as often as he wants money.

A-9. You have no knowledge of or responsibility for the method by which the men themselves are paid by the contractors?—No. As mentioned in my written statement complaints soon come to us if the people are not being paid properly. They come up in numbers before the Government officer and say "we have been swindled" or "under-paid by the contractor". We then get hold of the contractor, use our good offices and see that things are put right. We have no real power to make the contractor deal squarely with his labour, but I think that on the whole, when we take him to task severely and tell him that there is trouble ahead of him, he falls into line with us and tries to correct his ways.

A-10. Is the chief complaint that payment is delayed too long?—No.—The chief complaint is about swindling over the measurements of work done by each group of labour. Generally they work in groups of 10 or 15. Practically all the work is done on piece-work system. The contractor puts just a few men on a muster to do miscellaneous work, and those men, I think, are paid fairly regularly; otherwise he could not get them, for no one wants to go on a muster.

A-11. Does he pay monthly, fortnightly or weekly?—I think he pays them weekly. It is a very small payment because most of the people are indebted to him; he has given them very heavy advances; so he pays them only a little just a day before the bazaar for grain and settles up his so-called accounts at the end of the season.

A-12. How long do you anticipate the constructional work will continue?—It will continue till 1934. The great bulk of it will be finished in June 1932 when water will be let into the canals. After that it will be a matter of completing outlying and miscellaneous works. We are aiming at having in the year 1932 something like 400,000 units, if we possibly can.

A-13. What meaning do you attach to the word "units" in that connection?—It means labour employed throughout the year. We take the monthly totals and add them up. As I said, we hope to get 400,000. I have some figures if they will be of interest to you.

A-14. That will be the maximum on constructional works?—Yes, that is what we want on constructional work.

A-14a. The supply of labour has been less than you could employ?—Considerably less. I can give you one or two figures. In 1926 our maximum in any one month was 16,271 in the month of February 1926. Our minimum was in August 1926, 5,769. The total number of units on the monthly basis for the year was 97,000. In 1927 our maximum was 15,154, which was rather less than the previous year; but the monthly average was more because we had 142,291 units as against 97,000 for the previous year. In 1928 our monthly maximum rose to 26,524, our minimum to 12,375. The total employment for that year was 220,944. For this year our monthly maximum rose to 38,000 in the month of March and the minimum so far (up to the end of July) was 19,500, which is greater than our maximum in 1927. The total number of units employed is 205,856 for seven months of this year. So we shall probably get close upon 350,000 this year.

A-15. I am not quite clear yet how you reckon the unit. The largest number employed at one time hitherto is 36,000?—Yes, that is right. Correctly it is 38,300.

A-16. How do you convert that into units?—I have taken each month's figures and added them up, and to get the average divided them by 12.

A-17. *Mr. Cliff*: That comes to 38,000 in one month?—Yes. This year, for instance, in January it was 28,907, in February 35,037, in March 38,335, in April 31,729, in May 30,000 odd, in June 20,000 odd and in July 19,000 odd. That totals up to 205,856 which is the figure I gave you just now.

A-18. *The Chairman*: I notice that you suggest that some of these workers may become settlers when your scheme is completed?—Yes.

A-19. When your scheme is completed, will preference be given to those who have been engaged on constructional work?—No, I do not think there will be any particular preference shown. I think it is a question of economics. First of all the Bombay Government will, I presume, look after their own flock, that is the people within the confines of the Bombay Presidency. The people of whom I made particular mention are the Thakurs from the uplands of Gujarat, who are pretty badly off; they have a rather precarious rainfall, and they have gradually drifted to our works. Personally I would like to see them settled because they have stuck to their work throughout the year; they have not been frightened of the hot weather and have worked continuously for three years without going to their homes. It is obvious that these people have no attachment to their birth-place. That is probably due to economic reasons.

A-20. Can you tell us what is the number who would be settlers?—I think this particular people of whom I am speaking would number about 2,500. That is men, women and children. Everyone, of course, expresses a willingness to settle in this area, because they think they will get something for nothing; I think that is the general idea.

A-21. In your written evidence, dealing with health and sanitary arrangements, I notice that you say that except when water-borne epidemics are anticipated, or water is particularly scarce, no special arrangements are made on scattered works for a drinking water-supply, water being generally obtained from wells in the vicinity of the works?—Yes.

A-22. Are these wells tested to see that they are fit for drinking?—No. In India the people are very clever at finding out where they can get good water; an immediate enquiry is always made from the local residents as to which is the best well in the vicinity and you find everybody flocking to that particular well.

A-23. Yes, but in these days there are known to be such subtle differences in water that the best informed amateur or resident cannot always know whether or not there may be any infection in that water?—Quite so, but directly we see the smallest sign of anything wrong, our hospital assistant is on the spot, and we have the water tested. But it is generally known which is the good well; we have never had a case where a well said to be good has brought any harm to the people.

A-24. Would it be a matter of any great difficulty that periodical tests of water from wells should be made by the staff?—No, I do not think there would be any great difficulty. We could send down a sample of water to be tested at Karachi.

A-24a. I would make that suggestion for the greater security of the health of the workers?—Yes, I think it is a very good suggestion.

A-25. Then it might be possible to disallow drinking from wells which were dangerous to health?—Yes, in the case of wells you could do that.

A-26. You could have some notices put on those wells which had been tested and proved satisfactory?—I think we would have to put guards on. I do not think notices are much good in India. The people would drink the water first and read the notice afterwards.

A-27. I notice that you also say it is difficult to prevent the general body of labour from drinking direct from the river?—Yes, we have great difficulty in Sukkur, although we put guards all the way along. We generally put on an ex-soldier, and you will see him dashing along to stop a party from drinking from the river. Although they know they are not to drink from the river, and although a water-supply is provided for them, they will go to the river, have a wash and then drink from the river.

A-28. I recognize that difficulty: still a good deal could be done by patient education in the matter?—Yes, we give lectures to the people. We send our sanitary inspectors round the township; they tell the people why they should not drink this water and why they should get water from the proper source.

A-29. In your memorandum, you tell us that the bulk of the labour force on your scheme is not under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—That is so.

A-30. Would you further define the word "bulk", distinguishing those who are, from those who are not?—I should think 95 per cent. are not protected. The only protection afforded, as we will be able to show you at Sukkur, is to those employed in the mechanical workshop, the stone-dressing shop and those dealing with electric power. Those are the only people who come under the Act, because our stores and shops are scattered about and there are none in which more than 50 people work.

A-31. I notice with great satisfaction, however, that you go further than the law requires and you tell us that you deal with accidents which are not covered by the Act as if they were so covered?—Yes. The Act came into force after the work had started. Throughout my service as a constructional engineer I have always felt that there are a lot of very hard cases, and when the Act came into force I suggested to the Bombay

Government that, as an act of grace, we should give compensation to these people as if they came under the Act. We do it as a pure act of grace in every single case, and it is a thing that is greatly appreciated.

A-32. I take it that not every one responsible for such works in India is as liberal as you are?—No. It may be said that I am liberal with the taxpayers' money; but that is not the case. Perhaps people's outlook is different when they are handling their own money; they may not take the same liberal view that I take.

A-33. May I take it that your example shows that it would be possible to extend that Act?—I think it would be possible and it is desirable.

A-34. To cover such labour as you employ?—I would not say entirely, but certain further classes of labour ought to be covered. I think it would tend to retard the contractors' enterprise if it were made generally applicable to all miscellaneous labour under exposed conditions such as we have in Sind. I mean conditions which are not cramped as in factories. I think there should be some limitation. We should move gradually in the matter of extending the scope of the Act.

A-35. Have you any suggestions to make as to the class of labour which might be brought under the Act?—I will let you have a copy of my note on the subject to the Government of India. They have already raised the question of increasing the scope of the Act. I will make a point of sending it to your Secretary.

A-36. Thank you, that would be useful. You say: "No appreciable improvement in the efficiency of workers on the class of work dealt with by this scheme has been noticed in recent years." And then in reply to our further enquiry under that heading as to the possible methods of securing increased efficiency you say: "Education of the masses to take a greater pride in manual labour seems to me the only efficient means of obtaining greater efficiency." Do you know if there is any reward for increased efficiency, where men have been working for some period and have proved their efficiency, or are they all rewarded on one and the same level?—Not so. On this scheme we pick out the men. If we find that some men are working well, we pick them out and give them permanent employment in preference to temporary employment. For instance, there are men working on the dragline excavators and we have a certain amount of unskilled labour about the machines. If we find a smart and intelligent man, he is put on to the ground gang of the machines, where he gets paid very much better; he gets about 25 per cent. more than he would get as an ordinary labourer on the canals. That is how we try to increase the efficiency of our workmen.

A-37. Would it then be correct to say that any man who shows efficiency in his work has an opportunity of improving his position?—I would not put that forward as a general statement. So far as our works are concerned, such men are discovered and if they are likely to remain in Sind, they are at once taken up by us on an improved footing.

A-38. *Mr. Sastri*: What portion of your labour is contract labour and what portion direct labour for which you are responsible?—I have not the exact figures, but I should say that from 8 to 10 per cent. of the labour is employed directly by us.

A-39. Is this 8 to 10 per cent. direct labour more conveniently situated with regard to housing, medical relief and other facilities than the contract labour?—Yes, in theory but not in practice. We did not want an unlimited call on our medical resources, so we issued a notice that contractors would be responsible for the health of their people, that is to say for the ordinary distribution of quinine, etc. But in practice we do most of it ourselves, irrespective of whether it is Government labour or contract labour.

A-40. In respect of wages I suppose the advantage would be decisive?—Yes, I think on the whole, there is a decided advantage to the worker in Government service.

A-41. There is no leakage of wages in direct Government service?—There is a certain amount of leakage in the subordinate staff, which we try to stop. I think there must be some leakage but the people are quite willing to come on to our muster-roll.

A-42. What difference would it make to you if the whole of the labour were direct instead of contract?—We simply could not do it. You have to remember that the contractor runs a very great risk owing to the pernicious system of very heavy advances being given. People will not come without advances. Labour that comes from up-country and gradually drifts on to our muster is labour that has probably originally been brought down by the contractors. The labourer would have to work off the advance made to him by the contractor. Then he says "I hear the Government want a few hands; I will try to get on to the Government muster." To bring them down is a great responsibility. I have to take up the cudgels for the contractor on this point. He is very

often put to considerable loss owing to gangs of labour running away without reason. There is sometimes a reason, but we have had cases of gangs of men simply going away because they were tired of work and they have got away with rather big advances from the contractor.

A-43. I was trying to look at it rather from the point of view of the labourers themselves. Would there be a great improvement in the conditions if the labour were dealt with departmentally and not with the aid of contractors?—I think there would, decidedly.

A-44. But you think that change would be accompanied by great expense and inconvenience to Government?—It would certainly entail a great liability to Government. Whether that liability would ultimately become an expense one does not know. We should not have the extraordinary control that the contractor has over the labourer. The contractor is able to follow the runaway labourer back to his village and get him back again. We should require a very big organisation to enable us to do that.

A-45. You say in your statement that although it is not an obligation of Government, still medical relief is looked after by Government agencies?—Yes.

A-46. You do that rather as a matter of humanity and Governmental function than as a part of your responsibility for the labourer?—That is so.

A-47. If the contractor does not accept it as an obligation to look after them in that way you consider it to be a mere charity to do so. Are not the labourers in a difficult position? I was trying to view it from that point of view. Is it not desirable that a system should be devised by which they would be looked upon as somebody's concern? At present it is neither the contractor's nor the Government's responsibility?—Well, it is supposed to be the contractor's. I quite agree that it would be to the interests of the labourer to be definitely under somebody and, I should say preferably under Government. It is not an extraordinarily great liability. I could give figures. The cost of the medical organization on this scheme works out at roughly Rs. 80,000 a year. I happen to be looking after it myself. It might have gone up to two or three lakhs of rupees if we had allowed faddists to have their way. I have a scheme devised on practical lines from the layman's point of view. So far we have met all the calls made upon us and the cost is only Rs. 80,000 per year. That comes to about 0.25 per cent. of our annual expenditure.

A-48. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say in your written evidence under the head "Unemployment" that "there are definitely no good grounds for any unemployment problem in Sind." But we found on going round Karachi a great deal of unemployment. Yesterday when we visited the Port Trust workmen's houses we saw a great many workers who, we thought, ought to be working instead of sitting idle. What is the difference between the Sukkur Barrage workers and the coolie labourers here in Karachi? Why do not these unemployed workers go to the Sukkur Barrage works?—There is little or no difference. I do not know what sort of labour is referred to. For instance, were they *Mekranis*, because we employ a lot of *Mekranis*? But the men may not want to move, because they have been accustomed to doing purely dock labour or handling coal. We have got similar work to do in Sukkur and no greater exertion is required there than they have to undergo here (Karachi). In fact, the concentrated exertion of loading and unloading a ship is probably greater than the average spread over energy that we require from our people. So that there is no reason at all that I can see why they should not go up to Sukkur.

A-49. There is unemployment here in Karachi and you are seeking labour at Sukkur. Have you made any attempt to attract labour from here to Sukkur?—I think our contractors have, and they will probably make still further attempts, because this season we have a big programme and there is great shortage of labour.

A-50. So far as you personally know, there is no reason why hundreds of labourers here in need of employment should not go to Sukkur and be employed?—To me no apparent reason at all.

A-51. For instance we saw Pathans idling here in Karachi. They pass Sukkur on their way here?—Exactly.

A-52. Why do they not stay at Sukkur?—You probably refer to the *Barsati* Pathans. There are different kinds of Pathans; some only come seasonally, while others work all the year round away from their own country. These may be *Barsati* Pathans and they may think that the climate of Karachi is very much more comfortable than that of Sukkur in the hot weather.

A-53. Do you employ *Barsati* Pathans?—Yes, but not in large numbers. Throughout the year I do not think we have 500 *Barsati* Pathans on our works now, whereas we get as many as 15,000 to 20,000 Pathans on our works in the cold weather.

A-54. Generally speaking you do not see any reason why hundreds, if not thousands, of men who are at present unemployed at Karachi should not be employed at the Sukkur Barrage?—It appears to me there is no reason why they should not.

A-55. In your memorandum, dealing with the question of efficiency, you say: "Generally speaking the efficiency of the labourer is as it was 25 years ago but as the rate of wages has risen the value of work done for wages paid shows a distinct increase in costs"—That is so.

A-56. You have been connected with labour for many years. Can you give us statistical information showing the wages paid for different types of labour at different periods, to-day, 10, 15, or 25 years ago?—I can get that information and I shall be very pleased to supply that to the Commission. At present I have not got it here.

Chairman: Could we have it here when it is ready?—Yes, I shall get it and send it.

A-57. Sir Alexander Murray: You will please give a sort of graduated table showing the wages paid over a period of years and brought up-to-date as far as possible which will put the facts in a nutshell?—Yes, I shall get that information.

A-57a. Not general information.—No.

A-58. Similarly can you get anything to show the difference in the cost of living to-day from what it was some years back with regard to the coolies and other types of labour that you employ on construction works?—It would be difficult for me to get that information, but fairly accurate data can be got from the Director of the Labour Bureau in Bombay. I shall try and get that also and send it.

A-59. Mr. Ahmed: I understand Mr. Harrison, that you ordinarily pay your labour higher wages than are paid by the contractors?—Yes, that is correct.

A-60. You said in answer to the Chairman that swindling of labourers by the contractors is one of the chief reasons why the labourers who go home are not brought back by the contractor?—I did not say so.

A-61. At any rate the same contractors do not bring back the labourers who go home?—I think they very often do.

A-62. You said that the old workers do not generally return to the work once they go home.—I do not think I said that.

A-63. Do you get back the old workers?—Yes, I think a very large number come back. As I have mentioned in my written memorandum nothing spreads quicker in India than the news that a contractor is not treating his men properly. It is not any easy matter for the contractor to recruit labour if he has treated his men unfairly.

A-64. Do the contractors repatriate their coolies if they want to go home?—Yes. If a coolie does not run away the contractor always pays his return fare. Of course he cuts it out of his pay, but he arranges to keep money for his return ticket. He advances money to start with and buys the labourer's tickets. Of course he gets that money back, probably with interest. The contractor will always assist the labourer to get back to his home. I have not known of labourers being stranded when they have finished the work.

A-65. How do you know they get assistance?—Because I have never known them stranded.

A-66. Do you know for certain that they get money to go home?—That is what the contractors inform me and I have no reason to think it is not true. Otherwise there would be considerable numbers of people wandering about and sooner or later, it would come to our notice. All such abuses come to our notice. That is what I should call a major abuse, people being brought to a foreign country and left stranded. We should be bound to hear of that. If we did not hear, at least the District Officials would be bound to hear of it if a large number of labourers were stranded in that way. I am not speaking of isolated cases, but of anything in the nature of a general complaint.

A-67. Very often disputes between labourers and contractors regarding measurement create trouble. How are they settled?—They are generally settled by us, through our good offices, as I have mentioned in my statement.

A-68. How many such cases occur in a year?—They are not individual cases but are mass complaints. When I or my officers go on a particular work a body of men will come towards one and say, "Sahib, we have got a complaint to make." The officer will ask, "What is the complaint?" They will say that the contractor or the contractor's *jemadar* is in some way swindling them. If it is a case of the contractor's *jemadar* it is an easy matter, because we give the contractor an order not to employ that particular *jemadar*. That has a most salutary effect on the *jemadars*.

A-69. Have you got any officers deputed for the purpose of settling disputes between contractors and labourers?—All our subdivisional officers and all the subordinates on the works have distinct orders to see as far as possible that there is no swindling. We have no authority to look into the contractor's accounts; that is his own private concern.

A-70. Can you give us an idea of the rates the contractors pay their labourers as compared with the rates they get from you?—Yes, I can give you an idea. I discovered a few cases in which the contractor was able to get labour for extraordinarily low rates, rates much lower than we had ever heard of in Sind in recent years. In one case we were paying a contractor Rs. 8-4-0 per 1000 c.ft. of earth work, while he was actually paying the coolies only Rs. 4-12-0.

A-71. What is the difference?—Government contracts with the contractor and pay him Rs. 8-4-0 or Rs. 8-8-0 per 1000 c.ft. and from our enquiries we found that in one specific case the contractor was paying only Rs. 4-12-0 to the labourers. We are interested in these things, because in running this big scheme on commercial lines we are trying to cut out the big contractor and to get into direct touch with the small contractor. I find there is a big difference between what we pay the big and small contractor. So that it is to our interest to eliminate as far as possible the big contractors. To that end we always make enquiries regarding the rates paid by the contractors. Since we discovered that case last year, I have asked my officers particularly to enquire into this matter. I find in some cases there is very little margin of profit to the contractor.

A-72. Have you got any test cases so that we may be in a position to compare the wages paid by your contractors with the wages the labourers are getting elsewhere and to know the profits the contractors are making on the transaction?—No.

A-73. It is nearly 100 per cent. according to you in this case?—My experience in India is that, if I am to believe the contractors, they never make any profit at all. It would be very difficult to get that information.

A-74. In spite of that, the major portion of the work is done through the contractors?—Exactly so.

A-74a. Then the contractors are very philanthropic?—I can get certain information from my officers if you want it, as to large discrepancies in rates.

A-75. Do you write to any union or to people who supply labour in the vicinity of your work asking them to supply you with labour?—No. There are no such men to whom we can write. The jemadars are illiterate. There are no bureaux or anything of that kind.

A-76. Could not some of the labour unions supply you with labour?—No. I have never been approached by any labour union to give them work. I do not know any union sufficiently well to which I can apply with any useful prospects of getting co-operation.

A-77. Are not the rates given for labour supplied by the unions lower than the rates given to the contractors?—But will the labour unions take responsibility for the advances which have to be given to the labourers to get them to come to our works? That is our difficulty.

A-78. Have you asked whether they would undertake that responsibility?—No, I have had nothing to do with them. I have, up to certain limits, been able to carry on with the usual practice of using the contractor. If you could tell me of something better, I should be very pleased.

A-78a. You cannot prove from your books of account that many labourers have cheated the Government or the contractors; you have not got test cases?—Labourers cheating Government?

A-78b. Yes, taking advances and then not doing the work?—Government makes no advances.

A-78c. But the contractors?—The contractors give advances, yes.

A-79. How is it that the Government, without giving advances, can get a supply of labour?—The contractor gives very heavy advances; Government does not. As I mentioned just now, if it is foreign labour, it is generally brought down by the contractor, and it gradually drifts from the contractor on to our works. I am always stopping at attempts by our staff to take contractors' labour; but if the labourer has finished his work for the contractor and likes to come into our employ, we are glad to have him; it is, of course, such labour that has come to our works not at our cost or risk but at the contractor's cost and risk.

A-80. Your scheme is a very large scheme; probably the Sukkur Barrage scheme is the largest in India?—It is the largest of its kind in the world, I think.

A-81. I think you have spent some 18 to 20 crores ?—Up to the present day we have spent round about Rs. 10 crores.

A-82. And your scheme is so large that you will spend a much larger amount ?—Yes, 20 crores in all.

A-82a. Considering the amount you have spent and the still larger amount you are going to spend on the works, can you suggest better methods of obtaining supplies of labour ?—No, offhand I can make no suggestion for any better method of dealing with the labour force.

A-82b. After the experience you have had and in view of the fact that you have stated the high rate paid to the contractor with which you have compared the lower rate paid to the labourer, can you, for the benefit of labour, suggest any better methods of obtaining your supply of labour ?—No, I cannot see any—not without giving advances, and I cannot see that the State is justified in risking the taxpayers' money to that extent.

A-82c. Looking at the question from the point of view of the labourer, do you think it would be better to pay the labourer directly a higher wage rather than pay that higher rate to the contractor, who retains parts of it ?—If the labourer were paid the higher rate directly, I think it would work out in the end that Government would pay still higher rates than it pays at present. It is all a question of economics ; it is not a question of philanthropy at all.

A-83. Can you suggest any method by which the conditions of labour would be ameliorated by obtaining wages which might be higher than those paid by the contractor and yet possibly lower than that at present paid by Government to the contractor ?—No. I have already touched on that subject in my written evidence ; I have said what the methods are and what they might possibly be, and I have also spoken of the possibility of abuses.

A-84. How long have you been on this scheme ?—I have had 27 years experience of construction.

A-85. In view of that long experience, can you suggest any methods by which you could ameliorate the conditions of labour by paying them a slightly higher wage than the contractors have been paying, and at the same time decreasing the expense to Government ?—I have said yes—by Government shouldering the responsibility of making heavy advances.

A-86. Can you answer my question ?—I have said yes, provided Government is prepared to take the risk ; but, speaking as a responsible officer handling the taxpayers' money, I think we are not justified in doing that.

A-87. From the commercial point of view ?—Yes, from the commercial point of view.

A-88. Can you suggest any means of getting your supply of labour by payment of slightly higher wages than the wages the workers are at present receiving from the contractor ?—No.

A-88a. You see there is apparently a considerable margin between the rate paid by Government to the contractor and that paid by the contractor to the labourer ; there appears to be profiteering on the part of the contractor ; could you, therefore, pay the labourer a slightly higher wage than he is receiving at present from the contractor and at the same time pay the contractor rather less ; is there no scheme that you can suggest ?—No. I must repeat that that cannot be done without increasing the liability of Government.

A-89. *Mr. Cliff* : I presume that the written memorandum which you have submitted to this Commission has special reference to the Lloyd Barrage scheme ?—Yes.

A-90. May I suggest that you have addressed yourself to the problem rather as an engineer than an administrator ?—No, I am afraid my functions here at present are 70 per cent. those of an administrator and 30 per cent. those of an engineer.

A-91. Then may I take it in those proportions ?—I think so ; I have had to look at it very much from the administrative point of view.

A-92. Will you help me as to the class of labour on this scheme which is employed directly, which I think you said comprised 8 to 10 per cent. of the whole ?—Yes.

A-93. With regard to the class of labour that is employed directly and that employed through contractors, what is the distinction between the two classes of labour ; on what work are they engaged ?—For instance, on this scheme we employ a fair amount of labour in connection with the dragline machinery, the mechanical excavators ; practically all

those men are men we have worked up from the ordinary unskilled labourer class ; we have had to train all those men ourselves ; I believe that comprises the bulk. Then we have our workshop labour ; we have two workshops there : the ordinary workshop and one for the repair of the dragline excavator machinery. We have also a stone dressing shop. Those are all men employed by us. Wherever we can give them individual piece-work we do so ; otherwise they are on dally wage labour. The other class consists of ordinary unskilled labour used for miscellaneous duties. As I think I have made clear in my written memorandum, wherever it is possible to give out work on measurement piece-work we prefer to do that, rather than muster labourers and simply get what work we can out of them. There is a certain amount of work that has to be done, fetching and carrying, miscellaneous work, where Government has to keep muster rolls, where one cannot bring the work down to a form of measurement.

A-94. May I take it the second form of labour is labour employed by contractors ?—Yes, that is so.

A-95. May I take it that those who are directly employed on the draglines, the shops and the stonemason's yard are subject to the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—On the draglines, no ; but in the three shops I mentioned they are.

A-96. Are they at all subject to the Factory Act ?—The three shops, that is all, nothing else.

A-97. Will you give me the percentage of labour that is employed in the three shops apart from the draglines ?—I could get it for you by the time you go to Sukkur.

A-98. Can you give it to me approximately ?—The shops are very much less ; I should think the shops represent about 10 or 12 per cent. of such labour.

A-99. Ten or 12 per cent. of the 8 per cent. which is directly employed ?—Yes.

A-100. Is that the only labour which is subject to any protective statutory regulation on the scheme ?—That and anybody employed in the electrical part of the scheme. The electrical trade comes under the Workmen's Compensation Act, but nothing else does.

A-101. None of the other labour is subject to any statutory regulation at all ?—No.

A-102. As an engineer do you agree in principle with workmen's compensation ?—Yes, I do.

A-103. Do you agree with sickness insurance ?—I think I would—at present certainly in the abstract ; but I think it is a matter which would have to be gone into very carefully.

A-104. I am at the moment concerned with principles. May I ask if you agree in principle with unemployment insurance ?—As applied to India, no.

A-105. You do not agree with the principle of unemployment insurance ?—No.

A-106. But you do agree with the principle of workmen's compensation and sickness insurance ?—Yes.

A-107. Will you make clear the radius from which this contract labour is brought ; you have stated in your evidence certain places, but can you give me approximately the mileage ?—I should think all within 500 miles.

A-108. Of the Barrage scheme ?—No, some would be a little further ; it would be 500 miles generally speaking and probably 750 miles as the extreme limit. That is, of course, in bulk ; we have cases of people coming all the way from Madras and we have got them from Bhutan.

A-108a. An area of about 700 square miles ?—No, 700 miles radius.

A-109. Are advances in those cases an economic necessity ?—I take it they must be ; otherwise the contractor would probably be able to get his labour without giving advances. Up to a certain point they are an economic necessity. From my experience and the enquiries I have made, it is difficult to say whether it is a true economic necessity ; often the labourers get these advances and finish their season at home, they marry their daughters and their sons and then try and work off the advances. It is a debt they incur. I suppose it may be for domestic obligations rather than for absolute necessities.

A-110. Supposing the workman has to leave his home and travel say 100 miles, leaving his family, it is likely that he would want some money to pay his railway fare ?—Yes, he always gets that.

A-111. That is part of the advance ?—Yes, that is part of the advance ; he invariably gets that. That would be a very small part of the advance.

A-112. Would it be necessary for him to leave a small amount of money at home?—I think it would be convenient; otherwise he loses a certain amount by having to send it by money order and so on; there is a risk of losing it.

A-113. If he is driven to the Barrage scheme by economic necessity, is it not likely that some money would be required at home?—Yes, a small amount may be required at home; but, on the whole, I think the people rather gamble with these advances.

A-114. So that while a certain amount of the advance may be misused, there is an economic necessity underlying it?—Yes, I agree; but when it comes to 20 or 25 per cent. of a man's working capacity for a season, it strikes me as being rather a big advance.

A-115. Is it a fact that Government get this permanent regular labour force that they have by reason of the contractors having previously given the labourers advances to bring them to the scheme?—Yes. I am talking specifically of Sind, because in general Government can get its ordinary labour requirements on their musters from local labour.

A-116. I am confining my questions to Sind. Do you agree with the assumption underlying the question of Sir Alexander Murray that there were hundreds and possibly thousands unemployed in Karachi?—Yes, from what I hear trade is very slack now in Karachi; the shipping is not as great as it has been and there must be a fair amount of dock labour idle.

A-117. In your opinion would it be of any value to have a public employment agency for Karachi for the purpose of your scheme?—I have already mentioned that in my written memorandum.

A-118. Yes, I see that?—There are dangers in that. I would suggest there are dangers in connection with these public employment agencies.

A-119. Of course, there are dangers in many things?—Yes. I think it is a very real danger in this country.

A-120. I understand contractors do scout for labour in Karachi?—To a very small extent in Karachi; they will not come to Karachi. They will send their men straight off to the Mekran to get their labourers from their homes; they will not trouble to get any appreciable amount of their labour from Karachi.

A-121. With regard to the rapidity with which information respecting grievances spreads, might I suggest that information respecting good conditions would spread with even greater rapidity?—Yes, it would.

A-122. Have you heard much about the good conditions on the Barrage scheme?—Yes. I can put my fingers very quickly on the contractors who deal fairly and squarely with their labour.

A-123. Does it mean that in the districts from which those contractors obtain labour there is no difficulty with regard to the supply?—That is so.

A-124. Sir Alexander Murray asked for statistics with regard to the comparative rates of wages paid. Do those rates of wages only apply to the direct labour employed by the Government?—There is not a very great variation between the Government profit, constituted in money. Of course it means a great deal to the man himself. For instance, in Sind we can muster men from 12 to 14 annas per day, whereas we know the contractor gets them at about 10 annas. There is that 2 to 3 annas difference a day, which makes all the difference.

A-125. Can you supply the Commission, with any degree of surety, with a table in regard to the rates of wages paid by contractors?—I can give you that. The contractor pays on the piece-work system. I can give it in those terms.

A-126. There are records?—Only from our enquiries. We have made careful enquiries. There is no method by which we can examine contractors' books.

A-127. There is no record in existence which would show that?—No, but I can give you certain figures.

A-128. I take it that you pay at so much per thousand cubic feet?—Yes.

A-129. Would it be possible to tell us what is the labour cost now per thousand cubic feet compared with the labour cost per thousand cubic feet twenty years ago?—Yes, I could get that.

A-130. In your memorandum under the head "Industrial efficiency of workers" you say "Twenty years ago mechanical excavators, for instance, could not compete with labour. It has now been proved that for earthwork in heavy bulk mechanical excavators

can more than hold their own against manual labour". Will you explain that to me?—I can give you a very good example. Twenty years ago I was constructing a very big dam near Igatpuri. I worked out the question of cost, using mechanical aid. I found that the only two things I could afford to buy mechanically were three portable engines, pans for mixing mortar, and some light railway trucks which were pushed by manual labour. I could not even afford to buy light tractors to pull the trucks. Contractors came out from England to inspect that work, and they said it seemed a very extraordinary thing that I could not do the work by mechanical means. I pointed out that mechanical means could not possibly compete with the then wages of labour. When this scheme was started we worked out the question, and, based on rates that were then being paid in Sind, we found that mechanical excavators won hands down. The comparison then—five years ago—was very much more in favour of mechanical excavators than it is to-day, because by bringing in mechanical excavators we reduced the cost of hand labour.

A-131. Relating to workmen's compensation, have you any records with regard to the contractors paying compensation?—My Superintending Engineers have. There are several cases in which big contractors have come up and asked "What shall I pay the man?" The smaller contractor says "I am sorry I cannot do anything". We have had two or three cases where they have actually paid compensation. Very few cases so far have occurred in the contract labour, because it is not the most difficult form of labour. The dangerous part of our work is done by departmental labour.

A-132. But for another purpose you are proposing to increase the small contractors as against the large contractors?—Yes. I am giving you that not for any outside reasons but purely from the economic point of view, which must control my actions as safeguarding the public purse.

A-133. Do you consider that the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act should not have been repealed?—I would rather have seen it modified than repealed, because it leads to a battle of wits now, which is not to the benefit of either party.

The Chairman : I have not heard of any suggestion of re-enactment.

A-134. *Mr. Cliff* : Can you tell me what is being done to train labour on your scheme?—Yes. On a scheme of this sort we have never been able to get sufficient skilled labour to meet our requirements. Therefore we have had to train it in every shape and form from purely raw material. We have gradually trained the people up step by step. If it is within their means to learn, we have tried to teach them wherever we have had to do departmental works. This work has been a great technical school, and was remarked on by Sir John Simon.

A-135. Is it proving profitable?—It is profitable to us in that way—to teach the people the methods we want them to follow, and it gives them a very much higher market value when they leave the works.

A-136. Are you in favour of its expansion?—Yes. If we can take the opportunity of training people on works, it is better than trying to start small schools and "half-baked" institutions.

(At this point, the witness's oral evidence was adjourned until the Commission's visit to Sukkur.)

**Mr. T. S. DOWNIE, O.B.E., Chairman, and Mr. JAMSHED
N. R. MEHTA, Vice-Chairman, Karachi Port Trust.**

A-137. *The Chairman* : Mr. Downie, may I first express my own sympathy with you and your Trust at the present condition of your export trade, and at the serious diminution which you have recently experienced; and also express the hope that it is only a temporary depression and that it may recover to something like its maximum period. It certainly is a serious thing you have to face—a fall from 2,070,000 tons to 660,000 tons in a period of four years. You have put before us a very interesting statement covering the conditions of employment within your sphere, and also the housing, as far as it goes, of your employees. We had the pleasure of inspecting some of the workers' houses yesterday. In your memorandum you tell us that the question of inducing employers of labour to acquire sites on which to build quarters for their workmen has been taken up, and that negotiations are on hand towards that end. Would you say what you mean by "negotiations", and with whom?—We have approached employers of labour, such as stevedores and members of firms who house their labour in the village at Keamari, and have informed them that we consider that at this time they should build houses for their own labour, and that the Port Trust have so far decided not to build any more houses.

We have offered them sites beyond the village on reclaimed land, which they may acquire on specified terms. This has taken some considerable time because of the present depression of trade, and the reply of the stevedores and employers was that they were financially not in a position to erect houses, and that the matter might stay for a time until the trade of the Port improved, so that people would then be financially in a position to acquire those sites and to build such houses. That is what is meant by "negotiations".

A-138. You say that "The Port Trust have under consideration the reconstruction of a large number of the houses which were built many years ago and propose in due course to take this work in hand". Is that necessarily to wait for an improvement in trade?—Yes, sir. The question was gone into and it was felt that a better class of houses, or a different class, should be built to meet modern requirements. The proposal was to totally rebuild, and the question was gone into and reported on by the Engineer that houses could be reconstructed at a very much less cost and it was decided, in the first instance, to put up one or two model houses, which have been put up, and to subsequently start a building programme of reconstruction extending over a number of years. For financial reasons also that has not been pushed forward.

A-139. Referring to Workmen's Compensation you tell us that your Trust does not confine itself to its legal obligations under the Act but that you do grant compensation on the lines of the Act to all your employees who may be injured or killed in the execution of their duty?—That is correct. The number of employees under the Workmen's Compensation Act is very limited. But all employees who are injured or killed get the same compensation as if they were under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

A-140. I take it you would not object to other employers doing what you do to your own men, that is to say, extending the provisions of the Act to cover every class of employees?—No.

A-141. With regard to periods of payment of wages, have you considered the possibility of paying all your men at shorter intervals than appears to be the custom, namely, the monthly system?—We had a representation from Government, sir, two or three years ago and we went into the matter and improved it by accelerating payments. In cases where men were being paid once in ten days we probably reduced it to seven days. People who were paid monthly preferred to be paid so; they did not want to be paid weekly. We had no complaint about the period of payment. The only complaint we had was that the payment should be made quicker, that is soon after the end of each month or week as the case might be.

A-142. Do you not think that they would prefer a shorter period of payment instead of monthly payment?—I do not know. As far as I can make out they do all their payments in monthly instalments and they seem to prefer it. We had no complaints that they would like it paid fortnightly or weekly. Probably Mr. Mehta may be in a position to say. (Mr. Jamshed N. R. Mehta): My personal opinion is that they would prefer weekly payment.

A-143. Mr. Downie, can you tell us whether it would be difficult for you to make weekly payments?—(Mr. Downie): None whatever.

A-144. It could be done?—Yes.

A-145. And presumably to that extent it would relieve the recourse of the workmen to outside agencies to obtain money for expenditure during the period?—I doubt that. My opinion is that they would probably spend the money and not discharge their obligations. At the end of each month, as far as I am able to ascertain, the man is surrounded by his creditors who know that he has got money and so they get it from him. If he is paid fortnightly or weekly I am afraid he might use it for other purposes and not pay his debts. That is my own impression.

A-146. I think it would be our duty to consider that question?—Mr. Mehta is in a better position to speak on this subject and I quite agree with what he says. (Mr. Jamshed N. R. Mehta): There is a remedy. If the Port Trust starts a co-operative credit society for them the remedy would be very simple. I quite see Mr. Downie's point, but it is not impossible to check it. These people could be got out of their debt by starting a co-operative credit society of the Port Trust for the workers. The experiment can be tried and encouraged by a body like the Port Trust.

A-147. You think that the two things ought to go together—a shorter period of payment combined with the establishment of a satisfactory co-operative credit system?—Yes.

A-148. Would that not need in its inception some personnel officer who would take a special interest to see that it did succeed?—I am in favour of having a personnel officer; I think that is necessary. If he encourages it it is bound to be a success.

A-149. You suggest that the Port Trust is a particularly favourable body for trying such an experiment?—Very favourable.

A-150. *Miss Power* : I see that you mention that in the case of fines and unclaimed wages these are credited to the Port Trust. Do you think it will be possible to make use of such sums in some form of welfare work?—(Mr. Downie) : They are very trifling. I think the fines come to about Rs. 100 a year. They are not very substantial.

A-151. What about the unclaimed wages? Are they not a substantial sum?—Only occasionally they are unclaimed. They are not large. The amounts are trifling. In fact they are so trifling that we had no necessity to consider what to do with these amounts. The fines are very small and the wages are not claimed only occasionally; it may be a sum of Rs. 200 or 300.

A-152. Do the unclaimed wages arise from a man having to return to his village hurriedly and being unable to claim his pay prior to the pay day?—They disappear; they go on leave and never come back.

A-153. Without having put in any claim?—No. We treat it as unclaimed money.

A-154. What is the interval for the workers on the night shifts in the shipping?—According to hours. There is no interval. They work from 7-30 p.m. to 6-30 a.m. In actual practice the men take turns, going off for a few spells. They cannot work right through without a break and they arrange that amongst themselves.

A-155. What is the interval they actually take under that arrangement?—It is merely a matter of arrangement with the headman; there is no specific time laid down.

A-156. In your memorandum you refer to the question of the reduction of hours of the workers having been postponed pending certain improvements. I am afraid I do not quite follow what the improvements are which would affect this question from the workers' point of view?—It is rather a difficult matter. When the question was brought up a large portion of the traders of the place were against reduction in hours. They thought that the time was inopportune for doing so and felt, as far as I can remember, that when we got the new conditions of working which we are likely to establish in the West Wharf, that is the new part of the harbour, they would be in a better position to see what the result of reducing the hours would be than what they were at that particular time.

A-157. Is there likely to be a considerable interval before there are any improvements?—We hope to open the first of the West Wharf piers by this time next year, and to work under different conditions from those in the past. It is rather a technical thing, but I can explain to you if you so desire.

A-158. You think it will result in the possibility of being able to alter the shift times?—I cannot say. The Port Trust had put it forward to the various chambers, stevedores and others concerned and asked them for their opinion on the matter of reduction of hours. The Indian Chambers favoured reduction, but the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and the stevedores who are mostly the employers of the labour concerned were very much against it and were unable to see any necessity for reduction and the Board accepted that view and postponed further consideration of the matter.

A-159. I understand that you are very slack just now?—Very slack indeed.

A-160. Then this should be rather an opportune time to try the experiment in the reduction of hours, might it not?—No, this is just the time when they want to work more; people would like to work for 24 hours if they could get it. There will be no trouble about the working hours now. When we are busy and when trade is carried on at a pressure, is the time to reduce the working hours.

A-161. My point is that if you are slack now you will be employing more people in the bulk on shorter shifts?—That depends upon the number of days the ship stays. For instance, in busy times we keep it only for three days. If there is no particular hurry and the ship stays for eight days, the number of men employed is naturally less. That is the trouble. It is work that we want here.

A-162. Referring to your housing scheme, you state that there has had to be an increase in the rents lately. I take it that at the same time there has also been a decrease in wages?—It is not a decrease in wages, but a decrease in work. We were having a loss of about Rs. 30,000 per annum for several years, and a year or two ago it was decided that we must do something to get some more money, and the rents were put up about 10 per cent., that is, just about the standard rate under the Rent Act.

A-163. Has there been an appreciable exodus of people from your own housing schemes since the increase of rents?—No. The only thing I know is that a lot of people said that

rather than pay this rent they would go back to their mud huts ; and a certain number of them have gone and erected huts on land which we are not quite sure belongs to the municipality or to the Port Trust.

A-164. More people would be taken in in order to lessen to the renter the cost of the increased rent ?—Very possibly they would take in more lodgers.

A-165. You do not in any way control the condition of workers who are contracted for through the contractors you employ ?—No.

A-166. Would there be any possibility of putting into the contract which you make with the contractors for coaling, the necessity for their complying with certain legislation affecting, for instance, the use of children on that work and the age at which children shall start on that work ?—That is rather outside our province. Mostly coaling is done in the stream and I do not know whether legally we have any authority over this. In the case of the vessels on the wharfs we have laid down conditions ; no one under 15 is employed in Port Trust works.

A-167. Have you any method of inspection to see that that is carried out ?—The staff inspect it every day ; if they see a youth under 15 the stevedore will be told to take him away.

A-168. Is it not necessary that the plinth of the houses for workers should be at least three feet from the ground ?—I think it would be a great improvement, but I do not think it is necessary.

A-169. Should not there be some provision for recreation of workers ?—I would be very glad to see that they have recreation. But if I understand that you wish the Port Trust to provide the recreation, I do not agree with that.

A-170. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Why not ?—It is not my duty to provide recreation for the workers. They can manage their own recreation as other people do. That is my reason.

A-171. You sometimes provide free houses for them. It is not your duty to provide free recreation ?—Excuse me, we provide free houses for specific jobs, to people who it is necessary should live near their work. For other people we do not provide free houses. They have to pay rent. Free housing is provided for specific purposes. But recreation and work in my opinion are two entirely different matters.

A-172. *Mr. Birla* : Mr. Downie, you refer to the depression in the export trade. Is it peculiar to the export trade or to the import trade as well ?—Entirely to the export trade. The import trade is very good.

A-173. Can you explain the reason why particularly the export trade has been affected ?—Owing to the reasons which have led to wheat not being exported.

A-174. What are your chief items of export ?—Wheat and seeds.

A-175. And Cotton ?—Cotton has now become the chief export. For some time wheat and seeds predominated. Now wheat and seeds have gone down, and cotton predominates.

A-176. Can you tell me out of the 20 lakhs of tons of export what is the quantity of wheat and grain that is exported ?—Putting it roughly, 100,000 tons of other commodities and the balance wheat and seeds. For instance, in 1924-25 we exported 1,200,000 tons of wheat alone, and previous to the war one and a quarter million has been exported in a year.

A-177. So it is on account of the fall in the export of wheat and seeds that your trade has fallen ?—Wheat and seeds are the principal items which have gone down.

A-178. Can you explain the reason for this fall ? Is it due to famine ?—I cannot say. I have been told that the reason of the wheat export going down is that people in India are consuming more wheat than they used to do ; also that the prices of Indian wheat will not compare with the prices of Australian, Canadian or Argentine wheat, and they cannot get a market for it.

A-179. It is not entirely due to any shortage of crops ?—No, it is in fact due wholly to internal consumption.

A-180. You suggest that the internal consumption has increased ?—I understand it has.

A-181. Do you think it has anything to do with the appreciation of the value of the rupee ?—I am not prepared to give an opinion.

A-182. You think that the appreciation of the rupee value has hit the Punjab agriculturists ? Is that your suggestion ?—I am not in a position to give an opinion on this matter.

A-183. You tell us about the housing conditions and the hesitation of the occupiers to pay the rent. Could you tell us the approximate cost of constructing a house, say 10' by 10', in Karachi?—We have got small houses which include two rooms and a verandah.

A-184. What is the area?—I can give you the area of the houses. The small houses consist of a verandah 14' × 6', one room 14' × 10', another 5' × 5' and another 14' × 10'. The value of that was originally Rs. 450 a house. That was many years ago.

A-185. Do you think the cost has increased considerably?—We have spent a very large amount on repairs.

A-186. What I am trying to get at is whether the cost of construction here is in any way higher than in Bombay or Calcutta?—The cost of building in Karachi is very much cheaper than in Bombay or Calcutta.

A-187. Then what is the reason of the hesitation of your occupiers to pay a rent of Rs. 3 or Rs. 4; it is not a very high rent for rooms of that size?—I cannot tell what the reason is. I suppose they have not the money.

A-188. Money is spent on health and education. Do you confine your activities to the labour alone, or do you spend money for your higher staff, on the education and health of your clerical staff?—We maintain two medical officers, who are confined to people who are generally getting less than Rs. 300. On the Manora side we have a medical officer who attends to every one. On the Manora side we also provide a school for Port Trust children. On the Karachi side there is a large number of municipal schools, both in Keamari and Karachi. To the Port Trust employees who send their children to Karachi we pay the tram hire.

A-189. What I wanted to know was whether you maintain these schools for the benefit of the labouring classes or for the clerical staff?—We maintain only one school, that is at Manora, and that is for all the Port Trust employees who would like to send their children to it.

A-190. How many boys attend that school?—About 35.

A-191. Do you think that is a quite satisfactory condition of affairs?—Well, that is all that there are about the place. The main body of Port Trust employees live in Karachi, and there they obtain the benefits of the municipal schools, a large number of which are to be found in Keamari and Karachi.

A-192. Mr. Mehta just now suggested the advisability of starting a co-operative system?—I have not considered the question. I should like to consider the matter.

A-193. Do you come across cases of swindling by your contractors?—No, I am not aware of any such cases. I have not come across any case of swindling.

A-194. Do you think the contractors deal fairly with the labourers?—I am not in a position to say.

A-195. Can you give us the margin of profit which the contractor makes; the rates you pay to the contractor, and the rates that the contractors pay to the work-people?—I cannot tell you.

A-196. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Would you make the enquiry and let us know?—I have not the means of finding it out.

A-197. *Mr. Birla*: I understand that you have been subscribing to the Red Cross Association. Do you think they maintain any *dais* for the benefit of the Indian women?—I understand they maintain qualified nurses at Keamari, who instruct the women. We subscribe and they do the work.

A-198. You will perhaps agree with me that the qualified nurses, unless they are Indians, are not very easily accessible to the working classes, and therefore I wanted to know whether you have made any condition that the Red Cross Society, on account of the subscription which they receive from you, should maintain more Indian *dais*, for the benefit of the Indian working classes?—We have made no condition at all. We merely subscribe, and leave the Red Cross to do their own work.

A-199. Do they maintain, or not, an Indian *dai*?—I could not tell you.

A-200. *Mr. Clow*: What is the procedure with regard to the reporting of accidents?—All serious accidents are reported to the Collector of Karachi and to the police immediately and, of course, to myself. It is left for the Collector of Karachi or the police to take any action that is necessary in the matter.

A-201. Who conducts the investigation of the accidents?—That is left for the police working under the District Magistrate, the Collector of Karachi.

A-202. Are there any technical men corresponding to the Inspector of factories with technical experience of machinery and accidents to conduct investigations into accidents ?—I do not know. We hand the matter entirely over to the police.

A-203. I should like to ask you one question arising out of Mr. Harrison's evidence to which you have listened. We got the impression yesterday that there was not perhaps as much of unemployment as of under-employment in Karachi. Large number of men clamoured that they could not get sufficient work in Karachi. Is that the case ?—Undoubtedly.

A-204. Mr. Harrison tells us that he cannot get a full supply of labour all through the year and that he finds it very difficult to progress with his work especially at special seasons. Will these men here be willing to go to Sukkur for employment if they get a chance ?—I should be very doubtful about the class of men you saw yesterday. Most of them are trained dock workers with the exception of probably two or three experienced hands who might get better wages at the Sukkur Barrage. They generally stick to Karachi or go to their own homes.

A-205. The unskilled workers we saw, Mr. Harrison says, are perfectly capable of being employed at Sukkur ?—You cannot call them unskilled because the dock labourer is a skilled man in his own particular way. We want very good men for that class of work. An ordinary man is no use. These men work here for years and then probably go home for a year or two and come back. Employment as dock labourer is limited to men with a certain amount of skill. There are of course others who do a certain amount of skilled work here. Dealing with sugar, for instance, we use the Mekrani labour which is bigger in stature and can do the work. With regard to imports, men from the Punjab are used because they are bigger. For the ordinary work of pack carrying, coolies are employed.

A-206. There is no considerable amount of unskilled labour unemployed in Karachi ? By the word, 'unskilled' I refer to the labourer with no particular degree of aptitude in anything ?—There must be a good deal of unemployment owing to the trade depression. For instance, we are not doing any work on the west wharf. We might have a thousand men doing odd jobs there. They are not being employed now.

A-207. The point I really want to get at is this. Is it a case of the unwillingness of the labourer to go to Sukkur ; or is it a case of the ignorance of the worker as to the place where work can be got ?—I am not in a position to answer that. (Mr. Mehta) : I can say, sir, that it is due to the ignorance of the labourers. If they were told that there is work obtainable at Sukkur and that they would get so much wages they would willingly go.

A-208. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In your memorandum dealing with "housing conditions" you say that the Port Trust have constructed 800 houses for the accommodation of the labourers at Keamari. This accommodation is not for the entire labour force of the Port Trust. It is only for a limited number ?—Yes. What happens about the others is this. Many of our men like others prefer to live in Karachi and they go and live in Karachi. Consequently these houses became empty and in course of time they have been filled up by outsiders as well as Port Trust employees. Out of about 800 houses only about 259 are really occupied by Port Trust employees.

A-209. And the balance is occupied by non-Port Trust employees ?—Not connected with work of the Port Trust. For instance, stevedores' labour probably live in it. The oil company's labour live in it.

A-210. In some way connected with the port ?—Connected with the work of the port, but not directly connected with the Port Trust.

A-211. In the matter of charging rents do you make any distinction between tenants who are in Port Trust service and those who are not ?—We make no distinction. We have a number of houses in the village. We give free quarters for our staff, but the others are on the same basis whether they are Port Trust employees or outsiders.

A-212. With regard to the question of rents you say that the policy of the Port Trust is to levy minimum rates for these houses. What do you mean by minimum rates ?—Such rates that we can charge without losing money. As I have already said we lose nearly Rs. 30,000 a year on the average, so that all the rents are not really remunerative yet.

A-213. How do you make out that loss ? Do you charge any interest on the cost of construction, and if so, at what rate ?—Yes, we charge an interest at 6 per cent. on the cost of construction and include depreciation also. We do not include the land value. We include the cost of the supply of water, the amount of taxes that we have to pay to the Municipality and all this works out to about Rs. 20,000 loss every year.

A-213a. What is the rate of interest you charge ?—Six per cent.

A-214. What is the total amount you have spent?—I have not got the figures here at present.

A-215. If this loss is eliminated from the calculation, by how much would the rate of interest on the cost of construction be reduced?—We have not worked that out.

A-216. I want to find out whether, instead of working out at 6 per cent., you worked out at 4 per cent. or 5 per cent., there would be no loss on the capital invested in construction?—I have got here the capital cost on the average including depreciation and interest and if we omitted it from our calculations we would be losing about Rs. 10,000.

A-217. What is the amount of interest debited now?—Rs. 29,000 to 30,000.

A-218. Is that your total loss?—No, it is Rs. 20,000 to 30,000.

A-219. If your loss is Rs. 20,000 before and if you eliminate it now, you would still get Rs. 10,000; but if your loss was Rs. 30,000 you would get no return on the capital invested. You are charging rents from Rs. 5 to Rs. 9-8-0. On what basis are these rents fixed?—A statement is worked out on the basis of the original cost, the present rental value, the value of the land and so on. It has all been worked out before.

A-220. How do these rents compare with those of similar accommodation in other parts of Karachi?—They are a gift; they are no rents at all. For similar houses situated in Karachi we can get three times the rent.

A-221. Is that the reason why there is so much over-crowding?—I do not know whether that is the reason. People will take in other people and we cannot keep them out. The accommodation provided in each house consists of three rooms and you would not get one room in Karachi for the same rent. We think it is a mistake to have the rents so low.

A-222. Is that not a liability on the funds of the Port Trust?—Yes, on the funds of the Port Trust.

A-223. Is the Port Trust satisfied that it is a legitimate liability on their part to let those houses at low rents to people who are not in the employ of the Port Trust?—We cannot get them out.

A-224. Have the Port Trust considered that aspect of the question?—The matter has been discussed on various occasions and as I said before, they came to the conclusion that they would build no more houses but get the employers of labour to build their own houses and give them sites for the purpose. Because they saw that it was uneconomic.

A-225. How do you explain the fact that men in Port Trust service entitled to accommodation which they could get at one-third of the rents obtaining in Karachi do not occupy it but allow others to do so?—I am talking of the situation about a number of years ago. At present the whole of the accommodation is not occupied by Port Trust labourers. Only about 200 houses are occupied by them. Whenever a house becomes vacant, which is very seldom the case, we allot it to a Port Trust employee. This is the rule that we have been following for some years past. It is going to take many years before the whole accommodation is occupied by the Port Trust employees.

A-226. These houses have been built for the benefit of the Port Trust employees at Port Trust expenses?—I cannot say they were built specially for Port Trust employees.

A-227. Then what justification is there for your charging only one-third rent compared with what similar accommodation fetches in Karachi?—The difficulty is this. The rents were fixed some twenty or thirty years ago and we have not increased them in the way the other landlords in the city have done. That is one reason why the rents are so low.

A-228. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Mr. Downie, was a representation made by the tally clerks to introduce a shift system for their staff?—Yes.

A-229. Was the matter considered by your Board?—Yes.

A-230. Did the Board unanimously recommend a reduction in hours originally?—No, the Board referred the matter to the various Chambers of Commerce and employers of labour for opinion.

A-231. Did they at any time unanimously recommend reduction in hours as a body?—I am speaking from memory and to the best of my recollection no decision was come to. The matter was referred, as I said, to the various Chambers of Commerce and employers of labour in Karachi for opinion.

A-232. Is it a fact that the European Chamber of Commerce at first viewed the proposal favourably?—I do not think it is correct to say that.

A-233. Can you, Mr. Mehta, throw any light on the matter?—I was not in the Port Trust at that time. I came in afterwards.

The Chairman : I think, Mr. Mehta has made some reference to it in his evidence and we shall examine him in the afternoon.

A-234. *Diwan Chaman Lall* :—I take it that you are not in a position to give me detailed information about it?—I think what I gave is the correct information.

A-235. My information is that the Board viewed the proposal favourably.—I am only talking on the resolutions passed by the Board. I do not know what happened at informal meetings of the Board. The resolution only says that the matter was referred to the various Chambers for opinion.

A-236. Am I right in taking it that the opposition to this came from Messrs Forbes, Forbes, Campbell and Co.?—The opposition to it came from the Chamber of Commerce and from the stevedores of the port.

A-237. The Indian Chambers unanimously agreed?—Yes, they agreed.

A-238. Is it a fact that the working hours in Bombay in the Port Trust are shorter than the working hours in Karachi?—It is a fact.

A-239. How does the efficiency of the Bombay worker compare with the Karachi worker in regard to work?—Very small and very poor comparatively.

A-240. Have you got any statistics which can show that?—No detailed statistics; only my knowledge of the work done in both places.

A-241. Is that your opinion?—My opinion based on the knowledge of the working in both ports. We work far better in this port.

A-242. But you have no statistics?—No.

A-243. What is the constitution of the Boards?—Four members are appointed by the Karachi Chambers of Commerce, two by the Buyers and Shippers' Association, four by Government, including one representative of the N. W. Rly. and one of the military Department, one by the Karachi municipality and two by the Karachi Indian Merchants Association.

A-244. Is there any representative of labour?—There is a nominated member.

A-245. Has there been a great deal of agitation on the part of the workers or their representatives demanding representation of labour on a better scale?—I have heard that such is the case.

A-246. You yourself personally would not be averse to seeing labour properly represented on the Board?—My personal opinion is that one labour representative is quite sufficient for the size of this place.

A-247. Do you agree with the method of putting the labour representative on the Board by nomination?—As far as I know it has worked satisfactorily; in other words, I agree with it.

A-248. Who is the representative of labour?—He is a gentleman called Mr. Merayab Khan.

A-249. Is he connected in any way with labour?—Not that I know of.

A-250. You are aware that the Port Trust Labour Union and other labour organizations in Karachi have looked upon this nomination unfavourably?—I have understood that.

A-251. You said that the rents of these quarters at Keamari which are owned by the Port Trust were increased; can you give me the average of the increase during the last few years?—Yes, Rs. 4 houses were increased to Rs. 5.

A-252. I will put it to you and perhaps you might correct me as I go along. The original rent of the small houses was Rs. 1-12-0 several years ago?—About 40 or 50 years ago.

A-253. Did you have any houses 50 years ago?—Yes, a lot of houses.

A-254. When was the rent Rs. 1-12-0?—I have not got that on my list; that is a very remote time.

A-255. Which is the lowest you have got?—The lowest rent that I have got here is Rs. 4-2-0 for the smallest house.

A-256. What date was that?—That goes back a good many years 10 or 15 years. I have not got anything before that.

A-257. Is that a small house?—The very smallest houses—Rs. 4-2-0.

A-258. And what is it paying now?—Rs. 5. That was in existence I should say about 1900, Rs. 4-2-0.

A-259. When was the last increase in the rent?—About a year ago.

A-260. Was there any increase in wages at that time?—No.

A-261. We will take the mat houses of Keamari; do you think they are fit for human beings to live in?—Well, I quite agree they are very unsightly; but their history is rather peculiar. I presume you refer to those at the end of the village; I think you saw them; I was not there. We put up about 10 lines of huts during the time we had plague here, so that when plague occurred at any house the families could be turned out and could live in the mat houses pending disinfection of their houses. The plague died away but the mat houses remained. The question arose: shall we pull them down? As many men came along to me and said: "Sahib, we are very willing to take this house", I said: "Very well, you can all have them at Rs. 1-8-0 a month." They were filled up, and that is the reason of those houses. Since they have been built, about 5 lines have been burned down and we have not erected any more. It is quite likely those existing will be burned down in the course of the next few months and there will be no more erected.

A-262. Am I right in saying that the space in these mat huts is about 10 feet by 10 feet?—I should say so.

A-263. Am I correct in saying that the average prisoner in one of His Majesty's prisons gets a cell 10 feet by 10 feet, all to himself?—I am not in a position to say.

A-264. Is there any wage-fixing machinery available for the purposes of the Port Trust workers?—No.

A-265. Would you personally be averse to the fixation of wages through some minimum wage-fixing machinery?—I do not quite gather what you mean by that.

A-266. There is a proposal before the Government of India, as a result of the International Labour Conference last year to set up minimum wage-fixing machinery; you would not be averse to that?—No; we generally fall in with the views of Government on these matters.

A-267. In regard to these porters you say in your written memorandum that "Suitable quarters are provided by the Karachi Port Trust"?—That is so.

A-268. Is it a fact that some of your accommodation at Keamari has been condemned by the Health Officer?—I am not aware of it.

A-269. That is a fact. You do not consider those satisfactory?—I am not aware of any houses that have been condemned that have not been brought to my notice. It has not been represented to the Port Trust officially.

A-270. You are the head of the Department and I take it that if a serious matter like this has not been reported to you, there must be something wrong with the constitution?—I say it is incorrect. It has not been brought to my notice as head of the Port Trust, as it should have been if there was anything wrong, and therefore I cannot answer any questions on that.

A-271. Then I will not pursue the matter, but from the information I have obtained from the Health Officer himself, it is so. You do not consider that those mat huts are satisfactory?—Of course not.

A-272. Is it a fact that many of your Port Trust workers are living at Lyari?—I should think it is, yes.

A-273. And is it also the fact that they are living in mat huts at Lyari?—I do not know the conditions there.

A-274. Have you been there?—I have been there, but I am not acquainted with the conditions there.

A-275. A great deal of the accommodation is mat hut accommodation?—I think it is.

A-276. Many of your workers are living there?—Very probably.

A-277. You would not consider that accommodation satisfactory?—Until I see the accommodation, I really could not say. I want to know the reasons why they are living there; they may prefer to live there.

A-278. You have no officer of the Port Trust who is in charge of the inspection of the housing accommodation of your workers?—Of our own village, of our own Port Trust houses—not outside.

A-279. Not outside?—That is municipal organization.

A-280. Would it not be desirable to have someone in charge?—I cannot go in and inspect outside houses belonging to the municipality; my jurisdiction only applies to the Port Trust, not the municipal arrangements.

A-281. But if it is a fact that many of your workers are living in mat huts of more or less the same types as the mat huts to be found at Keamari, you would not consider that accommodation satisfactory?—No: certainly not.

A-282. Could you give me any idea as to the indebtedness of the workers of the Port Trust?—I could not.

A-283. Have you got a seamen's rest house?—There is a seamen's rest house; it is not the property of the Port Trust.

A-284. Under the Port Trust Act are you not supposed to provide a seamen's rest house?—We are supposed to contribute; we contributed towards the cost of it and contributions were received locally. No one knows who the building belongs to. The only thing is we keep it in repair out of Port Trust funds and maintain it.

A-285. Are any Indians eligible?—All grades and castes are eligible.

A-286. Do Indians make use of that rest house?—Very seldom.

A-287. Can you give me any reason why they do not?—I believe they prefer to live in other places.

A-288. Would it not be better to provide a rest house for Indians?—That is a very excellent idea.

A-289. Is there any provision in the Port Trust Act for the safety of the crews employed for loading and unloading?—No, there is nothing specifically laid down.

A-290. Would it not be desirable to amend the Act?—That is a matter which was recently put to Government; the Port Trust suggested that Government should appoint a Government inspector for that purpose; the reply from Government is that they do not propose to move in the matter at present.

A-291. I was not merely thinking of an inspector; would it not be better to incorporate certain provisions of the British Act with regard to safety devices in connection with the loaders?—We have protection for the workers on the wharf, but on the ship, as I say, that is outside our jurisdiction; there would have to be an Act passed specifically for that purpose.

A-292. You are not averse to that?—I am averse to the Port Trust having that responsibility; I am not averse to the Act but to the Port Trust being saddled with the responsibility.

A-293. Could you give me any idea of the number of children of workers of the Port Trust who go to school in Keamari?—I could not.

A-294. Is there a provident fund for your workers?—For certain classes, yes, generally for permanent men drawing over Rs. 40 a month.

A-295. Is it not necessary to have some provident fund arrangement for those who are drawing less?—We have been extending it in the last few months; we recently brought in tally clerks, who had not previously had it; we brought in cramen and so on. We have been gradually extending it, but so far it has not reached the lower ranks yet.

A-296. It is desirable that it should?—Yes.

A-297. Have you anything to say as to amendment of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act regarding the method of employment?—I have no remarks to offer.

A-298. You have mentioned that at one place there are 32 privies at Manora. How many workers, men and women with their families have you got?—We have about 300 men employed in the workshop. I cannot say offhand the total number of men and women.

A-299. The men are living there with their families?—Not necessarily. But in many cases they are.

A-300. The arrangements are decidedly unsatisfactory?—I do not think so. We have a medical officer who reports to me whether everything is satisfactory. If he put up a recommendation for additional privies they would undoubtedly be put in.

A-301. But if there are 300 workers, many of them living with their families, and if you take family as being a unit of five, there will be nearly 1,000 people?—The conditions after all are different there. I have had no complaints about it.

A-302. Is it a fact that the Port Trust Labour Union has demanded better facilities?—I have not heard of it.

A-303. If it is brought to your notice I dare say it would be remedied ?—Anything like that would be remedied at once if it were found necessary.

A-304. You are in favour of departmental employment I suppose ?—To a certain extent.

A-305. And you would not be averse, I suppose, to having a labour bureau or labour exchange set up for the purpose of recruiting your workers ?—I have no objection at all if it would work well.

A-306. Would you have any objection to a system of sickness insurance being adopted for the permanent workers ?—Taking the Port Trust, I do not think it is necessary. We have very liberal leave rules.

A-307. Speaking generally, you are not averse to the principle of sickness insurance ?—No, so far as the casual workers are concerned, but not for the Port Trust employees.

A-308. Because they have been provided already ?—They are very well treated; they have medical attention free.

A-309. But where such facilities are not provided you would not be averse to sickness insurance ?—No.

A-310. Are you in favour of extending the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act in order to cover all classes of workers ?—We have extended it as far as we are concerned. I have no objection to its general extension.

A-311. *Mr. Cliff*: Would you oblige the Commission by giving us some photographs of the lines that we saw yesterday? You have got four categories of houses in which employees live ?—You would like photographs of the Manora houses and the native village houses? I will give instructions for photographs to be taken at once. It will take a few days. I can send them on to you.

A-312. Will you be good enough to furnish the Commission with a copy of the Constitution of the Port Trust and copies of the Annual Report for the last four years? I want you to be clear that you should include the one for 1924-25 ?—Yes.

A-313. Would you tell us the number of employees that are employed directly by the Port Trust ?—There is one question I should like to ask; and that is about the definition of the word 'labour'. What is labour? Is a tally clerk who works for 12 hours a day like the artisan to be included or not?

The Chairman: I think clerical labour is usually kept in the books separately from other kinds of labour; it is not manual labour ?—I want to be sure of the definition because it might affect my answers.

A-313a. *Mr. Cliff*: You have got, I understand, establishments A and B and certain other labour ?—Yes.

A-313b. I want to know the number of work-people employed direct by the Port Trust ?—May I put in the clerical staff or omit it?

A-313c. Include it if you please ?—1,163 permanent.

A-314. How is that divided ?—403 clerical; peons, *chowkidars* and sweepers 306, engineers and drivers 381; coolies 10; cranemen, *munshis*, tally clerks, etc., 63.

A-315. That is the number of employees of establishment "A" ?—No. They are what we call permanent employees. The permanent employees are split into "A" and "B" which have different leave rules. That is what constitutes the difference between "A" and "B". Our permanent men are down at 1,163 while our temporary men are 3,293.

A-316. To save a number of questions, would you kindly send us a written memorandum showing the difference in the matter of privileges between "A" and "B" establishments ?—Yes. We have it all tabulated in a document a copy of which I can send on to you.

A-317. Would you tell us approximately the number of men who are employed by the Port Trust on dock labour, such as loading, unloading and coaling ?—It is about 25 a ship. Of course it depends on how many ships are in.

A-318. Are they employed direct ?—No, through the stevedores.

A-319. Have you any approximate idea of the number of men who were engaged on this work in the year 1924-25 as compared with the current year ?—I can work it out for you if you want to have that information.

A-320. Yes, if I am not troubling you too much ?—We have the data, but it is not collected.

A-321. Do you exercise any control over the labour employed by contractors?—None whatever except in very small details. For instance, on the docks we insist that the appliances should be up to our prescribed standard. We examine them for the safety of the workmen.

A-322. Have you got a record of the number of women and children that are employed by contractors?—None whatever.

A-323. Is it possible to ascertain that?—I should have to write to those people and ask them how many women and children they employ. That is the only thing I can do.

A-324. You would simply have to take what they say; there is no record?—No record.

A-325. Is there any record of rates of wages paid to the dock labour?—No, only in their books. I pay the stevedore on a fixed basis per ton and I have nothing to do with the wages paid to each man.

A-326. Have the Port Trust considered the question of having a register of dock labour?—Never.

A-327. You were asked a number of questions as to the finance of your housing scheme. Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola made a calculation as to the necessary relation between cost and rent. I had a little difficulty as to the arithmetic. Would you send a statement on the finance of this housing scheme?—That is, you would like to know how the rent is arrived at.

A-328. Yes, the capital cost, how the rent is calculated and what interest the Port Trust obtain. I believe you said that excluded the cost of the land?—Yes. The difficulty we have about this matter is that when I said the rents did not pay, that was based on the usual method of calculating rent. Very frequently in years gone by in fixing the rents we were guided by the rents which prevailed in previous years. The rent was merely fixed at say Rs. 4 or 5—purely an arbitrary figure and subsequently that has been increased by annas 8 or Re. 1. Very likely it will be necessary to work out a comparison.

A-329. You will do your best for us?—Yes.

A-330. Could we also have copies of the correspondence which took place between your authority and the Government with regard to the provision of an inspector?—Yes.

A-331. Mr. Chaman Lall asked you some questions about the movement for a reduction of hours that has been discussed by the Port Trust. I have with me a copy of the memorandum supplied by the Karachi Port Trust Labour Union. I do not know whether you have seen a copy of it?—No.

A-332. Incidentally I may tell you that they pay you a great compliment, but what I am concerned with is a question of fact with regard to the proposal to reduce the hours of working. In this document they say "Unfortunately the representatives of big business the European Shipping Companies led by Mr. E. A. Pearson, Manager of Messrs. Forbes, Forbes, Campbell and Co., Ltd., Agents, Ellerman Lines, Limited, set their faces against the proposal and wrecked even the small measure of reform". That implies that the Port Trust had decided upon some reform. What I am concerned about in connection with this is that we should be furnished with the records of the Port Trust, if there are any, with regard to the proposal to reduce the hours of work at Karachi. Are there records?—Yes. I might explain that a note was put up to the Board with regard to working hours. This was gone through by the Board but its consideration was deferred pending a reference to the various Chambers and employers of labour. When the replies came back the question was again considered by the Board and it was decided not to go on with it. This is the gist of the matter. The recommendation is not that of the Chairman of the Board. Probably it represents the views of the Traffic Manager and others on the matter.

A-333. I am concerned to see what was the recommendation and upon what that recommendation was based?—Of course, the views of the Traffic Manager or of the Chief Engineer are not necessarily the views of the Board, and if you take the view of the Traffic Manager it might be against the ruling of the Board. I do not want to put in correspondence which might give a wrong impression as regards the Board's views.

A-334. This Commission has got to get at the facts. I hope you will not think we are troubling you too much in asking for this information?—No, certainly not.

A-335. Mr. Ahmed: You are in favour of constructing a rest house for Indian seamen?—I think it is a very excellent idea.

A-336. Because you have other rest houses which do not help them ?—There is a seamen's rest house.

A-337. That is not meant for Indian seamen ?—It is provided for all classes and creeds according to its constitution.

A-338. You are in favour of constructing a separate one for the Indians ?—It is a very good idea.

A-339. The number of Indian seamen is much larger than the number of those who use the other rest house ?—I should think so.

A-340. Yesterday we were inspecting the lost specimens of your huts where the workers live. The first huts we saw were constructed of straw and your Mr. Flynn was trying, I think, to disown these huts. Our Chairman, and many of our members and others, including the representatives of unions, were there. You charge for each hut Rs. 1-8-0 per mensem ?—I think that is correct.

A-341. It was Rs. 1-12-0 before, and you promised to reduce it to Re. 1. Is that correct ? Those are the facts that we gathered there, seeing the huts and making enquiries from the people ?—I am not quite certain.

A-342. And then instead of reducing it to Re. 1, you have increased it to Rs. 5 ? Is that correct ?—No, totally incorrect. I understand you are talking about mat huts.

A-342a. I told you I was referring to straw huts ?

A-343. *The Chairman* : What is the present rent of the mat huts which you described to us as having been put up at the time of the plague ?—Rs. 1-8-0.

A-344. Has that been changed ?—Not so far as I am aware.

A-345. *Mr. Ahmed* : From which class of huts do you realize rent at the rate of Rs. 5 per mensem ?—*Pucca* stone built houses.

A-346. You stated some time ago that you would reduce the rent from Rs. 1-12-0 or Rs. 1-8-0 to Re. 1. Instead of that you are charging Rs. 5. Some of the huts were burnt some time ago ?—Yes.

A-347. And the fact was brought to your notice ?—It was.

A-348. These huts were condemned by the municipal authority ; that also was brought to your notice by the municipal authority ?—I am afraid the facts to which you refer have not been brought to my notice. I have never heard about it.

A-349. When these huts were burnt, some people died as a result of the fire. I understand a man died ?—I do not really know ; not as a result of the fire, I understand.

A-350. You charge at the rate of Rs. 5 for some rooms or huts or buildings as a fixed charge ?—Yes.

A-351. They are of uniform measurement ?—Yes.

A-352. And the measurement of certain shops is the same ?—Yes, very likely.

A-353. You charge for the shops at the rate of Rs. 22 per month ?—That is correct.

A-354. And for the dwellings for workers Rs. 5 per month ?—Yes.

A-355. What difference is there ?—We found that the shops were being sublet for Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 per month, and we therefore thought an increase of the rent was indicated. They were changing hands at about ten times the rent we were charging. They were being sublet at exorbitant rates to outsiders.

A-356. Do you follow the same principle if the workers want an increase in their rates of pay ?—No, that is entirely different.

A-357. What is the reason for charging a higher rent for the shops ?—I believe it is usual to charge more for the shops than for a dwelling house.

A-358. I take it your principle is that of a profiteering concern. Is that the principle ?—We thought it desirable to put up the rent of the shops ; we thought they were being charged too small a rent.

A-359. Yesterday some of us also inspected the municipal system of supplying accommodation to the labourers at Lyari at Rs. 1 per annum. You probably know about it ?—No, I do not know it.

A-360. You have stated under " Housing ", that house rent is paid in the case of the shunting staff at the rate of Rs. 4 per mensem in lieu of quarters. Why do you charge a rent of Rs. 5 ?—This is a case where the shunting staff peons and *chowkidars* are supposed to get quarters if available. If quarters are not available, we give them a monthly

allowance of Rs. 4, in lieu of quarters. That is the general practice at Karachi. In lieu of quarters we give Rs. 4 per mensem to those who are entitled to quarters, as well as salary. If we cannot provide quarters we give them Rs. 4 to assist them to get quarters.

A-361. As you let the other houses at Rs. 4 have you any objection to letting these houses also at Rs. 4?—This is a different class of building. If I were building for these peons, I certainly should not give them two rooms and a verandah for Rs. 4 per month.

A-361a. The cost of building these huts on the Manora side is less than at Keamari? You do not know the amount spent?—No, I could not say without referring to my books.

A-362. Yesterday morning we were very much interested in looking at your crane, which was being used to load a steamer. You say in your memorandum that it is considered that if the slinging and unslinging were done departmentally the men employed would, as a whole, be better treated, as regards wages and housing conditions, than is the case at present; that is to say by employing workmen instead of having cranes which have caused disasters?—That means engaging the men departmentally instead of through contractors. The cranes would always be there.

A-363. You say it would probably be a very good idea to keep the men working instead of getting the contractor to do the slinging and unslinging work?—Yes.

A-364. Then why do you not maintain a fixed minimum number of men as permanent hands. Are you in favour of doing that?—No, I do not think I am.

A-365. If you kept a fixed minimum number of men as permanent hands, whenever necessary you could engage extra hands?—If it were done departmentally we would have to do that.

A-366. You are not in favour of that?—No, not necessarily. I would prefer the present system myself.

A-367. You say that it brings disaster, and our Chairman in the beginning asked about workmen's compensation. I am coming to that point. You are in favour of bringing men as permanent hands?—No, not necessarily.

A-368. Because slinging and unslinging work by crane means disaster?—I think there is some mistake. The slinging work is done by contractors now employed by the Port Trust. In my memorandum when I speak of the possibility of it being done departmentally, I mean it could be done departmentally as it is done in Bombay. Here the system is not to do that but to employ contractors to do the work. The machinery would be there whether it is departmental labour or contractor's labour. The cranes would still be there.

A-369. But there will be greater disaster and therefore you will have to pay more for workmen's compensation?—We find there is no disaster and that everything works smoothly.

The Chairman: It is merely a question between direct labour and contractor's labour.

A-370. *Mr. Ahmed:* Regarding medical facilities you say that you pay a certain amount towards the maintenance of a hospital somewhere?—Yes, we subscribe handsomely.

A-371. And you have two medical assistants, one at Keamari and one at Manora?—Yes.

A-372. But you do not undertake the direct responsibility yourself of giving medical facilities instead of sending them to the hospitals?—No.

A-373. You have not got your own staff?—We have a medical officer who attends three times a week for the staff who are ill, and in Manora a medical officer attends anyone who is sick. But generally a man who is very ill goes to the hospital or to his own home.

A-374. The hospital is open to the public, is open to everybody; there is no distinction between a patient who comes from the Port Trust and one who comes from outside?—That is true.

A-375. Can you suggest any other method?—No, we subscribe very handsomely to the hospitals here and we have dispensaries everywhere.

A-376. Any man in the street can get those facilities; but have you in the Port Trust any other means of giving the men the required medical facilities apart from sending them to the public hospitals?—No, I should say we are not prepared to give further facilities.

A-377. *The Chairman* : They are also citizens like all the rest ?—And we are tax-payers like everybody else.

A-378. *Mr. Ahmed* : The workers do not get any special medical facilities ?—We would rather subscribe more to the hospitals which render the necessary medical aid to our men.

A-379. But that is nothing more than the assistance given to the public. I am asking you whether the Port Trust are agreeable to take steps to give more facilities in the matter of medical relief of the workmen there ?—My opinion is that the trustees will not agree. The matter has to be decided by the Board.

A-380. But since you represent them can you anticipate their decision or will they decide against you ?—I should represent it unfavourably to the trustees, but the trustees might not hold the same opinion.

A-380a. *Mr. Ahmed* : From your written memorandum it is seen that the men work at one stretch from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for eleven hours, with one hour recess in the middle. Would you agree to minimize the number of hours of work and at the same time see that it is not continuous ?

The Chairman : We have already had the views of the witness on the question of the reduction of hours.

A-380b. *Mr. Ahmed* : Is that not in contravention of the Washington Convention ?—I am not aware of it.

A-381. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In answer to Mr. Ahmed with reference to your written evidence regarding the work being done departmentally, you stated that you thought it would be better to do it in the same way as they do it in Bombay, i.e., departmentally ?—No. I did not say that. I am not prepared personally to advocate any change.

A-382. You say that in Bombay they employ dock labour departmentally. Is that actually the case ?—I believe so.

A-383. Do they not in Bombay recruit through "Toliwallahs" and pay according to the piece-work system at so much per ton or so much per unit ?—I am speaking subject to correction, but I have recently read a report of what they call the "hamallaga" department which is a separate department which supplies this labour.

A-384. We have evidence to show that in Bombay they employ Toliwallahs but not contractors. You here employ stevedore contractors who employ gangmen to bring their gangs to work as dock labourers. In Bombay they do not have these stevedore contractors for dock work over and above ordinary ship stevedore work. The gangmen are paid by piece-work. The only difference between you and Bombay is that in Bombay dock work they do not employ a stevedore, whereas you employ a stevedore here.—Your information will be more correct than mine.

A-385. In reply to Mr. Chaman Lall regarding the constitution of the Board you said that the Board consisted of 12 members of whom four members were from the European Chamber of Commerce ?—There are 14 members including the chairman who is a trustee and four members from the Chamber of Commerce, Karachi.

A-386. So that, if the Board made a recommendation, there were on the Board only four members from the European Chamber of Commerce ?—Yes.

A-387. You evidently have not heard about the condemnation of some of your huts ?—This is the first I have heard of it.

A-388. Have you ever been to Lyari, where the Municipality is selling land for working class houses ?—I have been there once or twice.

A-389. If you were a worker would you prefer to live in one of your houses, or at Lyari ?—I should prefer to stay in my own hut.

A-390. If you could get the house at Lyari cheap, even then would you live in your own house ?—Yes, in my own house.

A-391. Will you take the photographs of the huts at Lyari as well as the huts you have provided for your workers ?—(Mr. Mehta) In the afternoon I will give you an album of pictures.

A-392. *Col. Russell* : In your memorandum with regard to the extent of the medical facilities provided you say that you employ two medical officers. Have you got a local dispensary ?—(Mr. Downie) We have a small dispensary in the Port Trust Office and another at Manora.

A-393. Do you provide any first-aid treatment in the case of accidents and minor injuries ?—As a rule, no, except, for instance, at the works where we have first-aid

appliances. On the docks first-aid is usually supplied by the ship. We have a motor ambulance ready to take a patient to the hospital, which is close by.

A-394. I notice that you subscribe to the maintenance of the ambulance and you also subscribe to the Red Cross Association which maintains a qualified nurse at Keamari?—Yes.

A-395. With regard to a question that was put to you about recreation, I rather gather that you do not agree to do what might be called "welfare work"?—No, that was not my idea. My idea was not to interfere with the recreations of the people and to allow them to find their own recreations. Welfare work is rather different.

A-396. You might easily add to the activities which you support? For instance, you might add welfare clinics for babies, crèches and ante-natal clinics. Would you be averse to extending your activities in those directions?—Yes; I think it is the duty of the municipality within whose limits the Port Trust is. We are prepared to subscribe to any such institutions; but it is the duty of the municipality, not of the Port Trust, to provide these things.

A-397. Is it not the duty of employers to provide welfare facilities for their workers?—We prefer to do it in the shape of contributions.

A-398. *Mr. Ahmed* asked you about the medical facilities which you have provided for the labourers. I take it that you are of the same opinion as myself that medical aid is much better given in a large well-equipped hospital than in a series of small hospitals maintained independently.—Certainly.

A-399. *Mr. Joshi*: What is the total number of workers employed in the docks, not merely by the Port Trust, but generally?

The Chairman: We are going to be supplied with some further figures, and this figure can be supplied at the same time.

A-400. *Mr. Joshi*: In reply to *Mr. Clow* you said that there was no unemployment, but there was under-employment?—It was *Mr. Clow* himself who said that.

Mr. Clow: I did not say that either. I said it seemed to be more under-employment.

A-401. *Mr. Joshi*: There is more under-employment than unemployment?—Yes, that is probably a better way of putting it.

A-402. Have you made any enquiry about other employees other than the employees of the Port Trust?—No.

A-403. Now as regards this question of under-employment, is there any method by which you can allot work to the different employees?—You see we have had to shut down our works on account of our financial situation and unless a revival of trade sets in I do not see any way of helping them.

A-404. Suppose at present you have got 4,000 workers and there is under-employment, which means that you allot work for two or three days a week to all of them, how do you allot work which is not sufficient for all the people for all the days of the week?—The under-employment is not among the Port Trust labourers. The men I have mentioned are working every day all the year round. The under-employment exists among the stevedores' men who are not getting any employment on account of the paucity of shipping.

A-405. Have you any method by which the work could be distributed among the people?—I have not got any method.

A-406. You certainly think it would be desirable to adopt some method by which the work could be distributed in such a way as to abolish under-employment?—It would be an excellent thing if it could be done.

A-407. Do you also think it would be desirable to adopt some method by which the number of workers in the docks would be restricted to those who permanently work?—I should like very much to get the population down, but I do not see how it is possible.

A-408. In western countries they have the same difficulties, and they have some method of registering the workers. Those who are registered are given work, whereas those who are not registered are not generally given work. You would not be against such a system?—No, but it is rather difficult.

A-409. Can you tell us why your workers prefer to go and live in the town to living in your houses?—It is for communal reasons. I have tried to get the men to live at Keamari.

A-410. Perhaps it may be costly; your rent may be too high for them?—It may be in some cases. But in many cases our rent is cheaper. Anyhow they prefer to live in Karachi and do not want to go to Keamari.

A-411. Do you ever find that the proportion of rent to the total earnings of your employees, or any class of your employees, is too high? You are charging Rs. 5 as rent in some cases?—I quite see your point. The difficulty is frequently got over by three or four men sharing a house. We know that that happens. For instance, if we were to pay a man Rs. 5 as rent allowance, he would not live in his house alone; he would immediately take in one or two friends. The result would be the same.

A-412. As regards medical arrangements, the representative of the Seamen's Union stated that a certain class of people get the benefit of treatment by a well qualified medical man, whereas the lower paid workers do not get the benefit of treatment by so well qualified a man. Is that true?—It is not quite correct. Some of the workers are not entitled to medical facilities which others are entitled to get. We have a local dispensary at Keamari managed by the municipality and the ordinary working man, if he is entitled to medical attendance, can go there and get attention free. There are only two officers, one deals with Manora and the other who deals with Karachi.

A-413. If you find that certain persons get the benefit of treatment at the hands of a better qualified man, while certain others who are low-paid get treatment at the hands of a less qualified man, will you change that?—I think I should.

A-414. In reply to Mr. Chaman Lall you said that you would like to have a sickness insurance scheme for the permanent staff only and not for the casual workers. What do you mean by casual workers?—Just the man who comes to-day and goes away to-morrow.

A-415. You have a class of daily rated men?—There is a distinction. We have daily wages men who may come and work for two days, go away, and then come back a week after; but we also have daily wages men in our workshops who are practically permanent while still on daily wages.

A-416. If Government prepares a scheme for sickness insurance, will you pay your quota also?—I do not like it in the case of the casual worker, one who works for a day or two and goes away. We have a very large number of them.

A-417. Have you found out how many of your workers are working in the docks for months together though they are regarded as daily rated? Would you call them casual workers who should not be given the benefits of sickness insurance?—Yes. They are not on my list really.

A-418. I am talking of the people on your list, those people who work in the docks not merely for a day but for weeks together. Do you not think it would be justifiable for an employer to be asked to pay a certain proportion as his share of the sickness insurance premium?—I am not in favour of it as I see it at present.

A-419. Why do you make a difference between a man who is paid daily and a man who is paid monthly?—Because the man I pay monthly is under my observation and I know his habits and character. A casual worker who comes to me for a day or two may get sickness not through any fault of his work, but through his own fault.

A-420. I am not talking of the casual man; I am talking of the man who is paid daily but works for months together?—That is a very different thing. We have in the engineering shops daily wages men who have been with us for 25 years. Those men would get the same benefits as other employees get.

A-421. *Dewan Chaman Lall*: Then you agree with Mr. Joshi?—Except in the case of the casual labourer.

A-422. *Mr. Joshi*: Have the Port Trust any ships registered under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—We have one or two small tugs.

A-423. So that you are interested in questions relating to seamen?—Yes.

A-424. Have you any objection to the representative of labour on your Port Trust being elected by the Port Trust Workers Union?—I should not like to say. It depends who it is; I might object to the man. I do not consider it is necessary at all.

A-425. Suppose you want to send your representative somewhere, certainly that representative will be selected by you. In the same way if you want a workers' representative, that representative must be approved of and accepted by the workers?—But I do not want a workers' representative on the Board.

A-426. You have one?—He is nominated by Government.

A-427. You cannot explain why you are opposed to the workers' representative being elected?—I do not think it is necessary that he should be on the Board. If he is there I cannot object.

A-428. If he is there, you would prefer an elected man?—Not necessarily.

A-429. Diwan Chaman Lall referred to safety regulations ; you said you are not against that?—No, certainly not.

A-430. You would not be opposed to legislation laying down certain measures for the safety of workers who work on gangways and so on, loading or unloading?—Quite so.

A-431. Was your Port Trust consulted by the Government of India on this question?—We were.

A-432. What was your reply?—We suggested that a Government inspector or inspectors should be appointed to carry out the duties which are carried out by the Board of Trade at Home in such matters.

A-433. The question is not who should appoint an inspector ; the first question is whether there should be some law laying down measures for the safety of men working?—Yes.

A-434. The second question would be as to who should inspect to see whether those regulations are carried out or not. Then certainly the Government will appoint an inspector. So my question to you was this : whatever may have happened in the past, supposing your Port Trust is consulted now by Government as to whether such regulations are desirable or not, your Board will most probably reply that as far as you can judge regulations are necessary?—Certainly.

A-435. *The Chairman* : You have promised to send a statement on the question of reduction of working hours?—I understand that was withdrawn.

Mr. Cliff : What I withdrew was the question of your advice and recommendation to the Board ; but I would like the resolution?—I beg your pardon.

A-436. *The Chairman* : We did not think it right to press for internal advice given ; but I want to ask if you can give us with that information two documents which I think may be taken as official documents, namely, the communications on that matter that you received from the two Chambers of Commerce, the European Chamber and the Indian Chamber?—I am not certain about it, but I rather think that the communication of the Chamber of Commerce was marked " Confidential ". The Chamber of Commerce could give it.

A-437. If it is confidential, of course we cannot ask for it?—I think most of their communications are marked " Confidential " ; I am not certain.

A-438. If you find that they can be put at our service, we should like to see them?—I shall talk to the President of the Chamber of Commerce about the matter.

A-439. *Mr. Joshi* : In the memorandum of the labour union it is said that you sometimes pay wages as late as the 15th day of the following month ; is that a correct statement?—I think that is incorrect. You understand that sometimes three or four holidays will intervene and then there may be late payment ; but the whole thing has been tightened up and my information is that our payments are made with the utmost rapidity, from one to 5 days after the end of the month in practically every case. There may be an isolated case where a man for some reason has not got his pay, but not as a rule, and certainly not 15 days.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. JAMSHED N. R. MEHTA, President, Karachi Municipality.

A-440. *The Chairman* : Mr. Mehta, you are the President of the Municipal Council of Karachi?—I am.

The Chairman : May I take this opportunity, in the first place, of thanking you on behalf of myself and my colleagues for your kind courtesy to us during our stay here. May I ask you also to convey to your officials our sense of gratitude to them for the services they have rendered to us. I myself, during my short time here, have formed a very high opinion of the qualities of the staff of your municipality and I am sure they are a great credit to you, you being the President of the Municipality. You have been good enough to submit a detailed memorandum to us, and we have had the advantage of your presence with us during the greater part of our work of inspection yesterday ; so that having had the opportunity of putting many questions to you verbally and receiving such ready answers to them, it will not be necessary for me to put more than two or three questions to-day. May I suggest to my Colleagues, too, that they might not find it necessary to repeat questions which were put yesterday.

The Witness : May I put in certain statements in writing in order to save time ?—There are certain figures which the Commission may find useful.

The Chairman : Some additional figures ?—Yes. I have got an album of photographs of the housing conditions of Karachi. I would draw your special attention to a photograph which will give you an idea of how the people live in wooden cases. Then, sir, I have got a statement of the housing conditions prepared from our records and census figures, showing the different positions of labourers and how they live. Then, sir, I have got a statement of infantile mortality amongst labourers, containing information about latrines and bathing places. Then, I have got a statement showing how many labourers and officers and others work in each department of the municipality. That may be useful to you.

A-441. In your memorandum you say that "Unemployment is considerable in the city of Karachi," and you tell us that it is caused by a slump in trade and by there being no industry in the city. Labour is employed generally by the Port Trust, Municipality and the Railway. The Railway has lately shifted their workshop from Karachi to Sukkur. Thus the unemployment is increased considerably." You heard this morning some questions raised in the evidence of Mr. Harrison. He said he could employ much more labour than he has at his service. Will you give us your views as to the possibility of the transfer of some of the unemployed labour in Karachi to fill the gap which exists at present in Sukkur ?—The labour in Karachi have all got their families with them, and they are practically permanent residents of Karachi, and they know that at Sukkur they would be required only for a temporary period, and naturally they would not like to shift their families. Even then I feel that unemployment is so severe that some of them would go to Sukkur, leaving their families here, particularly those who are not holding any permanent jobs here, in order to earn something there.

A-442. Some would go particularly those who are not held by family ties ?—Yes, but there is so much unemployment that even people with families would go.

A-442a. Having heard that evidence, is it within your power as President of the Municipality to see what steps can be taken to relieve this unemployment ? It seems a pity that there should be unemployment in Karachi, while there is work waiting for the labourers at Sukkur ?—Yes, certainly.

A-443. I understood from Mr. Harrison that the demand will continue until 1934 ?—This is the first time I knew of that.

A-444. In your memorandum, you refer to the housing conditions, that is to say your municipal housing which we saw. You say "There is ample supply of water being made to them, but I do feel that there is more need of provision for bathing facilities which is not adequate at present" ?—Yes.

A-445. It is within your power to remedy that ?—Yes, it is within our power. I am merely making a statement of fact.

A-446. No doubt you will have that express need represented to your Board ?—Yes.

A-447. In your memorandum you make a reference to the usefulness of Provident Funds, and I gather that you have some special experience of your own in that respect. Could you tell us what that is ?—The Provident Fund which all the local bodies, like the Port Trust and the Municipality have opened, generally extend to those who are labourers. The system is that, although they have worked for 25 years—I know even in the municipality some of them have worked for 25 years—they are still on daily wages, and they are called daily wage people. Everywhere my experience is that as soon as you start to do something the question of finance is brought in. It is said that they have been there for years and that they are now too old to be brought under the Provident Fund, and that it would mean a lot of service books, trouble and accounting. My personal opinion is that it only requires a change of heart to overcome all these difficulties.

A-448. By the term "Provident Fund", I take it you mean a fund into which the workers pay their savings, and through which they can obtain credit on certain conditions ?—No. By Provident Fund we mean that the workers pay a specific amount, say 12½ per cent. of their salary, towards the Provident Fund. Then the Municipality or other employer add another 12½ per cent. Then we allow compound interest on the amount and the amount goes on accumulating, and at the time of retirement they get it in a lump sum. If they are in need, for example, during sickness, we allow them to draw out of the fund, provided they pay back within 24 months by deductions from their salary. That is the system of provident fund as it is generally known everywhere in India. The employer makes an equal contribution from his side.

A-449. That is the system working in the Municipality ?—Yes, in the Municipality Port Trust and many places with which I have been associated.

A-450. From what you stated this morning, I gather that your view is to have a system of weekly payment of wages, combined with a co-operative credit society?—Yes.

A-451. That would be a benefit even to the lowest class of worker?—Yes.

A-452. Have you any actual experience of that matter?—I have experience of the co-operative credit movement, but I have no experience of the weekly payment system, because none has been made up to now. I have gathered the opinion, however, and I do feel myself, that by weekly payments there would not be so much indebtedness. Under the prevailing system the men have to borrow money for their grain. Naturally they have to pay interest. A weekly payment system would go a great way towards helping to better their condition.

A-453. I gather also that you are an advocate of shorter hours of labour, discussed this morning?—I am not only an advocate, but a strong advocate of it, and I have got reasons for it.

A-454. In your memorandum you make a suggestion, which I do not profess to understand, with regard to 'direct legislation about the priest classes and *sanyasis* who take every opportunity to rob the innocent persons of their moneys'. Do you wish to press that suggestion?—I am quite serious about it. My opinion is this: we take precautions against epidemics, plague, cholera; and these priests and *sanyasis* are no less than an epidemic in India. Some legislation ought to be undertaken to save the labourers from this trouble. These *sanyasis* and *sadhus* are a real epidemic in India.

A-455. That would be a very novel type of legislation?—It has to be done, if you want to save the labourer. I would respectfully say that if I were a Member of the Royal Commission, I would put it as the first item of work. I am quite serious about it.

A-456. I should be interested to see the draft Bill on that subject?—All the efforts that you would make otherwise would be absolutely useless, at least a good deal of them, without this,—either education or legislation, or both.

A-457. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum you say that there is no need of a public recruitment agency in the city of Karachi. In view of what you have stated regarding unemployment, would you prefer to modify that statement in any way?—Why.

A-458. There is work for them at Sukkur?—I was speaking with reference to Karachi only.

A-459. Is it not possible that a recruitment agency might possibly be able to find work for them elsewhere?—Yes. I would modify my statement from that point of view.

A-460. *The Chairman*: In England there are some cases where railway fares can be paid on certain occasions to transfer labour to the places where work can be found for them?—I would modify my statement. I thought the question referred only to Karachi.

A-461. *Mr. Clow*: As regards the sweepers' houses which we saw yesterday, do they represent, in your opinion, the minimum that should be provided for a working family in order to enable them to live decently?—My personal opinion is that I would condemn these houses also. They consist of one room, in which there is a husband and wife, perhaps three children, a grown-up daughter and a grown-up son. How do you expect them all to live in one room?

A-462. These houses are rent-free?—True, but you asked whether I considered that as the minimum accommodation required. I do not consider that as the minimum.

A-463. Supposing you erected these quarters as a commercial proposition, what rent would you charge?—I will tell you what my opinion is. There are all sorts of mathematical calculations made by Municipality and other employers. My opinion is that we ought to calculate the rent on the efficiency we hope to get by housing them properly and on the sort of wages we give them. If we build proper houses for them we get the return out of them. This method of calculating by allowing for a sinking fund, depreciation, and interest at 6 per cent., etc., is unsatisfactory.

A-464. My point is this. Taking into view the poverty of the working class people, what would roughly be the annual rent if the housing of workers is undertaken on a commercial basis?—My calculation, if a really proper scheme is made, is that we could give them very good houses for Rs. 2-8-0 per month, provided those who are in charge of it agreed not to bring in any fantastical calculations.

A-465. Would that be a commercial proposition?—Yes. My calculation is that a loan of 30 lakhs would be repaid within fifteen years, and the rent could be kept at Rs. 2-8-0 per month. I am prepared to put that statement before the Royal Commission, with plans and everything. I would do that with the greatest pleasure.

Mr. Clow : If you will do that, it will be of help to the Commission.

A-466. *Mr. Birla* : You refer to the question of unemployment, and as a remedy for that you suggest the fostering of industries. Then you complain that the Government of Bombay has done nothing in that direction. Have you anything particularly in mind ?—Yes, if you read the history of Sind in the past, you will find that there were many beautiful cottage industries in Sind. The printing of cloth was one of the best industries of Sind ; potteries was one of our best industries ; lacquer work was another. All these industries are now no longer in existence. I feel myself that the Government of Bombay could do much. They have got an Industries Department. They have got a Director of Industries with practically no staff—one Director of Industries for five different districts. The Department should be expanded, and given proper staff and a cultured engineer or other officers who may be required for the purpose. I am personally of opinion that the Government of Bombay has done nothing for Sind for the last 100 years. Cottage industries could be fostered, and there are many things which could be done. The Industrial Department will not be enough. Experimental factories should be started. Many things could be done.

A-467. You have promised to give us a scheme about housing. Have you a similar scheme for the establishment of industries in this province ?—I have a note on it, and I will give it to the Commission.

A-468. *Mr. Harrison* in his evidence this morning gave us some very interesting figures to the effect that there is a great disparity between the minimum and maximum number of men employed on his work. He said the number fluctuated between 30,000 and 19,000 ?—Probably it is due to the fact that during the rainy season people like to return to their homes.

A-468a. You may have some scheme of your own by which you may be able to provide some work during the idle months of the year. I would be very much interested if you would be good enough to send us a scheme for the fostering of cottage industries, or any other scheme which might be promoted in this part of the country.

A-469. With regard to co-operative banks, do you think that co-operative banks alone, without the help of the money-lenders, will be able to meet the requirements of all your labourers ?—As a matter of fact in our co-operative banks we have got sometimes more surplus capital than invested capital.

A-470. What is the rate of interest which the money-lenders charge ?—I can give you concrete instances. We have got 720 sweepers. We took a list of the whole staff three years back. Their capital debt was Rs. 31,000 while the yearly interest paid was Rs. 53,000. These are facts ; it is no exaggeration. We have taken statistics house by house, the name of the money-lender, the amount owed, the rate of interest and so on. We have all the details.

A-471. Can we have that statement ?—If it is of any use I shall be glad to give it to you. The capital was Rs. 31,000 whereas the interest was Rs. 53,000. The interest is regularly paid and honestly paid in every case. It is generally two annas in the rupee per month.

A-472. You have been very much interested in the working classes. Can you tell us what the total debt of the working classes in Karachi is ?—I can tell you that there is no working man in Karachi who is not in debt.

A-473. Do you think that it is a huge figure ?—It is a huge figure amounting to lakhs of rupees in Karachi alone. Every working man is in debt to the extent of Rs. 50 to Rs. 200.

A-474. Do you mean to say that your co-operative societies will be able to find that money ?—I hope so.

A-475. If the business is so remunerative why do not the big financiers take it up ? Is it on account of the risk involved therein ?—There are sufficiently rich people who do take it up. It is a very remunerative business. These people pay their debts very honourably and honestly. If the father dies, the son pays and if the son dies the third generation pays it up. I have found the instinct of repaying debt to be very strong in the working men here. In fact, if I may say so, they have got more sense of honour than many so-called respectable merchants in the city.

A-476. There is now such a severe depression in trade in Karachi that if this particular business is so remunerative why do not the capitalists invest their money in it ?—They cannot go to the poor sweepers and other labourers. There are certain people who are conscientious enough not to charge a high rate of interest. But there are others who look at it from a purely business point of view, and charge 75, 80, 100 and 150 per cent. interest.

A-477. Can you give us detailed figures ?—I can give you figures for the municipal staff alone.

A-478. For other labourers ?—No, that will be too much for me. But I know it as a fact that every working man in Karachi is in debt. I am not exaggerating it.

A-479. What is the extent of the liquor habit among the working classes in Karachi ?—I think it is not much amongst the working classes. This habit is found more among the clerical than among the labouring classes, except in certain communities. The *Mekranis* and the Mussalman communities and many of the Hindu communities do not drink. But certain Hindu communities do drink.

A-480. Have you got any plan for the reduction of the consumption of liquor ?—Yes. I have got a plan. My view is that we should go to the root of the question. I was one of the members of the Excise Committee appointed by the Bombay Government, and we have given a complete report of the situation and how it could be handled. The Government of Bombay should have the courage to take those steps.

A-481. You will agree that the question does not entirely rest with the local government ?—Yes, it rests with the Central Government also. Our recommendations to the Central Government are very well summarized in four or five pages and the Labour Commission can get a copy of it. We have laid down a complete programme therein.

A-482. *Mr. Joshi*: Does the Karachi Municipality control any factory ?—No. In fact we have got no powers to control any factory except from the health point of view.

A-483. You have no workshop of any kind ?—We have got a small workshop.

A-484. How many men are there ?—Some twenty or twenty-five.

A-485. If there are 20 it must come under the Indian Factories Act ?—I meant to say that under the Municipal Act we have no powers to control factories.

A-486. As employers of labour you are quite willing that the hours of work in your factories should be reduced ?—Yes.

A-487. Your Municipality would not object to it ?—Certainly not. I do not think that our labourers are worked at night or for 11 hours and over.

A-488. You certainly do not want long hours of work in your factories, and your Municipality will certainly like them to be reduced by legislation ?—I am giving my personal opinion and I think the Municipality will carry it out. I am told by our Health Officer that we have only 54 hours of work per week for our labourers.

A-489. As employers of labour your Municipality will also approve of a reasonable scheme of sickness insurance ?—Certainly.

A-490. What about unemployment insurance ?—I am doubtful. But if there is any scheme by which we can do something for the welfare of the labourers we will not fail to adopt it.

A-491. Do your employees get the benefit of any provident fund scheme ?—We have an A list and a B list, but a large majority do not come under that provident fund scheme. As I have said, it requires a change of mentality and a change of heart.

A-492. You will try as President to change that mentality ?—You may take it from me.

A-493. In your Memorandum you have expressed the opinion that generally labour is permanent. So you do not agree with the view which some people hold that labour in India is generally migratory ?—As far as Karachi is concerned it is certainly not so.

A-494. You said in your Memorandum that the application of the Unemployment Convention would be ridiculous. You mean to say that the application of International conventions regarding unemployment to India would be ridiculous in the absence of education ?—Yes. Education is first necessary.

A-495. Perhaps you mean that people not being educated there will be some people to exploit them ?—Certainly.

A-496. Do you know that one of the Conventions regarding Unemployment is that Governments should supply statistics to the International Labour Office ? Are you against it ?—I am not against it wholesale.

A-497. You are not against the application of all the Conventions as a whole, because there are certain Conventions which ask Governments, that they should supply the necessary figures to the International Labour Office and do such other easy things ?—No.

A-498. Has your Municipality power to build houses for working classes generally, and not your employees alone?—Yes, we have got the power.

A-499. Have you exercised it at any time?—We have not exercised it. We have got some committees working on it now. We first want to house our employees who are about 2,000 and then we want to extend it. As a matter of fact there are two or three committees working at plans for the buildings and so on.

A-500. Do you not think yourself that the housing of the working classes by a public body like the municipality is much better and will be preferred by the workers themselves than housing by their own employers?—My opinion is that in the absence of the employers who are not generally willing to do it, the public body ought to do it for the sake of the health of the city. If the employers would do it, I would not object.

A-501. I suggest to you that the working classes would prefer housing by the municipality to housing by their own employers; because at certain periods they will be put to inconvenience if they are housed by their own employers? What have you to say on that?—I prefer them to be housed by the municipality if the municipality can do it.

A-502. Do you agree with me that the housing of the workers in Karachi is not desirable, because they cannot afford to live in better houses as their wages are not quite sufficient?—They have not got sufficient work to earn their wages, and their wages are not sufficient. It is both.

A-503. If a man earns Rs. 15 a month he cannot pay Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 for rent?—No, he cannot.

A-504. It is not that they have got the money and are not willing to go into better houses?—No, it is not.

A-505. You have got a Health Department. I should like to know your experience in certain matters. You have already stated that your municipal dispensaries are very well patronized by all the working classes. You have not found that they have any prejudice against them?—No.

A-506. Do you find it difficult to get doctors for your municipal work?—No.

A-507. Suppose the Government of India undertake a scheme for sickness insurance, do you think there will be a dearth of doctors to conduct that scheme?—The doctors will thank you for it!

A-508. Will there be sufficient doctors?—Yes.

A-509. You have dealt with the question of indebtedness among your working men. Do you not think it would be more helpful if we had a stricter legislation against usury especially for regulating the interest which these Pathans and others charge?—They get some protection in the Small Causes Court which enables them to pay in small instalments. But the difficulty is about the agency to help them. You may have legislation, but unless you have got an agency to help them it is no use. The terror of the Pathans is so great.

A-510. At the same time would you also agree that a stricter legislation is necessary which will prevent the charging of high rates of interest?—I do not think it is necessary. There are many other ways to get round it.

A-511. *Mis Power*: Dealing with the question of maternity benefit, I see you say that the Municipality affords facilities for women for 20 days' absence at least during maternity. That is, ten days before child-birth and ten days afterwards?—It may not be exactly that. It may be five days before and fifteen afterwards.

A-512. Does that cover the women sweepers as well?—Everyone.

A-513. Does the Municipality take steps to enquire whether the women sweepers have equal facilities in the hospitals with the women of higher caste?—As far as our maternity homes are concerned, they would have equal facilities.

A-514. Are there enough facilities in your hospitals to cover the great number of women employed?—We have three maternity homes, but more are required. We have only just begun.

A-515. Do you take any steps to ascertain whether the women employed are treated by trained midwives—those who are treated in their own homes?—Some prefer their own midwives. We have health associations which have midwives in all quarters, who regularly attend during the time of birth; but there are some women who still cling to their old methods and have their own particular midwives, who are not registered yet. The Government have lately asked us whether we would prefer to have registration of midwives, and we have agreed to that proposal; but as long as they are not registered we cannot take any action.

A-516. Could you give me any information on the subject of the women coolies employed on building. I presume they are all employed by sub-contractors?—Yes, they are all employed by contractors or sub-contractors.

A-517. Are some of them on Municipal work that is being contracted out?—Yes, in every building you will find them.

A-518. Are the women who are engaged in carrying stones carrying a weight equal to that carried by the men coolies?—No. They cannot carry the same weight.

A-519. *Mrs. Karaka* : I understand that a sweeper family makes about 50 to 60 rupees a month: the husband gets about 20; the wife gets 20, and if there are two children they get 20 rupees between them.—Children are not employed by us. They used to work, but we stopped it. They work in the private houses, but we do not allow them in Municipal employ.

A-520. Would it not be better to have separate maternity homes for them?—It might be. My personal opinion is that the only way to uplift them is to make them go to other maternity homes. Once you keep them separate, the separation will continually last.

A-521. Owing to caste distinctions they are not taking advantage of it as much as they ought to?—My personal opinion is that they should be made to go to other maternity homes if you want to lift them up. Otherwise they will always remain suppressed.

A-522. At present it means that the infantile mortality is more?—That is true.

A-523. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Can you give us a brief history of the trade union movement in Karachi, and a statement as to the existing trade unions, whether registered or unregistered?—We have three or four unions, and they are working very well, but generally they are managed by other than their own classes; and my opinion is that we should so foster them that they should be managed by their own classes. The Municipality has passed a resolution that they will only recognize those unions which are officered by their own men and not by the members of the Municipality.

A-524. But under the Trade Union Act that is allowed?—We do not object to it, but we do think that their own men should be trained up to manage their own affairs.

A-525. Was there any scheme propounded for erecting houses for the working classes by the Municipality?—In the last five years there have been several schemes, but so far we have not been able to carry them out, for one reason or another.

A-526. Was there a scheme to levy a terminal tax?—Yes, but the Government turned it down. In Karachi we have double the area than Bombay. We are 72 miles in area and we have one-fifth of the population of Bombay. To manage a city double the size of Bombay with one-fifth the population is difficult, so we suggested a small transit tax. All our labouring classes depend upon the transit trade. Therefore we wanted to impose a small terminal tax in order to build houses, but the Government turned down that scheme because the Chambers of Commerce and the mercantile bodies strongly objected to it. It was about one pie per gallon of kerosene oil and one pice per cwt. of sugar.

A-527. Was there a suggestion to make up the deficit of the Port Trust by means of some sort of terminal tax?—Yes. There was not an actual deficit, but in anticipation of a deficit the Port Trust asked the Government that the wharfage on cotton should be raised 25 per cent., and it was immediately allowed.

A-528. There was no question of turning that down?—No.

A-529. Did the Municipality take over certain schools from the Sweepers' Union?—We did.

A-530. Has the Government contributed anything towards those schools?—No, on the contrary we did not get a grant from the Government towards them. They disallowed it because we took them over without first asking their consent. They were going to be closed and I saw that the children would be without schools. There were seven schools, and I asked the School Board to take them over immediately.

A-531. Purely on that ground?—Yes.

A-532. Is it a fact that the Municipality provides soap, towels, brushes and so on?—Yes, in all the poorer schools we allow them free of charge.

A-533. Did that represent a portion of the grant for which you applied to the Government?—The Government have a very novel system of giving grants. They do not even pay grants for peons or sweepers.

A-534. They would not sanction this particular grant at all?—No.

A-535. I understand that under the Municipal Act itself they cannot prevent you from giving books and slates free to the school children?—They cannot, but they do not give their half share.

A-536. What is the system of factory inspection in Karachi?—They have Government Factory Inspectors.

A-537. How many times in the course of the year does he visit Karachi?—Possibly twice a year. I am not certain.

A-538. There is no organization on the spot?—There used to be a Boiler Inspector, but now there is none.

A-539. Do you agree with the Shippers' and Buyers' memorandum that there is no considerable unemployment in Karachi?—No. I am the Chairman of that body, but I do not agree with that.

A-540. With regard to your statement about the Workmen's Compensation Act, you say something about gaining experience; but if experience showed that the provisions of that Act should be extended, you would not be averse to that?—No.

A-541. Nor would you be averse to an amendment of that Act in order to widen its scope?—Certainly not.

A-542. I take it that it is your definite opinion that housing has a great deal to do with the increased mortality during certain months of the year?—I am convinced of it.

A-543. And that the mortality figures would improve if housing conditions were better?—Yes.

A-544. How many people are living in Keamari and Lyari?—In Keamari there are about 800 families and in Lyari 9,000 families.

A-545. Would I be correct in stating that something like 50,000 people live in those two quarters?—Yes.

A-546. Would that be about one-fifth of the population?—Yes.

A-547. Would I be correct in saying that the conditions of housing in those two places leave everything to be desired?—There is no housing at all.

A-548. So that one in every five in Karachi live under those conditions.—In many houses there are 20 people living; in others 14. The census records show that.

A-549. Have you any welfare workers employed by the Municipality?—We are all supposed to be unpaid welfare workers.

A-550. Would it not be a better plan to have welfare workers?—A very good plan.

A-551. You say that there is no facility for industrial or vocational training of any kind. Would you recommend that there should be an attempt made to provide that sort of training?—It is very necessary. We must raise them up and make them efficient workers.

A-552. With regard to hours of work, you say you are in favour of a 9 hour working day. Does that leave very much leisure to the working classes?—It takes them about 1½ hours to come and go.

A-553. That means 11½ hours really consumed in the task they have to perform. Would you be averse to a general measure for an 8 hour day?—No, I would not.

A-554. Can you throw any light on the reason why shorter hours were turned down by the Port Trust?—It was because the majority opinion was that it would make the working of the Port dearer. But my opinion, and the opinion of some others, is quite different. First of all, supposing they were to employ two shifts; everyone in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay would have to do the same, and the result would be that it would not make our port dearer than other ports, as it would apply to all ports. That is the first reason. There is no reason to fear competition or diversion of trade; it is a fallacy to suppose, as some people do, that trade would be diverted to Madras, Calcutta or Bombay. My second point is that even if it is so we would take the risk of making the port dearer. My third point is: why should the burden of making the port dearer be put upon the shoulders of the labourers alone; there are the clerks and officers; they all work 6 or 7 hours. I see no reason for putting the burden of making the port dearer solely upon the shoulders of the labourers; there would be many other factors. My fourth point is this: I have been studying what is called labour and fatigue literature, and I think that if the labourers worked only 8 or 9 hours a day and 6 hours at night, they would be more efficient and the municipality or any other employer would be able to get more work out of them. That is really a matter of scientific investigation. Of course so far it is merely theory for I have made no practical experiments in this respect but I am convinced from a study of the literature on this subject that that is so.

A-555. Do you think it would be a good thing to insert a fair wages clause in all labour contracts?—I should be in favour of legislation with that object, but I should like to know how it is to be done.

A-556. Are you in favour of the fixation of a minimum living wage for the working classes of Karachi?—I am in favour of that for all places.

A-557. Do you agree that the working classes should be given the franchise on the adult basis to enable them to exercise their influence on legislation?—Our Municipality has passed the adult franchise already, but the Government has not accepted it.

A-558. *Mr. Cliff*: Will you tell me how long you have served on the Karachi Municipality?—I have been for 15 years a member and for 8 years its President.

A-559. And have you been connected with social work for many years?—For many years. For the last 20 years I think.

A-560. You have expressed the opinion that the fundamental thing to be aimed at is education?—Yes; without that nothing can be done.

A-561. I gather from your answers to questions that you believe that education will afford the greatest measure of protection against oppression?—Yes.

A-562. Is that your view?—Yes.

A-563. What is the rate of taxation in the Municipality?—14 per cent. on the rental value of the house.

A-564. Is there any minimum?—We do not charge anything on houses of an annual rental value of less than Rs. 50.

A-565. It is 14 per cent. on the rental value of houses of an annual rental value of Rs. 50?—Yes.

A-566. You have answered a question as to how you deal with trade unions on the municipality; would you make clear what was the exact resolution. Is it a resolution that you will not recognize or deal with a trade union which is represented by outsiders, or is it a resolution that municipal councillors shall not represent trade unions?—That municipal councillors shall not represent trade unions.

A-567. So that in present cases you are prepared to deal with trade union officers who are not employed by the municipalities?—The municipality is, but personally I should prefer that they should be officered by their own men.

A-568. You want the work-people to be educated and trained so as to be able to represent themselves and become officers of the union?—Yes; otherwise I personally feel that they would again always be subjected to pressure of those outsiders in office; I do not mean in every case, but in many cases.

A-569. You further give an expression of opinion in your memorandum with regard to International Conventions. Am I to take it that you are in favour of the adoption of International Conventions that can be explained to and understood by the people?—Yes.

A-570. Will you tell me, in view of your experience in the Karachi Municipality, what is the attitude and general policy of the municipality to the union of sweepers; how do you deal with them?—We have a very favourable attitude towards them.

A-571. Have you any machinery which provides for regular consideration of matters arising out of employment?—All letters, grievances or anything of that kind that are reported to us are considered by the Health Committee, by the Health Officer, by the President and the Management Committee; such matters are considered very favourably; we try to go into every case that is represented to us.

A-572. Is the Health Committee in this case [the Committee which governs the employment of the sweepers]?—They control all sanitation, dispensaries and maternity homes.

A-573. So that if the sweepers desire representations to be made, they are made to that Committee?—Yes.

A-574. Can they appear before that Committee to make personal representations?—They go to the Health Officer, but they approach individual members as well.

A-575. Apart from that form of representation, there has not yet been any standing machinery?—No, there has not yet been any case in which such machinery has been found necessary.

A-576. *Mr. Ahmed*: In your memorandum you say: "The unemployment is considerable in the City of Karachi". Do you think the development of the salt industry would greatly relieve this unemployment?—Yes, if it were properly fostered, but I am

sorry to say it is not. If the Government properly fostered that industry by making proper transport arrangements, such as roads and channels, that industry might absorb thousands of labourers.

A-577. So that you are in favour of facilities by the Government of India to help the salt industry?—Absolutely; all we want is an arrangement to be made by the Government of India to carry the salt.

A-578. You see I have not got the local experience, but I hear a great deal in the Assembly. The salt industry in India requires a lot of facilities from the Government. The representatives of Madras in the Legislative Assembly are constantly making the point. What steps do you suggest should be taken on your behalf by the Government of India; do you ask for bounties or other facilities for developing the salt industry here? I ask you this as an experienced President of the Municipality?—I am in touch with the salt movement, and I say that the Government of India with very little expense could foster this industry so that thousands of workers could be given satisfactory employment.

A-579. What sort of facilities would you ask for?—Only transport facilities, water channels and roads to carry the salt to be shipped to Calcutta; that is all we want at present.

A-580. In your memorandum under the head "Education" you say: "There is no industrial area in Karachi and the children are taught in all schools. Labouring class is free to attend any school and many are taking advantage of the educational facilities". But do you really think that the people are sufficiently educated to understand the use of the franchise for the election of Members of the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council at Bombay?—As far as my experience of Karachi City is concerned, they understand very well.

A-580a. Do you suggest that the election of representatives of labour instead of nomination by Government would be helpful?

The Chairman: I really do not think this witness can answer that; it can only be an individual opinion.

A-581. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I see that the Industrial Census Report says that Karachi is essentially not an industrial city and I find you say the same thing; you say that there is no industrial area in Karachi and therefore relatively few people earn their living in industrial concerns in Karachi?—Yes, and they are chiefly for transit trade.

A-582. They are chiefly engaged in trade and commerce?—Yes.

A-583. As there is no industry here worth speaking of, why is it that overcrowding in Karachi is worse than it is in Bombay or Calcutta which are great industrial towns?—I will tell you why. On one side of Karachi you have Sind and on the other Marwar, the Makran coast and the Baluchistan coast. There is no rain in those places and there has been famine for many years. The result is that people come from Sind, Cutch, Kathiwar and the Makran coast and they like to live in Karachi because they can at least find something here while they cannot find anything in their own places.

A-584. You have made Karachi very attractive for them to come and stay here though there is no industry or work here?—They can do nothing in their own places; I mean the agricultural industry is absolutely down. On all sides of Karachi you will see that vast areas are mere deserts. The fact is that because they can get at least something in Karachi they come here.

A-585. I see also from these statistics that there are over 10,000 huts in Karachi of which 6,000 are in the area under the direct control of the Municipality?—Now there are 9,000.

A-586. That makes the matter still worse. The increase in the number of huts is not due to the existence of industry as we understand it?—No.

A-587. Traders and others come from outside and live in Karachi because it is such an attractive place?—People come because in the surroundings there is nothing for them to eat.

A-588. I see that you suggest that the hours of labour ought to be reduced and in your note you say that it should be reduced to 9 hours in the day and 6 hours in the night. That will be 15 hours out of 24. At the present moment they work for 21 or 22 hours by shifts?—Yes.

A-589. Do you not think that by reducing the existing working hours of the port from 21 or 22 hours to 15 hours you will be adding to the cost of the trade and commerce on which Karachi is existing at the present moment?—No, I do not mean that. I mean two shifts at night.

A-590. But my point is if you reduce the working time from 21 or 22 hours to 15 hours.....—I am not suggesting that. I am suggesting that instead of one shift working at night there should be two shifts.

A-591. You do not want to cut down the working time of the port, you only want to cut down the working hours of the workers?—Yes.

A-592. *Mr. Joshi*: You have stated your attitude towards the union, namely, that you would like the union to have its own officers from among its members, and you do not want any Municipal Councillor to be an officer of the union?—Or any outsider.

A-593. Do you not think that some difficulty is created by this attitude? In the first place, I think you will agree with me that you are restricting the right of the voters in elections. You tell them that they ought not to elect their officers as municipal councillors. The statute does not put down any restriction, but you by your attitude restrict the right of certain voters in the municipality?—Human nature is everywhere the same. If you appoint outsiders, they will know how to suppress the workers. My opinion is that they can make very good officers in a very short time from among themselves.

A-594. You do not see the difficulty. I hope you know this, that municipal servants are not allowed by your Municipal Act to become members of the municipality, and if they become officers they cannot be elected because they will be municipal servants. You will never allow any officer of the municipal union whether he is an employee or outsider to become a member of the municipality, so that you restrict their right of voting?—They can vote for other representatives.

A-595. But they may have confidence in a representative who is a member of the municipality, and in that case you want to prevent them electing a man in whom they have confidence?—I want to free them from any kind of subjugation.

A-596. I will give you another difficulty. In Great Britain, for instance, the working classes in order that their own working class men should become Members of Parliament used to pay their Members. If your employees want a really working class man to be a member of your municipality they may think of paying him because usually a working class man has no leisure; he must earn his livelihood. If they want him to be a member of the municipality he must be paid and if the union pays the member then he will be usually their officer?—If they elect one out of their own number, I will have no objection. What I do not want is an outsider, not in the trade, to become an officer.

A-597. But there is a legal restriction preventing such a man from becoming a member of the municipality?—I am willing to have that changed, if that is so. I can now give the figure which I said a while ago I would be supplying. There are 93,000 permanent labourers, and 82,000 daily wage earners of whom practically 70,000 are without work every day.

A-598. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In your memorandum you say "The only way I can suggest is to foster industries." I take it that by this you mean that industries should be established which would be reasonably remunerative to the capitalist and would give a fair living wage to labour?—Yes.

A-599. You say "The Government of Bombay has done nothing to help the people of Sind, to carry out industrial schemes, etc." Will you please tell us what you really mean?—They have not done anything, that is all.

A-600. The reason I am asking this question is to direct your attention to the fact that India has both a Central Government and the Provincial Governments. I want to know what a Provincial Government, within the powers vested in it, can do to foster industries?—I quite see your point of view, but let the Provincial Government fight out that point with the Central Government. We are only concerned with the Provincial Government to which we look for help.

A-601. You say you are in favour of legislation to enforce a minimum wage. I take it that your view is that a minimum wage should be fixed for Karachi; or is it your view that the Government of India should legislate and fix a minimum wage for the whole of India?—I am giving evidence so far as Karachi is concerned, but I would wish it for the whole of India.

A-602. The difficulty is that conditions are not the same all over India. In support of this view we have evidence in Karachi itself. One memorandum says that certain classes of labour are employed at from 6 annas to something like Rs. 1-8-0 per day. I want you to tell us whether it would be practicable to carry out the principle of a minimum wage throughout India?—It need not be one wage throughout India. At least we should know what is the minimum wage a man requires to live.

A-603. In different parts of India it varies?—But the minimum could be known.

A-604. The minimum wage in certain villages may be 8 annas which will be sufficient for a man to live upon, while in other villages he may require Rs. 1-8-0.—In the villages there might not be industries at all.

A-605. Do you think that there should be a fixed minimum wage for industries throughout India? Could it be uniform?—It may not be uniform.

A-606. You say you find that money is spent on liquor and ceremonies?—What is needed is propaganda and education.

A-607. You think that is practical?—It is like an epidemic which must be stopped.

A-608. *Colonel Russell*: In the first place, my question refers to welfare activities. You say in your Memorandum: "There is none. Some attempt was made, but somehow it was dropped." Can you tell us why the matter was dropped?—There are not sufficient workers, no interest is shown and no encouragement is given.

A-609. Is it not a matter for the Municipality and social workers?—Yes, I quite agree with you. I have merely made a statement of fact.

A-610. It was not being paid for by the Municipality?—No.

A-611. You say you have no doubt that dietary is one of the things which is largely responsible for the inefficiency of the labourer?—No doubt it is.

A-612. What exactly do you mean by that?—What they eat in the small hotels is wretched stuff.

A-613. Do you mean that it is poor food or insufficient food?—Both insufficient and very poor.

A-614. *The Chairman*: In reply to some questions you put in figures, which I must ask you to take back and have checked and put in a better form. Either the question was misunderstood or the answer was incorrect. Really they conflict with the figures that you have already handed in. It is not possible that there should be 175,000 labourers in Karachi, of whom 93,000 are permanent labourers and 82,000 on daily wages, and then, as you say, 80,000 who have no work for 365 days' in the year. It surely cannot be correct, that 80,000 men have not a single days work throughout the year?—No, that cannot be correct. "There are 93,000 permanent labourers, and 82,000 daily wage earners of whom practically 70,000 are without work everyday." What is meant by this is that a large proportion of the daily wage earners did not get employment all the year round; not that 70,000 persons or labourers are without work for 365 days in a year.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Dr. TARACHAND J. LALWANI, Chairman, Indian Seamen's Union
and Mr. MULCHAND M. KIRPALANI representing that Union,
Port Labour Union and Karachi Port Trust Labour Union.**

A-615. *The Chairman*: Dr. Tara Chand, are you yourself a seaman?—I am not a seaman.

A-616. Is your colleague a seaman?—He is not a seaman either.

A-617. What is your profession?—I am a medical practitioner, and my colleague is a pleader.

A-618. Can you give us the date of the formation of the Karachi Seamen's Union?—It was formed in the month of July 1927.

A-619. Is this Union affiliated to any other Union?—No, it is an entirely independent Union. It is not affiliated to any other seamen's association. It came into being in July 1927, that is two years and three months ago.

A-620. Can you give us the membership of the Union?—500.

A-621. Can you supply us with a balance sheet of your Union?—I can.

A-622. I should like to have that. What period would that cover?—It would cover the entire period of two years.

A-623. I suppose with the balance sheet there will be a report?—Yes, I will give you the report.

A-623a. I should like to have that. Then with regard to the memorandum which you have submitted to us, I wish you had been able to let us have it a little earlier?—My written memorandum was the first to be sent. Mr. Mulchand, my colleague, is the author of the memorandum which I have submitted.

A-624. You say that the Indian Merchant Shipping Act lays down rules for the allotment system, but it is a dead law, and instructions should be issued to Masters and Owners of Steamers that it should be put into practical operation forthwith. Do you mean that the law is not carried out with regard to Karachi, or throughout India?—It is applicable throughout India.

A-625. How long has this law been in operation?—I think since 1923.

A-626. An Act passed six years ago is not in operation?—No, the provisions are not carried out.

A-627. Whose duty is it to see that the Law is carried out?—The Shipping Master.

A-628. I understand now that it is an optional law, and what you ask here really is that it should be made mandatory?—Yes.

A-629. And I presume your reason is that the sailors may be able to maintain their families during the time they are away at sea?—Yes.

A-630. Mr. Ahmed: Did you send a representative to the Trade Union Congress?—No, we have not sent any representative to the Trade Union Congress yet; we were invited by the Government of India to send a representative.

A-631. What was the previous practice and what is the existing practice with regard to recruitment?—About two years ago one *ghat serang* was appointed by the Customs Office, who used to select a number of men and present them at the shipping office, and the Captain used to select whichever he wanted. Since the Union was created it has made representations to the Shipping Master and the Collector of Customs, asking that the representative of our Union should be stationed there to present any number of men who may be required to go to sea. After some correspondence our man was allowed to present himself there. Since then our man has stood at the shipping office and whenever a crew is needed the men are presented to the Shipping Office. The Captain of the steamer comes and makes a selection from those who are presented to him.

A-632. Do you remember in this connection the Clow Committee Report? What was it about?—In about 1922 the Clow Committee's report made some recommendations as to how the recruitment should take place. There were two alternative recommendations. The first recommendation was that there should be an Advisory Board, representative of the employers, the unions, and the men employed, who should make the selections. The other recommendation was that the Shipping Master should select. I find that the first recommendation is certainly the better one; that is to say, that the employer and the union should sit together, form an Advisory Board and make selections.

A-633. What was the second alternative?—The second alternative was that the Shipping Master should recruit the men himself without the help of any one. Then he in his turn employs *ghat serangs*; these *ghat serangs* collect men, and naturally they make a lot of money over it.

A-634. Will you give your reasons?—The reasons are these. If you are going to entrust the work to the *ghat serangs*, it is a well known fact that they will take a lot of money. There is no doubt about it. That is the greatest drawback in the second alternative.

A-635. Have you any idea how much the *ghat serangs* charge the men?—They charge from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for every man employed.

A-636. And besides that do they get anything from the employers?—They get a fixed amount. The other system is that the Union and the representatives of the employers and employees sit together in consultation with the Government representative. That is the most desirable and most workable system; it does away with a lot of illegal gratification.

A-637. Have you heard anything about the system in existence in Calcutta?—In Calcutta the system is that the *ghat serangs* collect a number of men and take them to the Shipping Office.

A-638. The *ghat serang* system is becoming a standing nuisance?—Yes.

A-639. Did you take any steps when the Clow Committee's Report was submitted?—Our Union was not in existence then.

A-640. The Government have not taken any effective steps. Then in your written memorandum I find certain passages as to which there is possibly a mistake. You say "If there were a separate shipping office a complete register of all the seamen could be maintained and the *serangs* could be entrusted with the work of selecting the necessary quota of seamen." Do you think that statement should be corrected?—It should be. We do not want that.

A-641. What improvements do you suggest in regard to the housing problem? We have heard a great deal with regard to the housing problem?—Most of the seamen at Karachi and Keamari live in houses belonging to the Karachi Port Trust, in the village that you saw yesterday morning. Other seamen live in huts belonging to the Municipality, and they pay Rs. 1 per annum as ground rent to the municipality. Out of a population of about 40,000 that live there, at least 10,000 are seamen. They have their own huts built there.

A-642. We were asking Mr. Downie this morning certain questions about rest houses for Indian seamen. May I ask you whether the Indian seamen have got any club, institutions or playgrounds?—They have no club, institution or playground. There is only one seamen's rest house that is open to Indians, but for ten years not a single Indian has taken advantage of it.

A-643. There is a seamen's rest house, but no Indians go there. What is the reason?—The reason is quite obvious. In the first place, the amount charged is enormous. They charge about Rs. 2-8-0 per day, with the result that the ordinary seamen getting Rs. 22 per mensem can hardly take advantage of it.

A-644. Are you aware that the International Convention recommended that there should be a club, an Indian institution for seamen and their children, and rest houses?—I have read about it. They are very necessary in Karachi.

A-645. Government has not taken any action?—No, absolutely none.

A-646. Do you know that Dr. Pillai has been deputed to this country and that he has been gathering information and sending it to Geneva?—He has not so far come to Karachi.

A-647. What does an Indian seaman get per month for his rations?—Rs. 19-11-0, while a European seaman's cost of living is £3 per month.

A-648. *Divan Chaman Lall*: Is that what he gets or what he spends?—That is what he gets, under the articles of agreement.

A-649. *Mr. Ahmed*: What do European seamen get?—(*Mr. Mulchand*): It is nearly five times that of an Indian seaman. An Indian seaman gets Rs. 22 a month, fireman Rs. 27, coal trimmer Rs. 21, grasser Rs. 32, *serang* Rs. 65 though he only gets Rs. 50 sometimes.

A-650. Is warm clothing supplied?—No, it is not supplied. India being a hot country they particularly need it when they go abroad.

A-651. In the Mediterranean they will need warm clothing?—They need it badly.

A-652. What have you to say about the accommodation on the steamer?—(*Dr. Tarachand*): It is very bad. About 20 to 30 seamen are put into one room in which I personally could not sit for more than two minutes. They are huddled together like sheep.

A-653. Was that on the open deck?—No, in an enclosure. What we recommended was that not more than four or five of them should be put together in a cabin.

A-654. What about their health?—I have said that the health of the seamen is good and that they are able to carry on their work very well.

A-655. *Divan Chaman Lall*: Is it a fact that in 1926 full crews were recruited from Karachi?—Yes, in 1926 and during the War.

A-656. Why was the practice abandoned?—The practice has been abandoned without any reason.

A-657. Does that cause any hardship?—Very great hardship.

A-658. What sort of hardship?—The hardship is this, that during the last two years only 310 men per annum have been recruited from the city of Karachi. Now whenever any steamer comes to the city of Karachi, the crew instead of being taken from the city of Karachi is wired for from Calcutta or Bombay. For some years these people have been fighting and they could not move anybody. But since the Union came into existence we made a representation to the Shipping Masters that they should not take men from Calcutta or Bombay, but the shipping companies said that they could not do anything in the matter. About three months ago a full crew was sent for from Calcutta.

The seamen of Karachi were so much annoyed that most of them went to the city to beat them so that they might run away and not return to our port to get employment. A similar practice existed in the city of Bombay some years ago; crews were being invited from Calcutta while the people in Bombay were unemployed. Whenever people from Calcutta came to Bombay they were hammered; so much so, that the authorities took note of it and declared Bombay a shipping port. The people of Karachi have that precedent in view and naturally, being unemployed for a very long time, they feel very irritated and might lose their balance at any moment. It is but natural in the case of absolutely unemployed men.

A-659. What is your opinion with regard to legislation on the basis of the International Convention's recommendations with regard to seamen? Have you studied that?—These recommendations must certainly be carried out in India. I have studied that. Those recommendations particularly with regard to hours should be carried out. European seamen on board the steamers have to work only eight hours, whereas our seamen have to work for nine hours during day time and do an extra duty of two hours in the night watch. Thus they work for 11 hours. They are not paid for over-time, whereas their European colleagues are paid.

The Chairman: That is set out in the Convention.

A-660. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* What about the question of unemployment insurance? Do you want it?—We want it badly. That is very important.

A-661. Is there a great deal of bribery rampant in the port of Karachi with regard to employment?—At present there is very little, because our own men stand there.

A-662. I notice one of your recommendations is that there should be a separate shipping office. Why is that desirable?—We want a shipping office in the port of Karachi. At present there is none. (*Mr. Mulchand*): If there were a full time shipping master he could advertise in the English papers that there are so many unemployed seamen in Karachi. Without that, the people concerned do not know that there are so many men waiting here for employment.

A-663. The Indian Seamen's Union of Bombay make a complaint that in regard to compensation to be paid to workmen working in ships registered in Great Britain there is a great deal of delay. Is that the case here in Karachi also?—(*Dr. Tarachand*): Yes.

A-664. Would you like to have that remedied by means of legislation?—Yes, by legislation.

A-665. You answered a question with regard to the accommodation on board steamers. What sort of accommodation would you like to have?—The maximum number in each cabin should not be more than four.

A-666. How much space would you like to have?—Just as much space as there is in a second class cabin of four berths.

A-667. Of whom is the managing staff of the Port Trust composed? Are there any Indians?—With the exception of the store keeper, they are all Europeans.

A-668. Do you want better representation on the Port Trust?—Certainly we do require better representation. That is our first grievance. The constitution of the Port Trust is very badly devised. There are no representatives of labourers. There are four representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, two from the Indian Merchants' Association, and two from the Buyers' and Shippers' Association. All the work is done for the Port Trust by the dock labourers; they are the people who do all the work. As a matter of fact we should have four representatives on the Port Trust Board like the merchants.

A-669. What would be the advantage? Would you be able to improve your conditions if you had better representation?—Absolutely. In the first place, the dock labourers who are loading and unloading ships, slinging and unslinging, are at present working under the contractors. The Port Trust gives the work to the contractors, the contractors pay something to these men and they carry on. They have not got steady work and regular incomes; they get work for two or three days and then they are turned away. Even if they work for fifteen or twenty years and then die, their families do not get anything. They do not get rent or free quarters. There is no unemployment or sickness insurance. If they fall sick, they are not looked after. Yesterday, when you visited the place you saw a sick man; he could not get any treatment unless some philanthropic person gave him medical assistance.

A-670. What have you to say about the hours of work at night?—They are absolutely intolerable and unfit for human beings. Labour at night time is a great

hardship for people who have to keep awake and work for eleven hours at a stretch. They hardly get one meal a day and with one meal a day it is inhuman to make a man work for eleven hours.

A-671. Just tell me something about the question of rents at Keamari and non-payment of rent?—The village you saw yesterday morning was built in 1900, not for the purpose of the Port Trust employees, but for the dock labourers there. Before this they were living in huts like those you saw in the Lyari quarter. But on account of plague all the village was burnt down and the Port Trust started this village where it at present stands. At that time they were charging Rs. 1-12-0 per month as rent. In five or six years they raised the rent to Rs. 5 and Rs. 6, but on account of agitation they brought it down to Rs. 5. For the shops they were charging Rs. 4.

A-672. I am not concerned with shops. Suppose a worker falls into arrears with his rent, what is done?—(*Mr. Mulchand*): According to them there is a criminal law by which they can sue the man in the criminal Court. Under the Port Trust Act, they can go to the Honorary Magistrate's court at Keamari. If they do not pay, a distress warrant will be issued, the property collected and sold. There was the case of one Hakim Sahib. Property belonging to him worth Rs. 1,000 was sold by the Honorary Magistrate for Rs. 29 and the shock to the man was so great that he died soon after.

A-673. Was that a civil or criminal proceeding? Section 84 of the Port Trust Act says: "All fees and sums due on account of property for the time being vested in the Board, all the arrears of rents, charges and rates due imposed under this Act may be recovered by summary proceedings before a magistrate." The law cannot apply to rents due to the Port Trust but not under the Act?—It refers to fees and sums due on account of property for the time being vested in the Board.

A-674. Are there many cases?—Yes. People do not pay rent.

A-675. Why are they not able to pay their rent?—They are too poor. They work for two days and then for two weeks they are doing nothing. When they work at night if the employer finds there is no more need for them he dismisses them and pays them only for the two hours although they were engaged for the whole night.

A-676. Is your Union in favour of an Unemployment Insurance scheme?—Yes.

A-677. And also in favour of a scheme for payment of wages on a weekly basis?—That would be better.

A-678. Under the Port Trust Act passed in 1924 children under 12 were prohibited from working. What have you to say about that?—(*Dr. Lalwani*): They are not working at present.

A-679. Would you like the age raised to 12 or 14?—It would be better if it were raised to 16—better for the health of the children.

A-680. What is your opinion about the employment of women on this work?—It is not such as to require women.

A-681. Is there any arrangement made for the resting of dock labourers during their intervals of work?—(*Mr. Mulchand*): You see them sitting under the wagons, and instances have occurred when the wagons have moved over those people and killed them. We have requested that a waiting hall should be provided for them. The only roof they have is the sky above.

A-682. What arrangements are there for bathing and cleaning themselves, or for providing soap and hot water?—None. There should be a bathing room and arrangements for changing into working clothes.

A-683. Has your Union anything to say with regard to the fixation of a minimum living wage for the workers?—(*Dr. Lalwani*): The Union would be very pleased to see it. They think there ought to be a minimum wage. The minimum wage for one coolie should be at least 20 rupees, excluding rent and other amenities.

A-684. Is it your opinion that there is general starvation among the workers?—There is.

A-685. *Mr. Joshi*: In the memorandum from the Seamen's Union it is stated that you do not want racial discrimination as regards hours of work as well as rations. You do not mention accommodation?—We do.

A-686. You are aware that under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act such a discrimination does exist?—Yes, but we do not want it.

A-687. You want that Act to be amended?—Yes.

A-688. In the memorandum from the other Union you state that you suspect that the Government wants to postpone the Bill as regards hours of work of the Port Trust employees, and also the Bill regarding the representation of the Port Trust employees on the body, on the ground that this Royal Commission has been appointed?—Yes, that is so.

A-689. You naturally feel aggrieved that this Commission should be made a ground for postponing action?—We do.

A-690. What do you expect from the Commission? You expect the Commission to say that they do not desire such postponement?—Exactly.

A-691. You can certainly take it for granted that the Commission does not want any postponement of such action?—If that is given to us, we are satisfied.

Mr. Joshi: I am sure the Chairman will give it to you if you write to him.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. R. K. SIDHVA, on behalf of Workmen and Labourers of the Flour Mills.

A-692. *The Chairman*: From the memorandum given to us I take it that you are not a worker in the flour mills yourself?—No.

A-693. May I know what your usual vocation is?—A merchant.

A-694. You have been asked by the workmen and labourers in the flour mills to make this representation to us?—Yes.

A-695. Can you tell us in what way you were deputed?—I have taken a general interest in labour union affairs for the last ten years. I have been associated with several unions in the capacity of President, Secretary and Committee member. These mill men have not their own union, and they came to me voluntarily knowing that the Royal Commission was coming. They put their grievances before me, and said that they were being victimized, and that there were many hardships. About half a dozen of their representatives first came to me, and narrated the whole story. I noted down the details, and I said I would like to hear a larger number of the workers. They came subsequently with a larger number, and told me their grievances. On personal enquiry subsequently, I found they were correct. Therefore I thought it my duty to place them before the Commission. I told them they should come and place their views before you, but they said they were not prepared to do so; that they had been threatened that if they did anything of the kind they would be dismissed from the service.

A-696. I take it, then, that there is at present no organization among these workers?—No.

A-697. Is there any movement to have an organization amongst themselves?—They told me that they had made an effort some time ago. I also told them to start a union, but they said that no sooner any principal workers took part in it their fate would be dismissal. I share their views, because I have had experience of the Tramways. I was the President of the Tramways organization, and when I tried to form a union 37 conductors were dismissed straight away by the proprietors. Since then the tramway people have never ventured to form a union. There are nearly 400 men in the employ of the tramway company. In 1924-25 they went on a lightning strike, the effect of which was good; their grades were revised. They struck later in 1928, when about 30 conductors were sacked.

A-698. I may say that we will consider carefully the memorandum you have been good enough to submit to us, but the function of this Commission is not to act as a Court of Appeal between workers and their employers. It is our business to get a general view of the conditions of labour in this and other industries, but it is certainly not possible for us to be in any sense a Court of Appeal?—Quite so.

A-699. All I can say is that I have read this memorandum carefully, and I think my colleagues have too, and we will take it in that sense as a part of our evidence of the general labour conditions in Karachi and in India. You have suggested to us that these people were threatened that if they came and gave evidence be foreus they would be in danger of dismissal?—Yes. I might add that some of the women workers and male workers were told distinctly a few days ago that they must say they were working the hours as their master said, and that if they said they were working 12 hours without a

break they would be dismissed. This was made particularly clear to the women workers. I have evidence to that effect.

A-700. Why did you not write to the Factory Inspector?—These things were brought to my notice very recently.

A-701. This factory like others is working under the Factory Law. When we visited it we examined the book which contains the report of the Factory Inspector and we found nothing there to tally with your statement?—You will agree with me, sir, that because it is under the Factory Act, whatever notice is put up should be in conformity with the Act. If this is not done they would come under the clutches of the Act. They say that they are following the provisions of the Act very carefully; but it is not so. The Factory Inspector does not come always, but even if he comes it is but natural that these people who have very little voice do not place before him the real situation. They are simply ignorant.

A-702. But they apparently have approached you?—Yes, because they know I do not belong to the official class.

A-702a. It is open to any person to give information to the Factory Inspector?—This information was given to me recently and it will be given to the Factory Inspector in due course.

A-703. I think it is your duty to represent what you hear of breaches of the Act to the Factory Inspector who is appointed officer to see that the Act is carried out?—Quite so.

A-704. *Mr. Clow*: When we visited the factory we were shown a list of the hours of work. That showed shifts of 12 hours with two intervals of an hour each. I take it from what you say that during these intervals the factory continues to run?—Quite so. The factory works for 24 hours. There are two shifts of 12 hours. There is no break for recess and it is not a fact that the proprietors have employed more men in order to give recess.

A-705. *Mr. Birla*: Which is the factory you referred to just now?—The Indian Flour Mill.

A-706. Is it a limited liability company?—Yes.

A-707. Who are its directors?—According to the 1928 report, the Chairman is Mr. C. M. Lobo and the Directors are Dr. Macnuchas and Dr. Pires and the Secretary is Mr. C. F. D'abres.

A-708. Who are the managing agents?—I do not think there are any managing agents. I believe the Secretary manages the business.

A-709. Do you know any of the directors or the managing agents personally?—Yes.

A-710. Did you bring this to their notice?—No, I have not brought it to their notice.

A-711. Do you not think it your duty to bring it to their notice?—I came to know of this only a couple of days before the Commission arrived in Karachi.

A-712. *Miss Power*: Can you tell me how many women are employed in the factory?—About 17.

A-713. And is it your assertion that women are asked to work continuously for 12 hours without a break?—Yes.

A-714. Do the women also work for half a day on Sundays?—They do.

A-715. What work are they given on Sundays when the factory is closed?—Generally cleaning of the machinery.

A-716. When the mill is not working?—Yes, also otherwise.

A-717. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You say something about adult suffrage for men and women in your memorandum. Is that your personal opinion or the opinion of the men who were consulted?—It is my opinion, but I know they would certainly welcome it. They would like to be represented in all the executive bodies for ventilating their grievances.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I would make a suggestion in regard to the charge that you have made in paragraph 2 of your memorandum,—that it would be advisable to get signatures or thumb marks of those who have levelled that charge and forward them to the Factory Inspector.

A-718. *Mr. Cliff*: Do I understand that all the 130 people who are employed in this mill turn up for cleaning on Sundays?—Yes, all; even the engine men come.

A-719. You say that of the 130, 17 are women?—Yes, about that figure.

A-720. When did you have this meeting of the workers and labourers?—About 2 days before the arrival of this Commission.

A-721. Was that a Sunday?—On Sunday also we held a meeting; before that we had a meeting.

A-722. Where did you hold the meeting?—In my own compound. I invariably hold meetings of union people in my compound.

A-723. How many were there?—About 100.

A-724. What was the statement that was made with regard to victimization?—I told them that it would be far better if they themselves were to go and give evidence. But they would not come out and therefore I thought it my duty to place the facts before the Commission.

A-725. Was any statement made by some that they had been threatened?—They did make a statement.

A-726. How many people made that statement?—About 10 or 12.

A-727. Who threatened?—May be they said the manager; the Secretary, or whoever it might be, but one does not know—some superior officer.

A-728. *Mr. Ahmed*: Besides your being a merchant and the President of the Tramway Conductors, what are you, would you tell us Mr. Sidhva?—In my capacity as a public servant I am a municipal councillor, a Port Trustee.

A-729. You mean Port Commissioner?—Yes.

A-730. What else?—A member of the North Western Railway Advisory Board, Secretary of the Health Association.

A-731. Have you anything to do with postmen?—I am the President of the Postmen and Lower Grade Staff Union for Sind and Baluchistan, lower grade.

A-732. And I take it, as such, you are in direct touch with these workmen?—Certainly. Therefore they come to me.

A-733. During our visit to the Indian Flour Mills Ltd., Karachi, yesterday, I was supplied with a statement showing the number of hours the workers work. Have you seen the statement and is that correct?—I saw it yesterday.

A-734. I think that is correct and you tender that as part of your evidence?—Yes.

A-735. It is said there that the workers work on Sundays. That is correct, is it not?—Yes.

A-736. In your memorandum you say that workers should be provided with free, healthy and sanitary quarters. Can you tell me whether any other local body or private person has provided quarters for the labourers?—Yes, the Municipality is a local body and has provided houses to a certain extent. You must have seen the other day some good specimens of sweepers' quarters.

A-737. The next item is free medical relief. Is there any other agency which renders medical aid to the labourer?—Yes. I just stated to you that I am the Honorary Secretary of the Health Association and the primary duty of that Association is to render medical aid to women labourers. For maternity purposes only we have got seven trained nurses with two lady doctors. Karachi comprises of seven quarters, to each of which a nurse is deputed. The nurses visit each and every house. This was started from a purely private donation. Mr. Isardas gave a lakh of rupees and we got Rs. 50,000 from the public. From the interest on these sums together with a grant of Rs. 7,000 that we get from the Municipality and Rs. 8,000 from the Government this institution is maintained. Its annual expenditure is Rs. 27,000 with no additional increase in the income. But our work in the labour class has very much increased, and we asked the Government to increase the grant. Government said that they have not got money now.

A-738. *The Chairman*: I have just one word, Mr. Sidhva. From what we have heard of your wonderful activities, there could be no more suitable person than yourself to take steps to clear up this question as to whether the Factory Act has or has not been broken in this respect. I understand that you are willing to put yourself in touch with the Inspector in order that we may be sure that if it can be shown that there is anything wrong it shall be set right?—Yes.

A-739. Is the Factory Inspector resident here?—He is not here.

A-740. Is he moving about?—He is in the Bombay Presidency; he occasionally pays a visit here. I will put myself in touch with him.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. MINOCHER COWASJI, of Messrs. Cowasji and Sons, Stevedores.

A-741. *The Chairman* : You represent a firm of Stevedores at Karachi ?—Yes, Sir.

A-742. I take it that it is under your control that the coaling operations take place ?—Yes.

A-743. Are you the only firm of Stevedores ?—No, there are several other firms, beside ourselves.

A-744. But you are, may I say, the principal firm ?—Yes, one of the principal firms.

A-745. Some of my colleagues went to see some of the coaling operations in the course of yesterday, and would like to ask you some questions, and for that reason we have summoned you. Do you employ your own labour, or do you employ contractors ?—We employ our own labour. We have a system by which we employ what are called *Jemadars*, who bring the workmen.

A-746. You pay the headman for the whole of the work done by his gang ?—Yes.

A-747. Do you know what wages the headman pays to his individual workers ?—No. In many cases we inquire what is being paid individually. We satisfy ourselves that what they draw from us is paid to the men or women.

A-748. In that case where does the ganger get his profit if you insist that he pays out to the workers precisely what you give him ?—We pay him at the rate of Rs. 2 per day, whereas we pay the worker only one rupee a day.

A-749. *Miss Power* : You pay the wages to the *Jemadar* at the rate of Rs. 2, and what do you pay to the workmen ?—Rs. 1-2-0.

A-750. Out of the Rs. 2 the headman has to pay Rs. 1-2-0 ?—No. At the close of the day we count the number of men, women and children employed. There are 80 men and 20 women. To the men we pay at the rate of Rs. 1-2-0, women 0-13-0, and we hand over all the money to the *Jemadar*.

A-751. How many women are employed in these gangs ?—When we employ a gang of 50 men, there are about 10 to 12 women working, that is to say about 15 to 20 per cent. of the total number of workers in coaling operation, bunkering ships or landing coal ex-lighters on to the stacking areas and re-loading lighters ex-dépôts are women.

A-752. Is any differentiation made between the work done by men and women ?—The women are supposed only to carry the baskets.

A-753. Empty baskets ?—No, full baskets.

A-754. The men fill the baskets ?—Yes, or raise them on the stages.

A-755. We saw a number of women raising the baskets on the stages ?—They are not called upon to do so, but if they are willing they are allowed to do it. Hardly one or two women out of the whole gang do this staging work.

A-756. Is there any limit to the age of the children employed ?—In fact we do not allow any children to work on our works. But since they work in a family group, we have to employ them. At times we have attempted to employ only male labour, but the family refused to come to work.

A-757. In point of fact, you recognize the employment of children because you say you pay them ?—In a gang we do not employ more than, say, three children, and they are paid at the rate of 6 annas a day, and they are only employed on passing out empty baskets.

A-758. Do you make any enquiry as to the age of the children included in the family group ?—No.

A-759. In spite of the fact that there is a law which prohibits children being employed under 12 ?—They do not do any hard work at all.

A-760. Still they are employed. How can you tell, whether or not they are doing any hard work ?—Because they are physically incapable of doing any hard work.

A-761. There were some boys we saw yesterday who were lifting the full loads. At any rate you countenance the employment of children ?—We do not.

A-762. Who pays them the 6 annas ?—We pay 6 annas to the children, but there are only 2 or 3 of them out of a gang of 50 or 60.

A-763. What is the weight of the load that is lifted ?—About 50 pounds.

A-764. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Cowasji, you say that women and children are employed on account of the family system. We have been hearing a lot yesterday and to-day about the great amount of unemployment there is in Karachi, of thousands of able bodied men looking for a job all round Karachi, and yet you employ women and children ?—That is because in the coaling operations, we have only one class of labour who will handle coal. When we wanted more coal labour, the other group of labour would not come forward to handle coal.

A-765. How many are there in a gang ?—50 or 60.

A-766. And there would be three children, and how many men and how many women ?—There will be 12 to 15 women and the rest men.

A-767. *Mr. Ahmed* : There are a number of gangs ?—Yes.

A-768. And the *Jemadar* is supposed to be familiar with the work of these gangs and he is their headman. It is not your business to see whether there is any understanding between the headman and the gang. If there is any such understanding between the headman and the gang it is not your business to locate it ?—We do make inquiries on occasions as to whether the men are paid their full wages, and we are told that they get their full wages.

A-769. You are told by the headman ?—No, by the individual workers.

A-770. You hand over the money to the *Jemadar* at the rate of Rs. 1-2-0 per man, annas 18 per woman and annas 6 for every child. You do not count the money and hand it over to the *Jemadar*. You hand over the money according to the bill prepared by the *Jemadar* ?—We count the amount due to each *Jemadar* or each gang, and we hand over the money to the *Jemadar*.

A-771. And it is not your concern to see how much has been distributed among the work-people ?—I cannot do it. I cannot possibly do it.

A-772. You are in direct touch with the *Jemadar* only, the headman, to whom you pay Rs. 2 per day, and the *Jemadars* are rich people, never poor, and richly dressed ?—I do not know whether they are rich people : their mode of living is the same as the other coolies.

A-773. *Mr. Cliff* : Do you employ men and women and children for discharging and bunkering ?—We do not employ children at all, but family groups insist on bringing children, and we have to shut our eyes to it.

A-774. You shut your eyes to the children working ?—Not to the working, but to the bringing.

A-775. I understand you to admit that there was a payment made to children for working ?—Yes.

A-776. Is that against the law ?—It may be against the law. But they say that the child is not under 12 years and we cannot help it.

A-777. It is not against the law if the child is above 12, but it is if it is under 12 ?—Exactly.

A-778. Are you to obey the law or the family ?—We have to obey both on occasions.

A-779. Could you tell me what you pay per gang for bunkering coal ?—We count the number of men employed, and we pay accordingly. It is not a fixed amount. We pay according to the number of men who turn out, whether they are 40, or 35 or 30. We count the number of men, women and children.

A-780. Have you fixed the rate of pay for the men, women and children ?—I have not fixed the rate. It is the current rate prevailing.

A-781. What hours do they work ?—They are supposed to work Port hours—from 7-30 to 1 and from 2 to 6-30. But as a rule they never turn up at 7-30. They always start one hour late.

A-782. Do you pay them for coming late ?—Yes. We pay them full wages. Our difficulty is that we have to draw these working men from one class of people, and we have to shut our eyes to many things, and when they come late we cannot cut their rate.

A-783. What is the cost of labour bunkering coal per ton ?—About annas 8 per ton, only for shipping coal, i.e., for bunkering from lighters during day time.

A-784. What is the price obtained for that ?—It is all inclusive. We do not charge for labour only. We sell our own coal, and the charge for labour is included in our rate.

A-785. Are you always bunkering the coal that you sell ?—Yes.

A-786. What is the difference between the market price of the coal you sell and the rate you obtain for bunkering ?—We usually keep a margin of 8 to 12 annas for our profit on the whole transaction, that is, labour included.

A-787. Per ton ?—Yes, that is, the cost of the coal, labour, lighterage, towing, and so on.

A-788. You say the margin you obtain includes the cost of the coal. That is on the sale price. I want you to tell me the difference between the labour cost for bunkering coal per ton, and the price you obtain for the coal ?—You want the difference on the labour ?

Divan Chaman Lall : What Mr. Cliff wants to know is the difference between the cost of coal, the market price, and the labour cost put on to it for bunkering purposes ? —We put on our eight annas a ton for our labour cost, i.e., for bunkering from lighters during day time.

A-789. *Divan Chaman Lall* : This is a serious matter and I want you to look at it from a serious point of view. You made an admission that you have no way of telling whether there are children under 12 employed or not. There is a law on the subject under which you will be liable for prosecution if it is true that you have children under 12 employed under you.—There is no method of telling whether they are there or not.

A-790. For all you know there may or may not be children under 12 employed by you ?—Exactly. There is no method of finding it out.

A-791. Have you had any trouble with these people who bunker coal or load and unload ships ?—No.

A-792. Did you ever try to stop them from bringing their children ? Did you ever take any effective steps in that direction ?—We often tell them that they should not bring their children and that we will not allow them. But when we go away they bring in their children.

A-793. Have you any records of written notices issued to the gangmen to that effect ?—No.

A-794. When was the last occasion when you prevented children from working there ?—I cannot remember. It may be about a year back.

A-795. Who were the gangmen whom you told this ? Do you remember their names ?—Practically I told everybody.

A-796. Can you give names ?—Yes, I can give names.

The Chairman : Mr. Chaman Lall, I would remind you and all my colleagues that this witness has come quite voluntarily to help us, and he should be treated as having come in that way.

A-797. *Divan Chaman Lall* : One more point. Why do you not deal directly with the workers in regard to the payment of wages ?—It is impossible to deal directly with them.

A-798. Instead of paying the money to the gangmen, can you not directly pay it to the workers straight away ; It is just as easy.—It may be easy, but it is not practicable.

A-799. Why ?—We tried to do this. Before we introduced this system two years back, we had actually muster rolls and we used to make weekly payments and make the payments individually to every man and woman. Of course it was a long and tedious process.

A-800. Your only objection is that it is a long and tedious process ?—It would be better if we could adopt it.

A-801. Your only objection is that it is long and tedious ?—Yes, it is long and tedious.

A-802. Is it a fact that some of your gangmen or all your gangmen get paid for ten workers or so when they have employed only about five or six workers on the work ?—No, they cannot do it, because at the close of the day we count the number of men and pay them accordingly. It may happen this way. When we want 60 coolies they are expected to bring in about 12 or 15 women and the remainder men. If we do not take steps to verify the number of men and women, they may bring in more women than is generally allowed.

A-803. May I put it to you, whether it would not lead to better treatment of the workers, so that they may not be in any way put upon by the gangmen, if you adopted the system of the direct payment of wages inspite of its being somewhat long and tedious ?—But the coolies do not make any representation to us. If they are satisfied why should we change the system ? There is no reason to change our method.

The witness : Sir, I should like to make a statement. In last night's papers it was stated that the Commission paid a visit to the coal stacks where they found small children hard at work. I should say, sir, that you saw them at play rather than at work. It would be more appropriate to say that,

A-804. *Mr. Joshi :* How many men do you employ in your stevedoring and coal bunkering work ?—On an average we employ about four or five hundred men.

A-805. Do all these men get work daily ?—When I say on an average 400 or 500 men, one day I might have 200 men and another day, I may have 1,000 men.

A-806. How many men are there in the gangs you employ for your work ?—I have said it is on an average 400 or 500.

A-807. I am trying to find out how many days per month or per week your men get work ?—The men I employ are getting work for twenty days a month.

A-808. You cannot give them work for all the days in the month ?—I cannot employ them fully for the whole period.

A-809. Suppose you employ a smaller number of people and give them work for all the days, would there be any difficulty ?—No, our business is peculiar. We may have only two steamers to-day and to-morrow we may have 12 steamers. The men I employ on 12 steamers to-day I cannot employ on two steamers to-morrow.

A-810. Suppose you have 500 men under you while you want only 300 men on an average for your work. Then you leave about 200 men without any employment for ten days in a month. Suppose you stevedores co-operate, could you not find a way of putting an end to this under-employment ?—I do not think it will work.

A-811. Suppose we say there shall be co-operation by some kind of scheme which may be supervised by Government authorities for pooling together all your resources in men so that unemployment may be avoided ?—I do not think that the system would work, where the interests of the stevedores are concerned.

A-812. You are looking at the question from the point of view of the interests of the stevedores ? I am asking you to look at the question from the point of view of the interests of the workers.—It may be possible, but it is not practicable.

A-813. Do you not think it desirable to consider a scheme like that if proposed ?—We have never tried it.

A-814. You would not mind considering a scheme like that ?—But we are not the only employers of labour in the port ; there are several others and I do not know what their views in the matter are.

A-815. Anyhow you think it a desirable thing ?—It may be a desirable thing, but it is not a practicable thing.

A-816. Supposing a practicable scheme is put before you for avoiding this unemployment, which is universal in all the ports and not peculiar to Karachi alone, would you mind considering it seriously ?—I would certainly study the scheme and give it my best consideration.

A-817. You will take steps to consult the stevedores and consider a scheme by which constant unemployment in the docks can be avoided ?—Yes.

The witness : May I put in a statement with regard to the defects of the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act ?

The Chairman : Yes, you may put in that statement. I may say that I and my colleagues are greatly obliged to you for attending at such short notice at our request.

— (The witness withdrew.)

Miss R. PIGGOT, Honorary Secretary, Dais' Improvement Scheme, Hyderabad (Sind).

A-818. *The Chairman :* I gather that you can speak to us in two capacities, one on behalf of the Sind Branch of the all-India Women's Conference, and second, as Honorary Secretary to the Dais' Improvement Scheme, Hyderabad.—That is so, Sir.

A-819. We have heard a great deal of evidence about general questions of housing and various other things in the course of the day. We shall particularly value your evidence on questions connected with maternity where, I understand, you have great

experience, and if I may say so, have been able to do a great deal for women at those critical times. This is particularly a medical matter, and if my colleagues consent, I would ask our Medical Assessor, Colonel Russell in the first place to put questions. I hope that will be agreeable.—Quite.

* A-820. *Colonel Russell*: It is generally admitted that the housing conditions for the working classes in Karachi are very poor. In your memorandum with regard to housing you say: "The health point of view leaves much to be desired". Will you just indicate generally the points to which attention should be drawn in regard to housing in that connection?—I visited about 8 factories in various places. I found that in Mirpur Khas in Thar Parkar the housing was really very good, but in all the other places I found the housing to be indifferent and in most places the people had built their own quarters.

A-821. In what directions was it unsatisfactory?—The houses were so small, and rain had made them very damp in most places.

A-822. A question was raised this morning as to plinths for houses?—Yes, that is most necessary.

A-823. You consider it most necessary to have plinths?—Yes.

A-824. Have you any ideas as to the construction of a plinth?—I am going, I hope, to build some houses in connection with this relief fund and I shall certainly build a plinth to everyone.

A-825. Of what do you construct a plinth?—*Pucca* bricks.

A-826. In your memorandum you suggest that if accommodation were provided the houses would be occupied?—Well, they are very curious people; some like to live in one place and some another, but I did find in Mirapur Khas, where the houses were very good, they seemed to occupy them without any difficulty.

A-827. So that your opinion is that they would gladly occupy the houses if they were available?—I think so, on the whole.

A-828. With regard to rent rates in various classes, can you give us any idea as to the percentage your figure of Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 per mensem bears to the amount of wages earned? It varies very much in different places. All up-country is cheaper than Karachi; Karachi is the most expensive place in every way.

A-829. What percentage of total wages would that be?—I do not know that I can tell you exactly. Many of the houses are free; the employers have supplied the huts and they do not charge any rents.

A-830. But in cases where rent is charged?—I did not come across any charging rent, and they would not charge as much as that in the districts. It would more likely be Rs. 2 or Rs. 3.

A-831. You cannot give us any idea as to the proportion it bears to the total charges?—I am afraid I cannot. I looked upon that as being a matter more for the men; I did not study it from the women's point of view.

A-832. You say that up to date ventilation would not be appreciated; but even though it is not appreciated, it should be introduced, I take it?—Oh! most decidedly. I think the best method is to have, as I have seen in some places, a little space is left open at the top where the roof and the walls meet; that is very good and they do not mind that.

A-833. The incidence of tuberculosis, according to the Health Officer's report, at Karachi is very high; do you associate that with housing conditions?—I should think in Karachi very often that is so, but in the North what saves them is that they are very seldom in their houses. It is in the city that consumption is so very bad.

A-834. You speak of the infantile mortality as being "pathetic"?—Yes, it is pathetic.

A-835. The word "pathetic" to a statistician is hardly measurable; can you give me any exact figures: have you any statistics?—No, but I know it is very very high. I can easily send you statistics if you would like to have them.

A-836. I will draw your attention to some figures Mr. Downie gave us this morning; in the Port Trust area it is 168 per thousand births. Do you think that is low or high as compared with what you have experienced?—In the case of maternal mortality we reduced it to 103 in Hyderabad by training the *dais*. That was the best in the whole of Sind. I hope to send figures about the infant mortality.

A-837. You are to be congratulated on getting it down to 103?—But, alas, it has gone up again now.

A-838. Can you give us any idea of the methods you have adopted for training these *dais*, because that is closely associated with the question of infantile mortality?—Yes. My plan is unique. You cannot get these women to come to the towns to be trained. I do not blame them: they cannot leave their homes and children, and in all probability if they left their homes they would lose all their practice. So I send a very experienced nurse who makes her centre in a certain place. The *dais* go to her every day there; she goes to the villages and lectures the *dais*, and we pay the *dais* As. 4 to As. 8 according as they come to the lectures. The nurse stays at that centre from 4 to 6 months. We only train the *dais*; I find that is quite enough. The *dais* pass examinations either of the *Dais* Improvement Fund or of the Delhi Memorial Scholarships, though the latter is impossible in the districts. Sometimes these classes consist of only 5 *dais*, though sometimes it is 19, and we have had 36.

A-839. It has been my experience in connection with Indian *dais* that unless they are very closely supervised, they lapse, if I may use that expression?—Yes, they are naturally very much inclined to do so. We try to supervise, though that is our weak spot at present; it is so difficult because the places are so small. What I thought of doing was to place one nurse as a supervisor on each line and see what she can do, to begin with.

A-840. For a labour force where women are employed you would, of course, prefer to use Indian *dais* under the supervision of a society like your own, or under the Indian Red Cross, rather than Europeans?—Yes, the Europeans are not so useful to the women as they would not be willing, or able, to do all that an ordinary *dai* would.

A-841. Is there such a thing in Karachi as the Maternity Benefit Act?—Yes. I find that very few people know about it.

A-842. Do the firms, and the workers especially, know about the terms of this Act?—No, they do not know anything about it.

A-843. How do you suggest knowledge of the Act might be spread?—The bone factory here gave me particulars. I think each Government should give a notice to every factory that the Act must be exhibited in writing in the language which is used by the people and made known in that way.

A-844. But so few of the work-people can read?—There are nearly always one or two men who can read. Of course, that would not do in the districts.

A-845. Some of the men may be able to read, but would women report their pregnancy to supervisors of the male sex?—No, that is just the difficulty.

A-846. Where women are employed you would have women supervisors?—Yes.

A-847. In order to explain the Act to the women workers?—Yes.

A-848. And also to give them the benefit provided?—Yes.

A-849. On the question of dietary, you say that *bajra* is the cheapest grain. Is it physiologically a satisfactory food?—Yes. Nearly everywhere it is *bajra*. In one case I found that fish was added.

A-850. In this district do you find what are known as diseases of malnutrition among women workers?—No, not nearly so much as in most places. We put that down to the effect of the sun.

A-851. Are you acquainted with that form of anæmia of pregnancy which is so common in Bombay?—There is a great deal of it here, but I think it is more common amongst the better class because they sit in the houses more.

A-852. You have not seen very many cases?—I have seen a good many.

A-853. You describe a case of anæmia in your memorandum?—Yes, that was an unfortunate school teacher.

A-854. I have myself noticed, and I think perhaps you will agree, that there are a large number of cases of ophthalmia among children in Karachi. Do you attribute that to any defect in nutrition, or is it largely infectious in nature?—I think a good deal of it is due to infection from one to another. My experience is that the children's eyes are very bad.

A-855. If the food of the people is so good, why is it that the infantile mortality is so high, because if the physiological intake is correct, infantile mortality should be lowered?—It is due to bad feeding due to ignorance; they give the children all sorts of things to eat. The other day we went into a house where there were four babies under 12 months old, all of whom were ill. All four were being wrongly fed: one was eating gram, and another dates. The women were astonished when we told them that the wrong feeding was the cause of their children's illness.

A-856. It is a matter of education?—Yes.

A-857. You would, of course, be in favour of the development of general welfare work amongst workers?—Yes, very much; it is very badly needed.

A-858. The provision of crèches, for instance?—Yes. I have seen crèches in two factories, one here and one in Hyderabad; that is all I have seen.

A-859. They are not very good?—No, they are not.

A-860. Would you be glad to have the help of trained welfare workers?—I should very much. It is really only a question of money.

A-861. You would be glad to get Indian women welfare workers?—Yes, it would have to be Indian women I think.

A-862. Do you think Indian women would be capable of doing welfare work?—Yes, I think so, if they were trained.

A-863. Where would you train them?—There is a training school in Delhi which is very good.

A-864. Do you think that that training school would be sufficient to train welfare workers for the whole of India?—More or less I think. I think it would be a good thing to send superior women to be trained at Delhi, who would afterwards return to their homes.

A-865. Would it be possible to use young women?—No.

A-865a. Do you care to say why?—So many of these things are managed by men and the women resent that very much; nice women will not work under men under the present circumstances.

A-866. If ante-natal clinics and baby clinics were provided, you think the women would use them if there were women welfare workers?—Yes.

A-867. The women welfare workers must be Indian you think?—I think so decidedly.

A-868. In your written memorandum you say that maternity benefit is much needed?—Yes.

A-869. Can you suggest any method by which it might be arranged and administered?—I am very much in favour of starting a maternity benefit fund, but it is difficult. We are trying our best to start it. There is a provident fund in Hyderabad which is very flourishing, but it is only for Hindus, and they will not take up maternity; I do not know why. I have begged them many times to add maternity benefit.

A-870. They will not do so?—No, at present they only deal with deaths and marriages. We must have maternity benefit and we are trying to think out some scheme.

A-871. In your memorandum you say: "A free trained midwife has been put on by the Hyderabad Municipality but the people do not patronize her". Can you tell me why?—Because she is an outsider.

A-872. You mean she does not belong to the district?—Yes, she is a *Sindhi* but she is an outsider and the other *dois* are against her.

A-873. Do you still think Delhi could train enough women for the whole of India?—No, I think the best thing is to train from your own centre if you can.

A-874. You say that you see much suffering among women and children. Do you notice that among the labour force or in the general population?—Generally. Even if there is something wrong the women never think of getting advice.

A-875. If a woman is suffering so much she will not be able to work in a labour force?—As I have said in my memorandum, one woman was actually teaching from her bed. They will not give in; that is why it is so pathetic.

A-876. What I mean by labour force is those who are required to do hard work in factories?—Generally one doctor is attached to each factory, and the labour women go and see the doctor, but where they cannot see him they suffer so much.

A-877. You emphasize the point again in your additional note that women very much resent being under the direct control of men?—Yes they do, but it is impossible to help it at present because we are so short of women workers.

A-878. If you were provided with women welfare workers would that solve the difficulty as far as you are concerned?—To a great extent it would. Of course our difficulty is want of roads. If we get good roads it would be very easy to do a great deal more.

A-879. You say that education will help labour to find its feet. Do you mean that general education should be given or should it be more or less vocational?

education?—General education, because at present they do not know what they suffer from.

A-880. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : The Maternity Benefits Act of Bombay provides that a woman is to give notice before she is eligible for benefits?—She must work for six or seven months before she can claim the benefit.

A-881. Yes, before she gives notice. Is there anything to prevent an employer from dismissing her and thus get out of giving her the benefits?—I suppose if they did once or twice some would make out a cry about it; but I do not think that would be done.

A-882. Do you not think it would be better to have a provision preventing him from taking that step, because there is a provision preventing him from dismissing afterwards?—Certainly it would be better.

A-883. Would you be in favour of extending the Maternity Benefits Act to the whole of India?—If possible, it is better to have a general Act.

A-884. Do you think that the allowance allowed under the Act, namely, eight annas, is sufficient?—I think it is sufficient, but if it could be raised to annas 10 or 12 it would be better.

A-885. She does not get her wages for the period?—No. But the allowance is equal to her wages in many cases.

A-886. You would be in favour of a better allowance?—Yes.

A-887. *Mr. Clow* : Do you think there is any danger that the Act may have the effect of causing employers to substitute male for female employees?—I do not think so, because in several factories I have visited they are very anxious to get women. For instance, in the bone factory at Hyderabad, there is a nurse who visits once a week; and in all the factories I visited I found that they stop their work for about half an hour so that we could lecture to the women.

A-888. *Miss Power* : Were you able to see any of the Factory Inspector's Reports in order to find out how frequently these factories were inspected?—I did read some of the reports, but the ones I saw were rather contradictory.

A-889. How were they contradictory?—One seemed to say there had been no accident, while another said the working conditions were injurious to health, but he did not say on what ground he based that opinion.

A-890. Did you question the employer at all as to whether there had been any alteration made in conditions between the two reports made by the Factory Inspectors?—No, I did not; I did not think of that. It would be no use asking them; they would not know; that is all confidential in the office.

A-891. Did you yourself see any conditions in the factories, or find out anything from the women when questioning them, which made it appear that the Factory Acts were not being complied with?—They seemed to be complied with everywhere; but the people outside said they worked the children morning and night, and if an official or anybody else went suddenly early in the morning or late at night, they would find children working; but the employers all assured me that no women were on the premises after 7 o'clock in the evening.

A-892. Is the difficulty that the inspector cannot arrive unknown to the employer?—They are supposed to, but they cannot, because they are seen getting off the train.

A-893. Do you think things are put right in advance of the Inspector's visit and he does not see things in their normal condition?—I suppose to a certain extent that would be so, if they knew he was coming. It is very difficult to keep it quiet; when the Inspector gets off the train at the station everybody knows he is somebody new, they guess who he is and the news is taken to the factory. I know that is constantly done.

A-894. You think children are being illegally employed and are removed before the Inspector arrives?—That is what my friends assured me. One said he had stated it in his paper but no notice was taken.

A-895. What paper was that; do you mean a daily paper?—A paper belonging to Mirpur Khas. He was very keen on it, but I did not ask him specially about it because I have had so little time; I have really had only three weeks and that is a very short time in which to do Sind, especially as the roads have been so bad owing to the floods that it has been difficult to get about, and the trains have not been running. But I can get you a lot more information if you want it; I shall be touring now.

A-896. I think it would be useful if you would give the Commission some further information. I do a lot of propoganda, which is very useful; at every place I visit, I leave papers.

(The witness withdrew.)

The Chairman : Before the Commission adjourns, I wish to say something. During our proceedings it has been evident that two persons, at least, wish to say something to us. It would be impossible to take evidence without some previous notice, because it is clearly the duty of the Chairman to see evidence before it is submitted. But we are most anxious that nobody should feel they have not been heard if they have anything to say to the Commission. So I propose now to adjourn the Commission, but I shall attend here on the verandah, and if those persons wish to say anything about labour questions in Karachi, I personally, and I know many of my colleagues, will be glad to hear for a few minutes anything they have to say to us.

(The Commission adjourned to Sukkur.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
SECOND MEETING
SUKKUR

Friday, 18th October 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI,
 C.H., P.C.
 Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
 C.I.E.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
 Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
 Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWEE.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
 (*Medical Assessor*).

Mrs. HOMAI, F. J. KARAKA.
 Mrs. HARDEVIBAI A. MASAND. } *Lady Assessors.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
 Mr. A. DIBDIN. } *Joint Secretaries.*

**Mr. C. S. C. HARRISON, C.I.E., I.S.E., Chief Engineer, Lloyd
 Barrage and Canals Construction.**

A-897. *Mr. Cliff* : In your memorandum you express a doubt that corruption would become rampant in public employment agencies?—There is plenty of corruption now—that is, in the lower paid staff. If you were able to have highly paid staff and specially selected men to carry out the work, you would get rid of corruption.

A-898. If you get the right type of character in employment agencies would you obviate corruption?—If you could afford the price.

A-899. Is there the same kind of corruption amongst the contractors?—Yes, just as much.

A-900. You heard the evidence given at Karachi, that there was a large number of unemployed and that they did not know there was employment available here. Do you think that a public employment agency, with a record of unemployed, would be of any use?—It is difficult to say. I should not think it would be of any particular use. To-day I was told by one of my staff that a contractor had sent down some of his men to Karachi to try and get people about a month ago, and he was not able to get more than a few.

A-901. Is there a proper legal contract between the Government and the contractor?—Yes.

A-902. In all cases?—Not in all cases. We have two forms—the *pucca* and *kucha*. The former is a binding contract, a form called F.2. That is drawn up by the Legal Department, and it is legally binding on both sides. There is a time limit, and there is a fixed rate, and there are all sorts of clauses in it. Then there is the *kucha* contract, which is called K.2. In that we simply agree with the contractor at a rate. There is no question of how much he has got to do, or the time in which he has to do it. He can give us 24 hours' notice to stop the work, and we can give him 24 hours' notice.

A-903. Is the pay in that contract time-rate for the actual work done?—No, we pay on quantity.

A-904. Can you give me any indication of the range of values of that class of contracts?—I constructed a dam in the Bombay Deccan for 35 lakhs of rupees.

I did the whole thing on a *kucha* contract. In Sind we give up to Rs. 50,000 on a *kucha* contract. No deposit is taken. That helps the small contractors very much indeed, because on the legal binding form big contractors have to pay a heavy deposit; whereas the man on the K.2 form does not pay any deposit at all; it is merely piece-work.

A-905. Does the Government, in placing a scheme of this character and having to deal with contract labour, make any provision at all to shelter the contract labour?—No, there is no clause for shelter.

A-906. If the Government were taking a corps of engineers—soldiers—to do this work they would naturally provide an advance party to make provision for shelter and sanitation?—It depends. We have had work done by troops. We have given out an actual contract. They were our contractors. It was the Third Pioneers, The Bombay Sapper and Miners. They had to make all their own housing arrangements.

A-907. But the soldiers, as soldiers, would make the necessary provisions?—Yes. If you take their Commanding Officer as the contractor, he makes provision for their housing.

A-908. Does it not strike you that in a scheme of that character some provision for shelter ought to be made?—Yes. It is an ideal to be aimed at, but it is all a question of cost. Someone has to pay for that in the end. The State has to pay for it.

A-909. It comes in on the over-all cost of the scheme?—Exactly.

A-910. The consumer pays?—No, the taxpayer pays.

A-911. The same view apparently was taken many years ago at home. Now where contract labour has to be employed there is provision for shelter, for sanitation, for water, and so on. I was wondering whether in your experience you do not think it necessary and desirable that some similar provision should be made here?—I think it would be practicable on concentrated works; but it is a very large order to attempt to house people when they are moving from spot to spot.

A-912. Has there been anything of this nature done on concentrated works?—Yes. The contractors put up huts. If you were here in November and December you would see a tremendous number of huts put up by the contractors. The contract for these particular works has not been given out yet, so that the only hutting you have seen here is Government hutting.

A-913. Do they also make provision for a medical service?—No; we give all that here on the concentrated work.

A-914. How does a man employed on contract work avail himself of the medical service and the hospital here?—He goes straight to the hospital in the morning to the out-patient department. If he is very ill he goes straight into hospital. If he is an out-patient he lines up; gets his treatment, and goes back to his hut.

A-915. If he is unable to do that, what happens?—His relations must bring him. We have had many cases of that.

A-916. Generally on these large schemes there is no medical provision made?—On the scattered works, no. On the concentrated works, yes. All the camps are inspected by the medical officer and his staff. We have 15 doctors dotted over 13,000 square miles.

A-917. If there is an inspection, and something wrong is found, what happens?—The man is either advised to go into the hospital, or he is treated on the spot. We have only the one hospital for the whole of this work. If men are sick 150 miles away from here we try to get them to go to the nearest local dispensary.

A-918. Is it unfair to say that, generally speaking, little provision, if any, is made by the Government for cases of this character—for housing and protecting the people?—I say that on concentrated works we make a very successful attempt—in Sukkur itself; but on the scattered works it is simply impossible to do so. Our field medical units pay visits to all the people on the works, and in all cases of accidents the people are immediately taken in to the hospital. We see to that.

A-919. Take the place which we visited this afternoon; can you instance to me any provision for shelter which has been made for those people, outside of themselves?—No.

A-920. Is that a concentrated work?—No. Those people may be moved next week half a mile away.

A-921. That is the kind of labour for which there is no protection?—No.

A-922. With regard to the wages paid for that class of labour, would it be feasible to make provision that they should receive the rates to which they are entitled?—It

would be very nice to be able to do so, but I do not see how you could bring it into operation.

A-923. It ought to be done but it is very hard to do it?—Yes, it would be an ideal to be aimed at.

A-924. Dealing with seasonal labour, you say "A large percentage of labour employed on this work being seasonal it follows that the extent of return to villages is in general 5 months in the year, and this annually." In another place you say "There are no good grounds for any unemployment in Sind," and then you state the amount of work available. I am a little at sea with regard to those two statements. I cannot reconcile them. What is the meaning of "seasonal"?—It is agricultural labour. We are quite prepared to keep them on for the whole 300 days of the year.

A-925. You cannot get them to stay?—No.

A-926. You say "The cause of migration appears to be due to ordinary seeking after continuous employment." Is that a search for security?—I should say so.

A-927. Dealing with workmen's compensation and men receiving compensation under contractors, are there any records kept of the compensation cases paid by contractors?—No.

A-928. I learn that there are records kept for other purposes. For instance, you keep a record of the contracts between yourselves and the contractor, and particulars of those contracts are sent to the Income Tax authorities. Would it not be possible in the same way to keep a record of the payments paid by the contractors under workmen's compensation?—It would be possible.

A-929. Do you think it wise to do that?—Yes, I think it would be quite good. It would give us an idea as to how the Act was working under the contractors' orbit.

A-930. With regard to inspection, is there any medical officer, or Factory Inspector, apart from the Barrage scheme, who visits this scheme?—The Factory Inspector visits it—that part of it which comes under the Factory Act; that is to say, the stone-dressing shed, the drag-line workshop and the electrical workshop.

A-931. Are there any officers comparable to Medical Officers of Health who visit the whole scheme?—Yes. Apart from our own establishment, we get the Director of Public Health from Bombay. He pays an annual visit. Then we have the Assistant Director of Public Health for Sind for two or three visits in the year, and we invite his suggestions. He is resident in Karachi.

A-932. Can you say what suggestions have been put up by either of those Medical Officers of Health?—They suggest remedies for any little defects. One of them made a suggestion last year that the bins in the township should be plastered at the bottom—one or two little things like that. We work on the general lines of the pamphlet issued by the Public Health Department, so that there would only be one or two little defects which they might bring to our notice.

A-933. You say the usual kind of defects, and you illustrate it with regard to plastering bins and so on; may I take that to be a fairly good illustration?—Yes.

A-934. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Why were no wage statistics incorporated in your memorandum?—They are not in the memorandum, but I can supply information if it is required; I can give you the rates of pay.

A-935. Will you oblige me by giving a comprehensive statement of wages paid to various classes of workers?—Yes, I can give you that.

A-936. May I also trouble you for a statement regarding the hours of work of various classes of workers on the works?—Yes, I will supply that to the Secretary.

A-937. Should I be correct in stating that the average minimum wage of the workers on the earth works is about Rs. 20 a month?—That is about it, yes.

A-938. I do not know whether you have got among your papers a statement that was supplied to me this morning as to the diet supplied in your hospital for sick people?—I have not got it here; we have got it on our files.

A-939. I will read it out to you. There are two important points in it. The full diet costs 4 as. 6 p. per head per diem?—Yes.

A-940. That does not include milk and sugar?—Yes.

A-941. But if you add milk and sugar and 1 lb. of rice to this diet, which consists of flour, wheat, rice, ghee, dal, vegetable, curry stuff, salt and firewood, the cost would be about 6 as. 6 p. ?—Yes.

A-942. That is for the patient in the hospital?—Yes.

A-943. Should I be right in saying that an ordinary worker doing a full day's hard work may require a little more?—He might require it, but I do not think he gets it.

A-944. He does not get it?—He does not get it; that is the point. I should think he would require it, yes.

A-945. If I take the workers' family unit to be 5, should I be right?—I think that is a pretty high average figure.

A-946. I am taking the general Indian figure?—I should say that was high.

A-947. What would you put it at?—I should put it at 4, not more.

A-948. If I put it at 4, and I multiply 6 as. 6 p. by 4, I get a figure of 26 as. ?—Yes.

A-949. Am I right then, in considering that the average worker who gets Rs. 20 a month, is not getting sufficient?—No, you have drawn some false premises there. Our work-people on this work are mostly agricultural labour and they do not pay the same rates as we pay; they are probably paying half the rates that we pay for the food in the hospitals; for instance, they will get their milk free.

A-950. I am taking the workers on your works; I am not taking the workers when they get back to the villages. On the works you agree with me that they would not get their milk free?—Yes.

A-951. Nor would they get any other article of food free?—No, you are right.

A-952. And, bazaar facilities not being very adequate, they would have to pay fairly well for all the supplies that they got?—Yes.

A-953. If I put it in that way, if they want the same sort of food that you would supply to a patient, then at 4 to a family, it would work out at about Rs. 1-10-0?—Yes.

A-954. Should I be correct in my estimate?—As an ideal I think that would be a very good figure to try to arrive at, but as a study in economics there is the other side of the question, that if we aim at that high ideal in what I call income, that is to say, feeding the man and trying to get him that wage, there must be the other ideal of increased output, or else the country is going to suffer.

A-955. I will come to that point a little later. All I wanted you to tell me was whether you agree with me or not that the minimum figure according to your own statistics should be that?—Yes. That is on the assumption that none of the other members of his family do any work, which only applies in a Mahomedan country; it does not apply in a Hindu country.

A-956. Sind is a Mahomedan country?—Yes, 70 per cent. Mahomedan.

A-957. In your memorandum you say: "No appreciable improvement in the efficiency of workers on the class of work dealt with by this Scheme has been noticed in recent years. Generally speaking, the efficiency of the labourer is as it was 25 years ago." First of all, have you any standard by which you go in regard to efficiency?—Yes.

A-958. What exactly do you mean by efficiency?—It is on the question of costs.

A-959. Would you explain it to me?—If a man's rate of wage is going to be increased and his efficiency also increases, then you will get a more or less equal rate. But the rates have gone up enormously; that is to say, the man's wage has gone up three times and the rates have gone up three times, which shows there is no increase in efficiency on the part of the man.

A-960. Let me be perfectly clear. Let us take a man who works say 8 hours a day and digs up say 100 cubic feet, taking a hypothetical figure. If he did that 25 years ago, do you think, if he is doing manual work, he is likely to do more to-day?—Yes. Why not?

A-961. On what basis?—If he wants to earn more, why should not he. My point is that if you want to increase his wage, he must be prepared to do a bit more work.

A-962. What I am putting to you is this: given the same machinery, given the same strength, given the same number of working hours, would he be capable of producing more in cubic feet than he did 25 years ago?—Why should not he? The world is always aiming at increasing efficiency. If you are going to assume that he was doing his maximum amount of work 25 years ago, then there can be no increase.

A-963. Supposing a man did his maximum amount of work 25 years ago?—I am not prepared to suppose that at all, because it is not so. That is my opinion as an engineer.

A-964. Let me put it to you in another way. There is a limit to the amount of work that a man can do?—Yes.

A-965. The amount of earth that he can dig?—Yes.

A-966. Supposing he got to that point 25 years ago, obviously he cannot go any further?—Obviously.

A-967. Therefore there is a limit in regard to purely manual work?—Quite so.

A-968. And that limit constitutes a bar to any increase based on the question of efficiency?—If he has reached that limit of efficiency previously, then of course there is no question of increase.

A-969. What are the other factors that you consider necessary in the matter of efficiency?—In my written memorandum I have mentioned one very important one: pride in his work, which is a common trait in Europe. I am trying to compare him with a superior type of workman. In Europe you can leave a gang of workmen not only to produce output but quality combined with output. It is impossible to leave a gang of labour in this country without supervision if you want quality. To me, as an employer of labour, quantity is not the only thing.

A-970. I am taking the manual labourer doing earth work. What is the average that your manual worker digs out in the course of the day?—It varies according to the man.

A-971. I am taking the average?—It is so difficult to take an average, because the Pathan will do 2½ times as much work as a man from the United Provinces, for instance.

A-972. Is that because the Pathan is physically stronger?—Yes.

A-973. To increase a man's efficiency would you agree with me that the first consideration is that he must have good food?—Exactly.

A-974. The second consideration is that he must have a decent house to live in?—Not necessarily; we meet some people to-day who would not live in such a house if you built it for them.

A-975. But would you agree with me generally that it would increase a man's efficiency?—Yes, to give a man a good house and good pay.

A-976. Would you also agree with me that if he were free from the ordinary worries which are connected with the money-lender's demands upon him, it would possibly increase his efficiency?—Yes, certainly.

A-977. That is to say if you gave your labour force good food, good houses and good clothes, you would thereby increase its efficiency?—I should think so, yes.

A-978. What has been done during recent years to increase the efficiency of labour? Let us take the points one by one. What has been done with regard to housing to increase the efficiency of the general class of worker that you have here?—Do you mean in his home or on the work?

A-979. In his home?—Nothing.

A-980. During the last three years that you have been here, has there been a rise in wages?—No; I should say there has been a slight fall in wages due to the presence of these machines.

A-981. During the last few years has anything been done for the education of these workers or their children?—Not by me. There is a free school in the township, but not on the works; that is quite impracticable.

A-982. Then would you agree with me generally that many of the factors which would ensure greater efficiency have been lacking?—Quite so, yes.

A-983. With regard to migration, you say in your memorandum that it is economic pressure that brings your workers here?—Yes.

A-984. So I take it that the conditions in the places from which they come must be worse than conditions here?—Yes, I should say so.

A-985. You also say there is a great deal of going back to the villages?—Yes.

A-986. But nevertheless you state that 40 to 50 per cent. of these workers do not go back?—Yes; that is of the local Sindhi labour.

A-987. You say that of the labour employed in the Rohri Canal Circle 50 per cent. remains; of the Right Bank Area labour approximately 40 per cent. remains; of the Eastern Nara Tract approximately 45 per cent. remains?—Yes.

A-988. Are there any other areas apart from those areas?—No, that is the general area.

A-989. So that I take it that roughly about 50 per cent. of labour does remain permanently?—Yes; but by remaining permanently I do not mean that they do not go back to their villages for visits; they will remain on the works, but they go back to their homes for a fortnight or three weeks.

A-990. You say : " Eastern Nara Tract. Approximately 45 per cent. of the labour force in this area works continuously on the canals throughout the year " ?—Yes, that is right.

A-991. " Right Bank Area. Approximately 40 per cent. of the labour force in this area works continuously on the canals throughout the year " ?—Yes, that is right.

A-992. " Left Bank Area. Some 50 per cent. of the labour employed in the Rohri Canal Circle remains on our works throughout the 12 months of a year." So that if they go back, they go back probably just for a short while ?—That is right.

A-993. Would I be putting it too high if I suggested with regard to the other half of labour that goes back for 4 or 5 months, that if they had better conditions of life and labour here, better wages, it would induce them not to return to their homes and you would also have them here as permanent residents ?—No, not necessarily, because if they are truly agricultural they always want to go back to their homes. That is why I specially mention the Eastern Nara Tract where we have the " Tharis." They are extremely poverty stricken, and yet those men go back to their villages. If they hear of a drop of rain falling in their country, they run back to it and sow their crops, though there is only a 50 per cent. chance of those crops ever being reaped ; they are prepared to leave their work for that chance.

A-994. What number would that 50 per cent. represent ? Is this taken on the basis of 30,000 workers or 19,000 ?—I take it on the 19,000 basis, but you can take it on the average if you like.

A-995. That is roughly about 25,000 ?—Yes.

A-996. So that any permanent schemes for their benefit would be feasible, because they are permanently here ?—Yes, so long as the works are in progress.

A-997. For instance, if a scheme such as sickness insurance were provided for those workers, it would be feasible ?—No, it would not be feasible. That is the one thing I have tried to think of. You cannot have sickness insurance, in my opinion, in a country which is subject to epidemics as countries in the East are. If you have got your medical and sanitary organization at such high efficiency as to preclude the possibility of epidemics then I should say sickness benefits would be practicable. In the East you cannot do it as an economic proposition. As a completely philanthropic proposition it can be done, but as an economic proposition worked on any lines by the State it would be impossible.

A-998. I am glad you have thrown some light on that ; but first of all, let me dispose of these works. Have you had any epidemics during the last three years ?—Yes.

A-999. Serious ones ?—Yes, cholera, small-pox, and we get the usual malaria each year ; October is a malarial month.

A-1000. Supposing a system were introduced of panel doctors who would be paid so much and whose services would be available, epidemic or no epidemic ; would you object to it ?—I would welcome the system if it were economically sound ; my opinion is that it is economically impossible. It is an ideal at which we should aim.

A-1001. You remember recently there was an amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—Yes.

A-1002. And opinions were invited ?—Yes.

A-1003. Did you offer any opinion ?—Yes ; I have promised to give you a copy of my opinion.

A-1004. The point was raised in the Assembly that the Workmen's Compensation Act should be applicable to canals and open works ?—Yes.

A-1005. Are you in favour of that ?—Not at present. I said I did not believe in rushing headlong into increasing legislation and so on, until we have had some experience. I recommended that the present Act should remain in force as it is for 5 years, and then we might review the situation. The Act, I think, has only been in force 3 years.

A-1006. *Mr. Clow* : Five years.—Then they can review the situation.

A-1007. *Divan Chaman Lall* : What experience could you gain of the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act in relation to open works and canals ?—All these things go back to the question of finance, whether such proposals are economically sound or not. The ideal is admitted by everybody. I have to look at it from the economic point of view. As I have said, I have done it voluntarily, and we shall get valuable information as to what the costs are. If we are to increase the scope, we must estimate

what the increased cost will be. Can works economically bear that increased cost? If they can, then I say I am entirely in favour of extending the Act.

A-1008. But, apart from the economic difficulty, you are generally in agreement that the benefits of that Act should be extended to these works?—As a blind ideal, yes; but I have to look at all my ideals from the economic point of view.

A-1009. You would not look at it from this point of view, for instance, that a man who serves you and in the course of his employment suffers an injury deserves to receive some benefit from you because he is jeopardising his life or limbs?—He is not necessarily jeopardising his life or limbs.

A-1010. But that is shown by the very fact that he suffers an injury in the course of his employment?—No. The present Act has brought under its scope the classes of work that contribute to accidents. Beyond these further cases of accidents are extremely rare. It may be said that because they are extremely rare the liability is all the smaller, and therefore why not bring them in? But the trouble will be to see that the machinery works. Our difficulty, as one of the Members of the Commission has pointed out, is to find out whether people who are not of high moral standard, e.g., the ordinary small contractor, are paying this compensation.

A-1011. Then that is another practical difficulty that you point out?—Yes.

A-1012. But, apart from that, you would agree?—Quite so; my agreement is evident from my action in accepting a voluntary liability.

A-1013. You made a statement at Karachi which I am sure you did not mean in the sense in which I first took it. In reply to some question you said the only thing you were interested in was the increase in the number of workers. I suppose you are also interested in securing better conditions for the workers?—I do not remember that particular statement, and I want to know the context in which it was used.

A-1014. I take it you would be interested in the conditions of life of the workers?—Oh, naturally.

A-1015. Is there any organization of workers here on the canals?—Not that I know.

A-1016. You would not be averse to an organization being set up?—No, not if it were properly run.

A-1017. Is the system of payments here usually weekly?—Yes.

A-1018. And it works satisfactorily?—No, not entirely. I personally am of opinion that if we could pay every fortnight the people would be better off, because on every transaction the *bania* will try to make something. The more the transactions the more the worker will be robbed. The less the number of payments, the less chance of the *bania* robbing the men.

A-1019. Would not more frequent payments reduce the incidence of interest charges?—No, I do not think it would in the slightest.

A-1020. If I owe a *bania* Rs. 10, if I pay him back Rs. 2 this week, naturally the interest has not to be paid on that Rs. 2 next week?—But the nature of the person is such that he has already borrowed another Rs. 2 after paying back that Rs. 2. My enquiries lead me to believe that the people are continuously in debt.

A-1021. To-day I found one or two workers who told me they were working from 6 in the morning until 6 in the evening?—I would not believe that.

A-1022. There were other workers who said they were working from 6 in the morning until 6 in the evening with a 3 hours break?—If a Pathan said that, yes, but I never attempt to go out and inspect my works at 8 o'clock in the morning because I never see anyone on the works at that hour. I make an exception of the Pathan, who will even work on moonlight nights, because he is not on daily wages and he is out to get all the money he can; he will work until he drops. I cannot accept the statement you make.

A-1023. I would like you to look into that matter and let us have a statement about that?—Yes, I shall be pleased to have an observation made as to exactly at what hours they do turn out.

A-1024. There are other workers who work for 8 hours at a stretch, from mid-night to 8 in the morning?—Yes.

A-1025. Would it not be possible to give them some sort of rest, a break?—Yes, if they would like to have it.

A-1026. Is any place provided for them where they can take this rest? I am merely drawing your attention to a grievance which I think is there, because I saw yesterday several of them coming early and lying down on the cement blocks?—Yes.

- A-1027. Large numbers of them ?—Yes, that is their usual habit.
- A-1028. Would it not be better to provide some sort of shelter at their places of work where they could take their rest ?—I do not think they would use it, unless it was very elaborate ; then they would have to be trained to it.
- A-1029. Is there a fair wages clause in your contracts ?—No.
- A-1030. Would it be desirable to have a fair wages clause ?—If practicable ; yes, it could be looked into.
- A-1031. In your memorandum you say : “ I consider that the general effect of contractors as intermediaries is satisfactory ”, while lower down you say : “ The result is unsatisfactory because we have one set of wits working against another set ” ?—Yes ; that is dealing specifically with the abolition of the Workmen’s Breach of Contract Act.
- A-1032. The Workmen’s Breach of Contract Act having been abolished, you are of opinion that the present arrangement of getting workers through the intermediaries is unsatisfactory ?—No, I do not. I am giving you the point of view of the employer.
- A-1033. Looking at the fight that is going on between the worker on the one side and the contractor on the other ?—Yes.
- A-1034. You have come to the conclusion that after the withdrawal of the Workmen’s Breach of Contract Act the position is not satisfactory ?—As regards payments. That really does not affect the efficiency of our works.
- A-1035. I am not considering efficiency ; I am only considering whether the conditions are satisfactory or not ?—Yes.
- A-1036. Could you oblige me by getting somebody in the office to work out a statement giving the cost of labour and comparing it with overhead charges ?—Yes, I have already promised to give that per 1,000 cubic feet of work. I am having that made out.
- A-1037. Is there any security of tenure for any one of these workers on the canals ? Can a man be dismissed at a moment’s notice ?—Yes.
- A-1038. Is there any security ?—There is no legal security at all ; there is just the practical security.
- A-1039. *Mr. Joshi* : You said the cost of housing these workers would fall upon the works. Does not the cost of housing the officers and others fall upon the works ?—No, they pay ; the officers pay on a 6 per cent. basis.
- A-1040. Have you worked out the figures ?—Yes. It so happens that on this particular scheme, during the period of construction, to try and get officers to remain on the scheme, we have let them have their houses rent-free ; but ordinarily, on all other construction works they have to pay the usual Government rent limited to 10 per cent. of their pay limited to 6 per cent. of the cost of construction of the building.
- A-1041. On your works this question of whether the cost falls upon the works or not was not considered so far as the officers were concerned ?—Yes, it was all worked out what the cost would be.
- A-1042. The cost does fall upon the works so far as your officers are concerned ?—Yes.
- A-1043. You think it is only the cost of housing the labourers which should not fall upon the works ?—No, I did not say that ; I said it was a question of economics.
- A-1044. How do you decide that the cost of housing the officers is economic, while the cost of housing the labourers is not economic ?—Your officer is a specialized person. If you are going constantly to change the managing director of a company, that company is more than likely to go smash ; but if you change the lower paid clerks in the office that does not necessarily affect in the slightest degree the prosperity of the company. In this particular case you have to concentrate on keeping the type of officer, professional and otherwise, that you require here on the works ; for that reason I recommended to Government that we should give him some concession above his ordinary pay to keep him here. I should not give it to him where the climate is not against him.
- A-1045. The only thing I do not understand is this. You appreciate the necessity of having good officers, and you think if they remain here permanently you will get a better quality of work ?—No, it increases the efficiency of the works.
- A-1046. You complain that the labourers do not take pride in their work, that they do not give that quality of work that is given by better paid workers in Europe and other places ?—It is not a complaint ; I do not complain at all ; it is merely a statement.
- A-1047. Is it not possible that if you housed these people as you house your officers and if they remained here permanently, they might show a better quality of work and also take pride in their work ?—I have already answered *Mr. Chaman Lall* on that

point and said: Yes, house them better, feed them better, and you will get higher efficiency.

A-1048. Do you not think the employer should begin first to make an experiment of treating the labourers better and then expect a better quality of work, instead of expecting the worker to show a better quality of work and then begin to pay him more?—I quite agree, but I would put it on the 50-50 basis, if possible.

A-1049. Have you made an experiment of taking say 500 workers, paying them a little more, housing them better, treating them better in every way, and did you find by experiment that workers treated in that way did not give a better quality of work?—No, I have not done that; that would be a rather interesting experiment.

A-1050. If you had made that experiment you might have had interesting results?—Yes, I might have had.

A-1050a. You think that experiment will be interesting?—Yes.

A-1051. You say that sickness insurance and workmen's compensation are economic questions. I agree with you. But you state that you will have workmen's compensation when it becomes economic?—Yes.

A-1052. Supposing you provide sickness insurance and workmen's compensation, do you not think that would enable you to get better results and greater efficiency?—You are aiming at the ideal. You are asking me what I think of an ideal. I agree with you that as an ideal it would be an excellent thing. But as a practical man I cannot simply look at an ideal; I have to look at the practical combination of that ideal with the facts.

A-1053. I am not asking you to look at any ideal; I am asking you to make an experiment of giving sickness insurance and workmen's compensation and seeing what is the result?—At whose cost is the experiment to be made? It comes back to economics again. I agree in principle. It is all a question of the practical side of it.

A-1054. Then I will not pursue that further. You said that as 5 years have passed, you are in favour of extending the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Yes, as soon as the 5 years experience has been reviewed.

A-1055. Why should you not, who are in charge of labour, take the initiative of suggesting to Government that such a thing should be done, instead of waiting for others to ask you whether it should be done or not?—Again the issue is confused. It is very easy for me to set up ideals and to suggest to Government that such things should be done, because I am paying with the taxpayer's money. I have to consider what the result of my action will be on the man who has to pay out of his own pocket.

A-1056. You have agreed to the principle that if the labourer is treated better his efficiency will increase. Is it not the duty, then, of a good employer to see from time to time what are the difficulties from which his labourers suffer?—Exactly.

A-1057. If he finds that workmen's compensation is a benefit should he not suggest to the Government that such a law should be passed?—If he can afford it.

A-1058. My point is this. As a large employer you do not find time to deal with these questions. You have no people to look after the welfare of your labour?—We have no welfare staff at all.

A-1059. Do you not think some such suggestion might be made by you?—I could make the suggestion. The question is, is it practicable to carry it out? The economic point comes in.

A-1060. You say that if you engaged a man to make suggestions about the welfare of your workers it would not be an economic proposition?—Not if there is any hope of carrying out his suggestions. I am in the position myself to make a hundred suggestions for the betterment of the people. The question is whether I can make any practical suggestions on economic grounds. I do not think, in scattered works of this nature, it would serve any useful purpose to have a welfare officer specially for the job.

A-1061. You stated that in the case of some of your labourers their economic position is better because their women and children work. Do you not think their women and children work because their wages are low?—Not necessarily. The Mohammedan workman's wife does not work because her husband's wage is low.

A-1062. Ordinarily it may be true that if a man is in difficulty his women and children have to work?—Not amongst the Mohammedans.

A-1063. But among the Hindus?—Quite so.

A-1064. Is it proper that we should add the income of the wife and children?—We again get back to the law of economics.

A-1065. *Mr. Joshi* : You say you have a school in the town ?—A municipal school. We have given the buildings free.

A-1066. What class of people make use of that school ?—Every class. There are no sweepers.

A-1067. Are they labourers ?—No, the labourers do not go.

A-1068. You have stated that there is work enough here for people for 300 days in the year. Why do you say 300 and not 365 ?—Because I am allowing the 65 days for Sundays and holidays.

A-1069. You do not work on Sundays ?—We give them a rest day. Here it is Friday.

A-1070. You made a statement that the contractors have to pay an advance of 25 per cent. for the season. After the repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act did they not find difficulty in making those advances ?—Yes. The abolition of that Act has tended to make the contractors reduce the extent of their advances.

A-1071. They still make advances ?—Yes.

A-1072. They do not mind taking that risk ?—They pass it on to us in the higher rates.

A-1073. In certain areas you say you do not make any arrangements for water supply. Do you not think that is necessary ?—I have already said that where there is any question of difficulty of water supply we do make arrangements.

A-1074. You do not think that generally you should make the necessary arrangements for a pure water supply ?—The first thing a labourer asks when he goes to a spot is "Is there a good lot of water here," and they find out the best well and continue to use it. If they complain that there is not a good water supply we make arrangements to carry the water for them.

A-1075. For how many hours do your workshops work ?—Eight hours *plus* overtime. They can work up to 12 hours.

A-1076. Would you have any objection to the hours of work in the factories being reduced, by law, from the present figure ?—No, I am in favour of the shorter hours.

A-1077. *Mr. Clow* : You refer in your memorandum to the *Brohis* or *Brohins*. You state they have shown partiality for canal excavation directly under Government. Are they so employed here ?—Yes. We employ them in little groups. We make them their own piece-workers. When we first started we had rather big groups and we made one of their own party responsible for 8 or 10 families. We discovered he was just as bad as the outside contractor, so we stopped it and made little groups of 10 or 12 working together.

A-1078. They get no advances ?—No.

A-1079. Why is an advance necessary to bring in the ordinary worker ?—I have never been able to fathom why.

A-1080. You gave the other day an instance of what seemed to be a very large percentage of the rate you were paying being retained by the contractor ?—That was an exceptional case. That is why I quoted it.

A-1081. Taking a typical case, do you consider the amount retained by the contractor is reasonable or unreasonable, having regard to the risks and other elements involved ?—I think on the whole it is reasonable. If you review the situation, Sind is a country of contractors. I could name off-hand half a dozen men whom I would put in the category of wealthy. The rest of the men are small contractors, who get a living wage, and very little more.

A-1082. We have come across a fairly large proportion of men who have been here for several years. Are annual advances necessary in their case, or do they get only the one advance at the beginning ?—If they are working for one contractor they only get the one advance. If they move off to another contractor (he tries to entice them away) he is prepared to give them further advances.

A-1083. Is there much enticement of that sort ?—Yes. It is very severe. He will not pay them any more wages but he tempts them with advances.

A-1084. You say that the mechanical excavators 20 years ago could not compete with labour ; but now can do so. I take it you do not mean to suggest that labour has got less efficient, but that there is an improvement in the excavator ?—In this particular case the mechanical excavator has improved, but the ordinary locomotive has not. I could not afford to have locomotives 20 years ago because my labour was so cheap ; whereas now-a-days the locomotive is a cheaper proposition than labour.

A-1085. Can you remember what the rate was in this part of the world when you first came out for earthwork?—About Rs. 3-8-0 per 1,000 cubic feet. Similar work is now Rs. 6-8-0.

A-1086. So that allowing for the rise in the cost of living you would say that, on the whole, the worker is getting more—measured not by money but by what he can buy?—Yes.

A-1087. He is consuming more than he was?—Yes, and he is better clothed.

A-1088. As regards sickness insurance, do you think the workers would be willing to pay insurance premiums, suppose a scheme were devised?—I think it is highly improbable, without an advance of education.

A-1089. Regarding the weekly holiday, are we to understand that on Fridays no work is normally done here?—No. If we have to put on anybody to work on that day it is generally the mechanical staff, and they get overtime. The contractors' men do not work.

A-1090. Do your staff get a holiday?—No. Our staff do all their measuring up on that day. Our staff work the full week.

A-1091. Would they not do better work if they were only employed six days in the week?—They would probably. I am not prepared to experiment. Our full strain of work is for such a short season. I would not mind trying an experiment on a small work.

A-1092. *Colonel Russell* : I noticed, in going round the housing area, that you had the sewage from the cess-pits removed by carts. Would it not have been a more economical scheme to have laid down a sewerage plant right away?—It was a toss-up whether it would have been. When the decision was made it was a question whether we would be able to dispose of our township as a going concern, and I reckoned that the capital expenditure was not justified at the time.

A-1093. You will admit that it would have been much better from a health point of view?—Yes, not that I have anything to complain of about the health of the township. It has been extraordinarily good.

A-1094. Can you let us know the number of women employed direct on the works, and what percentage of women work under contractors?—I will try to find that out. It is a very small figure.

A-1095. You say that the medical facilities are readily availed of by such female workers as there are on the works. Do your female workers also take advantage of the hospitals during confinement?—No. We have not had a single case.

A-1096. In that case are there any trained *dais* or midwives on the work?—No.

A-1097. They are left to shift for themselves?—Yes, so far as we are concerned.

A-1098. There is no distinction made between the wives of the workers and the wives of those who are not workers?—No.

A-1099. The Bombay Maternity Act does not apply on the Sukkur Barrage?—No.

A-1100. You say that the Workmen's Compensation Act is not applicable to the bulk of the labour force on the scheme, but that a working scheme, by arrangement with the contractors, exists for compensating workmen?—Yes.

A-1101. When contractors have to pay compensation, does each case come up for scrutiny in a regular way?—No. I have no direct control over that. The Commissioner in charge of the Workmen's Compensation Act is the person who goes into all the details.

A-1102. None of the officers on the works have anything to do with that?—No. We have no right to examine a contractor's books.

A-1103. Would it be better to amend the law in that direction?—Yes, it would simplify things. It might mean an increase of work on the already over-burdened engineer.

A-1104. *Mr. Joshi* : Have you any idea as to what will happen to the labourers when your work is finished?—No. They will probably seek for other work, the same as workers are pouring in to us from the Sutlej Valley and the United Provinces. So, when they leave us, they will probably pour on to some other big public work.

A-1105. Do you not think that at such a time the need for a public employment agency is more felt?—I agree with a public employment agency in principle but not in practice. If you were able to get highly paid officers to run it, it might be successful. I would not leave the running of it to lowly paid people. You have got a sort of employment agency now in the form of the contractor and *jemadar*.

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A-1106. Why do you say there will be greater corruption in a public employment agency than there is corruption to-day under the present system by the *jemadar*?—There is corruption. If it gets too high, the man loses his job, but it takes rather a long time for a Government petty official to lose his job. He has to be found out by Government. These other people are found out by the men.

A-1107. *The Chairman*: Referring to the question of the surplus of labour in Karachi, there is at present no agency for directing surplus labour in one area to another area where labour is required. Can you personally make such enquiries as are open to you in Karachi as to whether even a thousand or two men coming willingly to work under you to that extent would be a great benefit?—Yes, I will enquire into that.

A-1107a. With regard to the inspections which are made by the Director of Public Health in Bombay once a year and by the Assistant Director at Karachi, can you give us one or two specimens? Do they report in print?—They write to us officially.

A-1107b. Will you send us one or two specimens running over two years to see what kind of supervision they give?—Certainly. I will have that sent to you.

A-1108. You have been rather pressed to give personal opinions on what are semi-political questions. I do not yet quite understand whether the relationship of a public servant to his Government is different in this country from what it is in England, but we should never expect public servants to give opinions on matters of policy at home?—Here it does not matter I think. If we qualify our answers by saying: "Speaking personally", it does not matter. It is a difficult position, I admit.

The Chairman: I can appreciate your difficulty in giving personal opinions, because I suppose on one side or the other there might be complaints in these days of public assemblies.

A-1109. *Mr. Sastri*: There is a doubt left in my mind after what I have heard about Mohammedan labourers in this part of the world. You have said to-day that no Mohammedan woman works at all. Is that universal, or does it apply only to particular classes?—There are many low classes. One of the Members of the Commission asked a number of men what they were. They were obviously Ods, but they said they were Mohammedans. The ordinary Sindhi Mohammedan never brings his wife to work. Then there are a lot of Bhuis who call themselves Mohammedans, but they are not. No true Mohammedan of Sind brings his wife on to the works.

A-1110. I was told that the objection to a woman labouring only exists among the clerical classes and among the labourers who receive very high wages. Where people receive the ordinary wage they let their women work also in order to add to the family budget?—That is rather a compliment to our works. Of course, the Mohammedan women work in their own private fields, but they will not come on our works.

A-1111. *Mr. Ahmed*: You pay Rs. 20 a month to some of the workers, and you do not give them a pension on principle?—That is right; peons and *patwaris* get pensions.

A-1112. We saw three persons seriously ill in hospital to-day. One told us he got Rs. 20 a month; another told us he got 10 annas a day; and the other told us he got Re. 1 a day. The latter was taken ill 5 days ago, and said that you will enter in your books the fact that he was dismissed 5 days ago, and that you had no concern to send him to the hospital?—I do not know of what people you are talking.

A-1113. I take it that to those to whom you pay Re. 1 a day, if they fall ill you enter their names on the dismissal list?—Not necessarily so at all.

A-1114. It is not your duty in their case, if they are ill, to send them to the hospital or take care of them?—So far as I am concerned, you are giving me a hypothetical case. I was not shown the man at all. He might have been a contractor's labourer.

A-1115. If a daily labourer is taken ill, you do not undertake to send him to the hospital?—No.

A-1116. Or give him any medical assistance?—Yes, we do.

A-1117. The man we saw said you did not give him any medicine or any assistance whatever, and I heard from your officers that he is liable to be dismissed because he did not do any work after he fell ill?—This is a matter unknown to me.

A-1118. You do not supply drinking or bathing water for the workers?—Not bathing water. I have already told you under what conditions we provide drinking water.

A-1118a. You do not give them drinking water?—Not if the source of supply is sweet and good.

The Chairman: This has all been gone into before.

(The witness withdrew and the Commission adjourned to Khewra.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
SEVENTEENTH MEETING
AHMEDABAD

Thursday, 14th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

<p>The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. Sir VICTOR SASSOON, BART. Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.</p>	<p>Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DWAN CHAMAN LALL. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
<p>Mr. HOOSAINBHAY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.</p>	<p>} <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i></p>
<p>Lady V. R. NILKANTH Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA</p>	<p>} <i>Lady Assessors.</i></p>
<p>Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN</p>	<p>} <i>Joint Secretaries.</i></p>

Dr. JACOB SOLOMON, Honorary Secretary, and Colonel B. H. NANAVATI, C.I.E., Vice-President, of the Sanitary Association, Ahmedabad.

A-1119. *The Chairman* : Dr. Solomon, will you tell the Commission in a few words about the formation of your Association ?—Our Sanitary Association was formed more than 10 years ago. We have as its President one of the millowners here, the brother of the present President of the Millowners' Association. Then we have the Civil Surgeon and Colonel Nanavati as our Vice-Presidents, and various other people on our Committee. Our chief object is to help in the sanitation of the city. We have sanitary rounds in the city, and we ask Municipal Councillors, citizens and members of the Association to take part. We go round the city to see the housing cleanliness, sanitation and so forth. We make our reports and urge the Municipality to improve matters. Then we carry on propaganda in the city by way of magic lantern shows and occasionally cinema shows in the streets, the mill quarters and so forth, in which we have the co-operation of the Labour Investigating Officer, Mr. O. Rajan, the Assistant Director of Public Health, and so forth. We have also a male health visitor who goes round the city attending to complaints, himself sees some of these nuisances, and who moves the Municipality through me to do what is necessary in the matter.

A-1120. You yourself are a practitioner in the city ?—Yes.

A-1121. And your Association is a body of public-spirited citizens endeavouring to improve the sanitary and housing conditions of the whole city ?—Yes, the housing as well as the rest of the conditions of the city in matters of sanitation and health.

A-1122. I take it that as our enquiry concerns particularly industrial workers, in a place like Ahmedabad the industrial workers may be said to be affected by the sanitary conditions of the whole city ?—Certainly.

A-1123. Although a certain number of them dwell in *chawls* surrounding the factories, there are, I suppose, a great number of them spread in the city itself ?—Yes.

A-1124. In your memorandum you say : " In the opinion of the Association the room^s stated to be unfit for human habitation should be demolished and their place taken by others of a more suitable type." I take it there are many of these rooms which, in your

opinion, are unfit for human habitation?—Yes, there are very many. I think there are nearly 10,000 to 12,000 in Ahmedabad which are unfit for human habitation.

A-1125. Have you been successful in persuading the Municipality to demolish any of these?—We had an enquiry into the housing conditions in 1923, the report of which was sent to the Municipality in 1924. I am, and was, a Councillor and a proposal was made by me in the Municipality, but it was rejected and nothing was done. Up to the present nothing has been done, although there is a proposal before the Municipality to build 5,000 tenements, and a committee has been appointed to report on it. Some months have already elapsed and I do not know how far the Municipality will move to do anything in the matter.

A-1126. Do you tell us that the Municipality has adequate powers for dealing with these habitations?—Yes, in the Act.

A-1127. To which Act do you refer?—The Bombay City Municipalities Act, 1925.

A-1128. Then you say: "The Association would therefore suggest the Government should enforce by legislation that all Municipalities (including municipalities with industrial concerns) should have strict building bye-laws and see that they are equally strictly enforced." When you speak of the Government, which Government do you mean?—The Government of Bombay through the Act.

A-1129. You suggest that the Government of Bombay should have power to override the municipality?—To enforce the Act, yes, if the municipality fail in their duty, especially in an industrial centre like this.

A-1130. Do you suggest that the Government should step in where the municipality has failed to act?—Yes, and where, of course, the municipality is unable to do so, the Government may even give grants and do other necessary things, so that this state of affairs may not exist.

A-1131. In the long run in your opinion would it be likely to improve municipal government if you had the Bombay Government stepping in and taking things out of their hands?—It is not actually taking things out of their hands, but by enactment compelling them to do these things and by grants enabling them to do these things.

A-1132. Is that done in any other case?—I think the conditions existing in Bombay were so very bad, they were badly congested and so forth; then the Improvement Trust was started and things were done; a large amount of money was spent from the common treasury for the good of Bombay.

A-1133. *Col. Russell*: If I may say so, it is not unusual for Government to interfere in these matters in India.

The Chairman: No, but it is a question of the ultimate good, whether overriding of the local authorities results in much good in the long run.

Diwan Chaman Lal: In certain cases where the District Boards have not performed their duties properly Government have stepped in and taken away the powers conferred upon them under the Municipal Act.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola: They have powers of supersession.

The Chairman: I am aware of that in other countries as well; but the witness does not contemplate that; he contemplates that the bye-laws should be strict and should be forced on municipalities by the Provincial Government?—Yes. In the United Provinces there are what are called standard bye-laws of a very good kind put forward by the United Provinces Government for the benefit of the municipalities.

A-1134. But you have told us that you yourself are a member of the Municipality here?—Yes.

A-1135. Do you not find that you can get support?—In the Municipality, as at present working, it is very difficult to get support for any ideal thing like this.

A-1136. What is the chief obstacle on the municipality for carrying out these reforms?—The first obstacle is the ignorance of the voters who return ignorant Councillors. I am nominated by Government.

A-1137. In your memorandum under the head "Health" you say: "It should be compulsory by law that every mill which employs more than 3,000 to 4,000 should have a qualified full-time medical man on its staff with all necessary equipments." Do you consider that it is the duty of millowners to provide full medical service for all those whom they employ?—Yes, I should think so.

A-1138. Quite apart from what the Municipality may do?—Yes.

A-1139. You say in your memorandum: "Drinking water arrangements exist in most mills. The provision of drinking rooms should be made compulsory in each mill

under the Factory Act.' Is there not a provision in the Factories Act at present on that matter?—I do not think it is compulsory under the Factories Act. The drinking rooms here were provided after the mill-hands threatened to strike; for that reason many mills provided these drinking rooms.

A-1140. In what way do you suggest to us that the present law is inadequate?—I suggest that it should be included in the Rules made under the Factories Act that every mill should have drinking rooms. Very often the workers drink hot water from pipes. Recently in the Marsden Mill there was a threat of a strike or a strike did take place, I am not sure which. Then Mr. Marsden provided ice for the workmen because the water from the pipe was too hot to drink.

A-1141. In your memorandum you make an interesting reference to this new system of ventilation which is called the "Carrier System". The Commission proposes to take an opportunity to see that modern invention. You also refer to the vacuum stripper in the card room of the cotton mill. Is the vacuum stripper in general use in Ahmedabad?—No, only in four or five mills.

A-1142. You tell us that your Association is in favour of enforcing an 8-hour day by law, "and until such time as this could be brought into force permission for working for 11 hours on any single day should be withdrawn." To what cases are you referring there; do any of the cotton mills here work 11 hours?—Yes, the maximum number of hours fixed by the Act is 11 per day and 10 hours usually. That maximum should be abolished.

A-1143. Do they in fact work for 11 hours?—Yes, on occasions they do.

A-1144. I am speaking of 11 hours actual work?—Yes, 11 hours actual work.

A-1145. There are mills here that are working 11 hours, not counting the hour of rest?—Yes, not counting the hour of rest. That is done on occasions when a mill is unable to work for one reason or another; then the next day they may have an 11-hour stretch with one hour interval, making 11 hours without counting the interval.

A-1146. That is done where there has been an extra holiday or where there has been a breakdown of the machinery?—Generally after a breakdown or a stoppage from some cause, and we urge that this 11 hours in the day should not be allowed.

A-1147. *Mr. Sastri*: Towards the end of your memorandum you refer to the financing of the great improvements that you suggest?—Yes, the Servants Self-Supporting Fund.

A-1148. You say: "One might wonder how the industry is to bear the additional burden. The Association believes that it is the duty of Government to put the industry on a sound footing so that it may be enabled to bear the additional burden." It is not clear to me how the Government could do that unless it takes the money of the taxpayer.—Of course, it is for the Government to find that out, but I might suggest that there might be increased taxes put on the importation of commodities when similar commodities are manufactured in this country.

A-1149. Then you suggest a measure of protection?—Yes, or bounty as the Government may think proper. The Government might have a detailed enquiry made into this matter. But, we urge that these things should be done so that the workers may be happy and healthy, and it is for Government to find out ways of putting the industry in a fit condition.

A-1150. But Government would want advice from experienced persons?—I think it would be for the financiers to advise.

A-1151. Later on you suggest a scheme of joint management of a fund to be raised in various ways. There is such a fund, is not there, though not in the precise form that you have suggested?—There is such a fund but only in one calico mill. We suggest that might be tried for all the mills together. A lot of money might be saved by these mills which are near together having one medical man between them and a properly equipped dispensary.

A-1152. Is it an essential part of your scheme that the public should be made to pay part of it?—It is not quite essential, but I do not think the public would object to it. One pie in the rupee might be paid on the sale of yarn and cotton cloth.

A-1153. In one way or another do you not see that the cost of your suggestions comes upon the public or the general taxpayer in the end?—Yes, to a certain extent it does, but for the sake of the health of these people, especially when we see them working in the mills and coming out of the mills in a wretched condition of health, I think such a tax would be advisable.

A-1154. As the moving spirit of a public-spirited Association, I should like to ask you whether you have taken note of the difficulties in the way of the realization of your object. Do you appreciate that a scheme which requires in the end that the taxpayer should be

additionally burdened in this country, runs the risk of being rejected on that very account?—Do you mean rejected by the people who take the benefit of it, or by those who have the power to vote the money?

A-1155. You suggest that Government should take this action. Government cannot take action unless it brings measures before the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Council is composed of representatives of the taxpayer?—But if, for instance, this Commission recommends it, then I take it there will be propaganda in favour of it and people will come to their senses and vote for it.

A-1156. In other words, your Association is convinced that there is no income left in the industry itself to support this additional burden?—It might be paid out of the Agents' commission, a portion, if not the whole, of it.

A-1157. It would be interesting to make a calculation as to what the Agents' commission amounts to, and whether, if it were spread over many mills and used to finance these beneficent schemes which you have suggested, that would be a feasible method of finance?—In the calico mill in which this scheme is being carried out the agent is taxed 6 pias in the rupee.

A-1158. Do you realize that your suggestions are somewhat drastic?—Yes, certainly they are drastic.

A-1159. You may be cutting at the very roots of the industry?—I do not think so.

A-1160. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What is the condition of health of the ordinary residents of Ahmedabad as compared with those employed in factories?—The nature of health of the ordinary worker in factories?

A-1160a. No, the ordinary factory worker as compared with the rest of the poorer population in Ahmedabad?—There are also workers in other labouring concerns.

A-1161. I am drawing a distinction between the workers in textile mills and the rest of the poorer population; is there any difference?—The rest of the poorer population, though they do not work in textile factories, work in other kinds of works like iron works. They are also labourers and there is not very much difference between these two classes of labourers; both come under the same category as regards health and living conditions. But if you talk of other poorer classes of people, then they are little better off.

A-1162. I am talking of the poorer classes, I am talking of the same class of people from which textile labour is drawn?—I do not think there is very much difference between the workers in textile factories and other labourers.

A-1163. Then would you advocate all the measures which are embodied in your recommendations also in regard to those other people, or would you restrict them to textile labourers only?—If the labour employed is very large then I would extend the same to the other works.

A-1164. If they are not employed in large numbers what would you do in regard to those who are outside the textile mills?—I do not think it is possible for smaller industries to stand the strain.

A-1165. You have advocated the imposition of taxation to make textile labour healthy and happy. If the industry cannot stand the strain you have advocated that the general public including those poor people should be made to pay for making the textile labourers healthy and happy; is that what you advocate?—The tax is very little; it is one pie in the rupee.

A-1166. I am not talking of the amount of taxation. Of course, one pie in the rupee collected in the whole of India would amount to a very large sum. I am merely asking you whether you think the State should impose taxation to make a small portion of the population employed in a particular industry healthy and happy?—If the State cannot afford funds from the general revenues, I think it would be justified, for the sake of health, in levying a small tax like this.

A-1167. Levying additional taxation?—Yes.

A-1168. In order to relieve one class of workers?—I should think so.

A-1169. You say in your memorandum "There are some mills in the city which are so cramped up for space as to render their further development and expansion impossible. If such could be removed to localities where more space is available, it would be better for the health of the workers thereof." That is to say, the old factory buildings are to be demolished and the factories are to be removed to more salubrious surroundings. That cost also should be paid by the State out of the general revenues?—Not necessarily, because there is the other alternative. They must either restrict their works to the available space, without making any extension, or, if they want to extend, go out.

There are two mills in the city which are a great nuisance ; they are situated within the city walls and the owners want to extend them. If they are extended it means ill-health to the surrounding people and to the mill-workers themselves for want of space, ventilation and so forth. Either they must stop extending or go out.

A-1170. Every piece of building work that is done in Ahmedabad is, I suppose, subject to the bye-laws of the Municipality ?—Yes.

A-1171. If that is so, any extension which will produce insanitary conditions would be objected to by the Municipality under its regulation ?—The power is there at present ; even now, notwithstanding the existence of bye-laws, buildings are rising contrary to building bye-laws.

A-1172. I was restricting myself to the extension of an existing factory. You say “ if there is no space to extend, either do not allow them to extend or let them remove ”?—That would depend upon the votes of the Councillors.

A-1173. The enforcement of building regulations will not depend upon the vote of the Councillors ; that is an executive function ; the executive officers are bound to carry out the regulations laid down by the municipality ?—But the Municipal Board always interferes with the work of the officers by passing resolutions.

A-1174. In the matter of carrying out the rules and regulations framed by them and sanctioned by Government ?—Yes, very often ; that is why there is difficulty in Ahmedabad.

A-1175. Then further on in your memorandum you advocate very stringent amendment of building regulations to be applied to Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-1176. Do you know what its effect would be ? Bombay has tried it and the effect has been a substantial increase in rents ?—We are suggesting it for the sake of health.

A-1177. I quite see that. But you are in favour of a stringent building regulation which will have the effect of increasing the rents which in turn will be paid by the employer as an item in the cost of living of the labourer ?—There are cheaper methods that could be adopted in the case of labourers, and I have mentioned them in my memorandum.

A-1178. You have given an answer so far as the measures that directly affect the industry are concerned, but what is your remedy for measures which will indirectly affect the industry by raising the cost of living in the direction of rents and other things ?—I do not think the increase of rents would be very much.

A-1179. It is not a question whether it will be more or less, it is a question of increase of rent which is one of the items of a family budget which would have to be paid by the employer ?—Increase in one way but decrease in another ; there will be a saving in doctors' bills or something else. The final budget for the month may not vary.

A-1180. Is your position that any indirect burden imposed on an industry should not be of a character which would raise the cost of production and place the industry in a position not to successfully compete in the open market ; or would you go so far as to say that it is better to suspend the industry rather than not to adopt the measures you have advocated ?—I have stated that industry should be made to stand on a proper footing so that it can make a profit. The other measures that I have suggested are for the sake of health. They ought to be enforced, because if they are left to be carried out voluntarily, they are not carried out. The condition of health, particularly in a very congested city like Ahmedabad, is very bad and the nature and the degree of its badness can only be recognized by personal contact with the ways of living of the workers.

A-1181. I agree. Every one is in sympathy with improving the conditions in which labour lives, and especially regarding their health. I was asking you this question in order to ascertain whether you have considered the economic aspect of the problem and what the effects on the industry will be, because it is likely that if the industry is not able to stand on a sound footing and Government do not give protection as you have recommended, the industry may have to close down. You will not go so far as that ?—I say Government should step in. It is a special disease coming on suddenly ; drastic steps should be taken to eradicate it.

A-1182. I think every one in the Commission is in favour of doing all he can for the health of the people. I was merely asking you what would happen in a particular circumstance. You would not go to the extent of bringing about the closing of the mills ?—Certainly not.

A-1183. *Mr. Glow* : You say in your memorandum “ Some of the mill *chawls* were constructed with privies and the landlords with a view to save themselves from the municipal tax have either abolished or locked the privies to the great inconvenience of the tenants thereof.” Does that mean that the tax is less where there is no privy ?—Yes, that is so.

A-1184. Will you give us particulars as to how the tax is assessed?—There is a separate sanitary cess which is charged for a privy when the privy is existing; they charge Rs. 4 per annum as sanitary cess when there is one privy existing in a house; they charge Rs. 1-8-0 when a man has no privy in his house but uses the municipal privies or goes outside anywhere. When people submit plans they make provision for a privy and very often they build it, but afterwards they lock it up or pull it down.

A-1185. The tax has had the effect of definitely discouraging sanitation?—It has happened so.

A-1186. In your memorandum you say: "It is neither right nor fair that the Agent's commission, which often is excessive, should be the first claim on the industry and that it should be based on profit earned rather than on production only." Does that mean that you are in favour of basing the commission on production?—No; on profit rather than on production.

A-1187. I thought you meant it was neither right nor fair that it should be based on profit?—No.

A-1188. What is the more usual method of calculation here? How many mills base the commission on production and how many on profit?—Practically all the mills base it on production.

A-1189. *Mr. Joshi*: You said Dr. Solomon, that on account of the Municipal Councillors being ignorant you cannot get reforms introduced. Can you tell us what proportion of the textile workers have got votes in the municipal elections?—I cannot say exactly what proportion it is, but a very large number have.

A-1190. What is the qualification for a municipal vote?—I think payment of Rs. 3 rent per month or having a house which fetches Rs. 3 rent per month.

A-1191. As regards your suggestion that Government should have power to compel municipalities, do you think that the present Legislative Councils will give that power to the Government?—Perhaps not, but I think the recommendation should be made.

A-1192. You say that the monthly ground rent varies from 8 as. to Rs. 3. Is that Government land or private land?—Mostly private land. If poor people are given such land by adopting a regular scheme, they will save much of their house rent and will have nice types of houses.

A-1193. You want Government to purchase land and make it available for housing of the labourers?—Possibly Government land may be available already; if not, they can purchase and give it for this purpose.

A-1194. As regards your welfare scheme you desire that it should be done by legislation?—If you refer to the last suggestion of ours, I do not desire that it should be by legislation; it is advisory.

A-1195. You want it to be introduced by voluntary effort. Suppose a proposal is made that a workers' welfare fund should be started by legislation, do you think it would be desirable or not?—I think it is better to do it by legislation.

A-1196. If there is to be a welfare fund established by legislation you have suggested that the public should be taxed to some extent?—Yes.

A-1197. Do you think that the employers also should be taxed to some extent?—In so far as they themselves will be purchasing the cloth they would also be among the public to buy it and would be paying taxes.

A-1198. I am asking you whether there should be no special responsibility of the employers as employers, not as members of the public?—They may also join in it.

A-1199. They should also pay contributions as employers?—Yes.

A-1200. As regards women workers you have made several suggestions and one of them is that their hours of work in certain departments should be reduced. What is your exact suggestion; by what proportion should they be reduced?—I think it should be a law that women should not work more than 8 hours in the mills.

A-1201. Do you desire that the hours of work should be reduced in any particular departments or in all the departments?—In only two; I have mentioned the winding and the reeling departments because only women work in those departments.

A-1202. I am told that women also work in the spinning department?—Yes, they do. If we restrict the number of working hours only in the two departments that I have mentioned, then those women who cannot work longer hours and who have to attend to their household duties can work in these two departments while other women may work along with men in the spinning department and thus earn more.

A-1203. What will be your attitude if the hours of work for all classes of workers are proposed to be reduced?—In fact I am in favour of it.

A-1204. You are in favour of 8 hours theoretically, but suppose a practical proposal is to be made, would you not be in favour of reducing the hours to some extent practically and not in theory?—Yes, I should be.

A-1205. You were asked by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola whether some of your suggestions with regard to sanitation may have the effect of increasing the rents. Are there no methods by which you can make some lands available without increasing the rents?—You might.

A-1206. If building space is made available the rents do not increase?—The rents increase mostly because people hold up the land.

A-1207. So you think more land is available?—That is why we have suggested two things—one is, imposing a tax on land lying vacant, that is to say, which is not used for building purposes and held up by rich men; and the second is, to remove the tax that is imposed on agricultural land to be put to non-agricultural use, that is for building purposes. Our suggestion is that, for the sake of city extension, no tax should be charged on land which is within 5 miles radius of the city.

A-1208. So if proper methods are adopted, the rents need not go up?—Yes.

A-1209. That is to say, you feel that building improvements can be made without necessarily increasing the rents?—Yes.

A-1210. *Miss Power*: Dealing with medical facilities, in one of the memoranda submitted to us there is a statement that civil hospitals and municipal dispensaries are only opened during the hours in which mills are opened and therefore cannot be made use of by the mill workers. Is that a fact?—Yes, that is a fact.

A-1211. Does that mean that the whole of the mill population have only such hospitals as are provided by the mill authorities to which they go?—Quite so, unless they stay at home and attend the municipal dispensaries.

A-1212. Does that mean then that they do not go to the municipal dispensaries unless by force of circumstances they are required to stay at home?—Yes.

A-1213. Was not the Municipality approached to take steps to keep their dispensaries open to suit the convenience of the mill workers?—There was a proposal before the Municipal Council that the hours be extended to suit the convenience of the mill hands, but this proposal was not agreed to.

A-1214. What percentage of the workers, for whom the municipal dispensaries were intended, are actually mill workers?—I cannot say exactly.

A-1215. I presume it is a very high percentage, is it not?—I suppose so.

A-1216. Dealing with the question of health visitors you say there are none in the town. Have any of the local societies and organizations ever raised this matter with the Municipality?—I and Colonel Nanavati, after our return from the Delhi conference on this subject, brought forward a resolution which was thrown out; it was thrown out because the Civil Surgeon was against it unfortunately.

A-1217. Apart from that, was there any constant pressure from associations in the town for the inauguration of a service of that kind?—One is about to be started. The Red Cross has promised to sanction the necessary amount for the purpose of having one lady health visitor; one has gone for training to Poona and we hope to employ her within a few months.

A-1218. Dealing with sickness insurance you say "The labour unions can arrange for this and the Government should contribute a certain percentage towards it or give a subvention." You do not, I presume, suggest a scheme where the worker would not pay any contribution?—The worker should pay his contribution himself and the Government should give a subvention; that is what we mean.

A-1219. Would you have it run through the union? You say "Labour unions can arrange for this"; what do you mean by that?—The worker will pay a certain amount to the union and the union on its side will pay to the man when he cannot go to work due to sickness.

A-1220. Do you think there will be any objection on the part of the workers to pay their subscriptions to the scheme of sickness insurance?—I cannot say that.

A-1221. You do not know?—One mill here is having a provident fund, namely, the Advance Mill. They cut down one anna per rupee from the pay of the workers and contribute an equal amount themselves; interest at 6 per cent. is added on to the total amount. The amount is returned to the worker after he finishes 20 years' service,

or to his heirs if he dies earlier. People do not take advantage of this system because they are ignorant. I am told that only about 50 clerks and about 45 jobbers and others have taken advantage of it in a mill of over 1,000 workmen.

A-1222. That is rather different from a sickness insurance scheme ?—Yes.

A-1223. You also deal with the question of maternity benefits. In one of the memoranda submitted to us there is a statement that the Maternity Benefit Act is not yet operative in Ahmedabad ; is that true ?—So far as I am aware, it is operating since a few months ; they have started within a year, after it was made compulsory by Government.

A-1224. Has there been a tendency to dismiss women on account of this benefit ?—I do not think so.

A-1225. You do not know ?—I cannot say. The Advance Mill have been giving maternity benefits during the last 12 years, far earlier than the Government thought of making it compulsory.

A-1226. You say : “ a minimum wage legislation is essential, as the first charge on the industry should be a living wage.” Could you enlarge that a little and say what sort of minimum wage you have in mind ?—If you take the family to be himself, his wife and two children, I think he would require at least Rs. 50.

A-1227. Is that the wage you suggest for a skilled or an unskilled worker ?—Rs. 50 is the minimum required for a family of 5. If both the man and his wife work the total wages should come to Rs. 50.

A-1228. You say if the woman does not work the man should get Rs. 50, but if she does work the man and the woman should together get Rs. 50 ?—Yes.

A-1229. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do you not include the two children ?—I leave them for the present.

A-1230. *Miss Power* : The minimum wage should have reference to the earnings of one individual and not of two. What do you think should be the minimum wage for an unskilled male worker ?—I should put it at Rs. 50.

A-1231. For an unskilled male worker ?—No, not Rs. 50,—the male worker and his wife, Rs. 50 for both together ; Rs. 35 and 15 will probably be a fair wage.

A-1232. *Lady Nilkanth* : You suggested that Municipal by-laws should be improved and enforced. I take it that you did not mean that Government should step in and take the powers which the Municipality has at present ?—I never meant that.

A-1233. You think that the present by-laws are faulty to some extent ?—To a great extent.

A-1234. Your oral answers created in me the impression that Government should come forward and take away the powers of the Municipality ?—What I meant was that Government should step in and bring the Municipality to its senses, make it realize its responsibility to the people and somehow or other see that the by-laws are carried out.

A-1235. If the Municipality does not do its work and does not enforce the by-laws, in what way would you expect Government to step in to bring the Municipality to its senses ?—For instance, in Ahmedabad there are about 10,000 to 12,000 tenements unfit for human habitation. The Government can force the municipality to erect temporary huts for these people till new ones are built and get the unfit tenements pulled down. Now nothing is being done except that a very few houses have been demolished and that too after pressure upon the Municipality for a very long time by the Sanitary Association.

A-1236. Is it not the duty of the Municipality to do that ?—If you pull down houses and evict people where will they go ?

A-1237. With regard to the tax on privies, is there a separate tax on every individual who uses a privy apart from the tax on the privy as such ?—No, not for every individual who uses that. I was not explicit when I explained the system some time back. The rule is : supposing there are 50 tenements and 4 privies every tenement is charged Rs. 4, not every privy. If there is a chawl of 50 tenements and no privies are provided, the cess is Rs. 1-8-0 per tenement.

A-1238. In order to reduce the number of hours women work you say that they might be asked to work in the reeling and winding departments, and reduce the number of hours in those departments. Would women with plenty of time agree to work in those departments instead of in the spinning department ; for working in the spinning department would give them more wages by longer hours than working in the other department which has shorter hours and would give less wages ?—When they have time they would naturally go to the spinning department.

A-1239. Even women with less time will be tempted to go to the department that would give them more money. Even if you give the concession to all the departments, is it not likely that in actual practice women would not take advantage of that?—The women working in the spinning department have to work side by side with men and bear a great strain. Therefore many would prefer to work in the other departments.

A-1240. In your scheme for welfare work among industrial workers, apart from finance, what sort of action do you expect Government to take?—In a place of such importance like Ahmedabad, there should be some co-ordinated action on the part of the various mills in the direction of welfare work among industrial classes. Government might legislate in that direction; they might levy a small tax for the purpose, appoint a board of representatives for the various interests concerned or take any action they think fit to bring about this co-ordinated action.

A-1241. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum you say that some of the housing accommodation provided by the mills is not fit for human habitation. What procedure do you follow before you condemn a particular area as unfit for human habitation and that it should be opened up and cleaned for rebuilding purposes?—The Municipality gives a notice to the landlord saying that the house is unfit for human habitation, that it must be closed down or certain necessary changes must be made therein. If the Municipality thinks that the house will not be fit for human habitation whatever may be the changes made in it, it simply gives a notice that the house must be closed down within a certain period, say 1 to 3 months.

A-1242. In your experience is this notice commonly served by the Municipality?—Yes. After the notice is served time is given for raising objections. These objections are gone into and the question decided.

A-1243. Does the Municipality serve many notices like that?—It does of late. They have been pulling down some houses every year.

A-1244. Is a doctor called in to certify that the house is unfit for human habitation?—The Health Officer is responsible for that.

A-1245. If the report of the Health Officer is a sufficient ground, why does not the Municipality do more?—Because there is not sufficient space for the evicted people to go to.

A-1246. Could not the Municipality set apart some money for acquiring lands for these people? Is there an Improvement Trust of any description here?—There is no consistent action in the Municipality here.

A-1247. In that case, the Municipality alone is to blame, not the constitution under which it works nor the procedure that could be adopted?—That is so.

A-1248. Is it not the duty of the Municipality to improve sanitation and housing by clearing up areas which are unfit for human habitation?—Yes.

A-1249. With regard to the acquisition of lands by Government for building workmen's houses, do you know that the Holland Commission of 1916 recommended that steps should be taken in that direction? Has anything in that direction been done here?—I know only this; once an offer was made to a Labour Union of a plot of land, and the Labour Union refused it.

A-1250. Who made the offer?—Government.

A-1251. When did they make it?—About the year 1920.

A-1252. With regard to the compulsory enforcement of by-laws relating to construction of tenements, you say in your memorandum that "this should not be left to either the discrimination or the mercy of respective municipalities."—Yes.

A-1253. Why should the Government intervene, when the municipality has got an Act and by-laws and does not choose to put them into effect?—In important places like Ahmedabad where the failings of the Municipality affect a large number of people Government must take some action to make the Municipality do its duty by the people.

A-1254. You have a Municipality of 60 members, 48 of whom are elected by the people and it is entirely in the hands of the commissioners to take whatever action they think necessary in the interests of the city?—Yes.

A-1255. If the rate-payers choose to elect commissioners who would not act, why should Government intervene?—In the interests of the suffering population.

A-1256. But surely you do not expect local self-Government to be taken away from your people?—But Government must see that local self-government is carried on for the benefit of the people.

A-1257. The rate-payers elect the Municipality and they get what they elect. What more do they want ?—It is the duty of Government to find a remedy when large number of people suffer.

A-1258. In your memorandum you give certain figures relating to death and birth rates. Take the Khadia ward. Are there industrial workers there ?—Yes, there are a few.

A-1259. The infant mortality per thousand births is given to be 376, or 40 more than the average for Ahmedabad. Yet there are no mills there. What is that due to ?—That is due to great congestion. The density of population per acre is 213.

A-1260. But that is not a mill area and the millowners are not responsible for the state of affairs there ?—A few mill hands are staying there also. But the death rate is high not only among the mill hands, but also among the ordinary citizens of Ahmedabad.

A-1261. That was exactly what I wanted to get. Yes, the death rate is high not only among the mill population, but also among the general population. But the death rate is higher among the mill population.

A-1262. *Mr. Sautri* : Are mill hands living in Raikhad ?—Yes, they are living there. But the density per acre is only 54. A large number of people stay in one room tenements. The mortality is 327, not so very high as Khadia. Anyhow the general death rate is very high.

A-1263. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I take it you have no statistics except this to justify the statement you made that infant mortality among mill workers is higher than it is among the general body of citizens of Ahmedabad.—No.

A-1264. In your memorandum you say that wages should be the first charge on industry. Is that not so at present ? You must pay wages before you do anything else ?—I refer to the minimum wage or a living wage for the workers. Usually the Agent's Commission is put down as the first charge.

A-1264a. In your memorandum you say that "the death rate would have been higher if the people were not accustomed to sleep outside." In a place having the climate of Ahmedabad is there no harm if the people sleep outside ?—When the houses are very congested it is better for their health to sleep outside. For 8 months in the year this can be conveniently done. There is neither rain nor severe cold during this period.

A-1265. With regard to your sanitary cess, is that intended to meet the cost of cleaning latrines ?—Yes.

A-1266. Does that meet your expenses under that head ?—No.

A-1267. Why then do you not increase it ?—The system of cleaning the privies here is this: the sweeper of a particular street or an area has a hereditary right to that job. The Municipality charges Rs. 4 per tenement per year, out of which it gives Rs. 3-4-0 to the sweeper and reserves 12 annas for supervision.

A-1268. Your sanitary cess amounts to Rs. 2 lakhs; whereas your expenditure under the head of conservancy amounts to Rs. 6 lakhs. Why do you not increase the sanitary cess to pay for the sanitary work ?—What we get here is the cess on tenements with privy accommodation.

A-1269. But in Bengal each house in a municipal area to which the Latrine Section has been applied has to pay a tax whether it has a privy or not.—That is not the case here.

A-1270. Do you not think that that would be a good idea ?—That is what some of us here are urging.

A-1271. Why does not the Municipality give effect to that practice which exists in Bengal ?—It has not been able to do so.

A-1272. Then the Municipality is to blame ?—They want to have the cheapest thing practically.

A-1273. You have told us about some chawls which were erected with privy accommodation, but that the privies were locked by the owners in order to avoid the tax. If you levy a tax on each tenement whether there is a privy or not, the owner would not do this.—I quite agree. That is what some of us are pressing on the Municipality.

A-1274. With regard to your drainage tax also do you follow the same principle ?—Yes.

A-1275. I see that your expenditure is Rs. 4 lakhs against an income of Rs. 2 lakhs. Why do you not increase that tax?—We are now gradually increasing the number of drainage connections to houses. It will take some time for all the houses to have drainage connections and completing the drainage works. When that is done the taxes may be raised and the expenditure met fully from the income.

A-1276. In your memorandum you say that "the appointment of a Board of Health in mill or other industrial areas is advisable." Would you be any better with a Board of Health than you are with the Municipality and the Sanitary Association, for instance?—Of course if the right type of men are put on the Board.

A-1277. Who would form the Board of the Health which you have in view?—I would put on the Board men like the Director of Public Health, a representative of the Sanitary Association, and one or two Government officers engaged in work connected with the mills.

A-1278. You still want Government officers, and nominees of Government; who will finance the operations of the Board of Health?—If the suggestion contained in the memorandum is adopted, measures can be devised to finance their schemes.

A-1279. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are of opinion that 11 hours work at a stretch is a hardship and that that must be divided into two portions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon?—Yes.

A-1280. In reply to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtools you said that the sanitary conditions under which the ordinary people live are about the same as those in which the mill-workers live?—Not in all cases.

A-1281. And the Municipality is responsible for it?—Yes.

A-1282. Is it not the duty of the Inspectors to report to Government the conditions under which the workers live and is it not the duty of Government to strictly enforce the regulations relating to sanitation and health?—Yes.

A-1283. Is it not the duty of the mill-owners to see to the good sanitary conditions of workers dwellings, even though it costs them some money?—But it is not every mill that has provided housing facilities.

A-1284. At least those that have provided?—No mill has provided for all labourers.

A-1285. Are you not in favour of housing accommodation being provided by the mill-owners?—Yes, as far as possible.

A-1286. Should they not in the interests of the health of the workers keep them in a sanitary condition?—Yes.

A-1287. As a rule are not mill areas dirtier than other areas on account of the smoke and other things?—Not only mill areas but several other areas in the city and outside are dirty.

A-1288. Should not the mill-owners keep them clean?—Some do, others do not.

A-1289. Is it not a good thing to make less profit and spend more on sanitation and welfare concerning workers?—Yes. The mill hands suffer much. Children are left in the streets while the mothers work in the mills. One child was run over by a motor car, because the mill-owners have not employed even a single servant to look after the children.

A-1290. *Divan Chaman Lall*: That is not the case in all the mills?—No, not in all the mills.

A-1291. *Mr. Ahmed*: How many members of this Municipality are elected by the mill-owners and how many by the workers?—There is no separate electorate for the mill hands or for mill-owners.

A-1292. What will be the proportion of mill-owners' representatives to mill-workers representatives?—In the Paras ward all the commissioners are elected practically by the mill-workers and officers working in the mills.

A-1293. To what class does the majority of commissioners belong? Is there not a single representative of the workers there?—There are three members belonging to the lowest classes, practically elected by the workers.

A-1294. *Divan Chaman Lall*: Is that a special constituency?—No. They have been elected by a majority of workers. And the Secretary of the labour union is the fourth man on the Municipality to represent the workers.

A-1295. *Mr. Cliff*: Does your memorandum deal with the mill workers and all the other labouring classes in Ahmedabad in the matter of health?—Yes. As regards

health it refers to all. But as regards particular schemes it is practically confined to mill workers.

A-1296. What is approximately the proportion of mill-workers to other workers in the city?—I could not exactly say. It might be 1 to 5.

Sir Alexander Murray: There are, I understand, 60,000 mill workers in Ahmedabad.

A-1297. *Mr. Cliff*: One witness says that the places where women work are mostly cellars, are damp and are therefore malarial. Do you agree with that statement?—The women carry the reels down to the lowest rooms below where the yarns are stored. It is the coolest part of the mill, but I do not think it can be called malarial.

A-1298. You do not agree with that witness?—No, I do not.

A-1299. In your memorandum you refer to the nuisance caused by the mills letting out waste water. In your opinion it is perfectly legitimate to call upon them to meet the cost of the disposal of that waste water?—Yes, certainly. Some are anxious to have the drainage extended to their premises and some are prepared to pay for it. A survey is being made. The sanitary association has recommended that Government should bear a cost of the scheme.

A-1300. Are there then some mill-owners who have not agreed to pay?—Yes, but at least some have come forward to pay.

A-1301. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Have the mill-owners' Association asked this to be done?—Yes, they have asked for drainage connections in the mill areas.

A-1302. Then it is the fault of the Municipality if that has not been done?—Yes.

A-1303. *Mr. Cliff*: Have the mill-owners asked the Municipality to do this?—Yes. My friend Col. Nanavati will explain the position. (Col. Nanavati): Some time back a special Committee was appointed to enquire into the best manner in which we could solve the difficulty arising in connection with the disposal of the suburban drainage water coming out of the mills. I happened to be the Chairman of the Municipal Special Committee at that time. Most of the representatives of the mills were asked to come in and they were asked whether they would contribute a portion of the cost of constructing the suburban drainage. I took down the names of about 25 mill-owners' representatives who showed their willingness to pay a portion of the cost. The others did not like to bind themselves in any way. They said that they would consult their mill agents and mill-owners, but never turned up afterwards. As a result of this conference it was agreed that a survey should be made of the drainage requirements of the area. It is but legitimate that the mill-owners should be called upon to bear a large share though not the whole, of the cost of constructing this drainage. (Dr. Solomon): There is also a resolution of the Sanitary Association requesting Government to pay 50 per cent. of the cost.

A-1304. You are in favour of minimum wage legislation?—Yes.

A-1305. One of the witnesses says that he is against minimum wage legislation, because labour is not trained to the level of having primary education and that it is unorganized and illiterate. Do you think that these are valid reasons against minimum wage legislation?—I do not agree; I urge that there should be minimum wage legislation.

A-1306. You stated that there should be a reduction in the number of hours?—Yes.

A-1307. One of the witnesses is against reducing the number of hours and he argues that the labourers have sufficient time after 6 p.m. when the mills are closed for recreation and rest. Do you agree with him?—No, I do not agree with him.

A-1308. That is with regard to the working man. Do the working women have sufficient time for rest and recreation?—They are perhaps working all the 24 hours either in the mill or at home. Besides working in the mill they have to work for their children and husbands.

A-1309. Are you in favour of making provision for old age?—Yes, something should be done to provide for a man when he is old.

A-1310. One witness says: so long as labour has not had sufficient education and does not understand matters of sanitation and health, there should not be any provision for old age. Do you agree with that view?—No. So long as men get old there should be some provision for them, whether they have been earning or not and whether they understand sanitary conditions or not.

A-1311. A witness says that there is provision of dining sheds and crèches in most of the mills. Do you agree with this statement?—No, I do not think that is correct. That is not the case in most of the mills.

A-1312. With regard to the improvements which have been made in erecting *chawls* and workmen's houses, it is stated that they have had a good moral effect on the workers. Do you know that good moral effect which has been produced?—There are some very fine *chawls*.

A-1313. How long is it since they were built?—Some are already built and some are in course of construction and they are very fine type of *chawls*.

A-1314. How many were built?—The Asoka Mills have about 200 of them. Each of them is practically a two room tenement. They charge Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 or Rs. 6. The ones for which they charge Rs. 4 have one room and a verandah where there are arrangements for bathing and cooking. The ones for which Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 are charged are practically two room tenements, the latter having larger space. People stay in these *chawls* according to their pay and habits.

A-1315. One witness says: some mill-owners make provision for crèches, drinking water rooms, education of workers' children and housing. Do you know any reason why the other mill-owners should not make exactly the same provision?—I do not know why they do not do it, but that is a fact.

A-1316. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Suppose the Government were to provide money for the building of tenements for workers, on Government land. In your memorandum you recommend a Government housing scheme. Would it work like this? The Government is in a position to borrow money at cheaper rates of interest than anybody else. Suppose the Government borrowed the money at 5 per cent., and got a return, as rent for these tenements, 6 per cent. Would that be a charge on the taxpayer? I am putting this in connection with the point which was asked about whether the general taxpayer should be taxed in order to provide housing accommodation for a particular class?—No, it would not be a charge on the taxpayer.

A-1317. In 1927, in the Ahmedabad mill industry, 44 out of the 49 mills made a profit of 1 crore, 23 lakhs, '76. If 6 per cent. is taken out of that as their profit, it would leave about a crore of rupees available for housing conditions. Money invested by these mill-owners in tenements is obviously not wasted money. The mill agents took 35 per cent. of these profits as their mill agency charges, and they allocated 36 lakhs for depreciation, etc., and there still remained a balance sufficient to pay a dividend of 18 per cent. If they were to invest a crore of rupees in building houses, and charged at the rate of 6, 7 or 8 per cent. on their total invested capital, that would not be a charge on the industry, would it?—No, I do not think so. They could easily do it if they had any sympathy with the movement. The Advance Mill is charging only Re. 1 rent per tenement, and they are trying to improve the condition of the people by offering prizes for cleanliness.

A-1318. What do you consider would be the cost of building 10,000 tenements?—I have worked it out per acre, the workers themselves building the tenements.

A-1319. Will you work out a figure for me for 10,000 tenements on that basis?—I will.

A-1320. Do the figures which you have given us in regard to Ahmedabad show that, unless there is an influx of workers from outside, Ahmedabad is a dying city?—Yes.

A-1321. Are you in favour of a scheme of sickness insurance for workers?—Yes.

A-1322. You mention bathing facilities. Are there any mills which provide such bathing facilities for the workers?—No.

A-1323. You have raised a very interesting question in regard to the taxation of land values. Have you worked out any figures as to how much the Government would be able to raise if that proposition were put into force?—No. I could submit figures later.

A-1324. What is your opinion with regard to the physique of the workers?—Their physique is very poor indeed.

A-1325. *Colonel Russell*: I think it will be useful to sum up what has more or less been admitted. In the Health Officer's Report for 1928-29 it is stated that "The water supply has not been adequate or satisfactory for many years. Drainage in suburban areas is absent. There is no efficient surface drainage. There are no *pucca* roads. There is a large demand for an increased number of markets. There is no infectious diseases hospital. The Health Department needs to be organized and staffed on a better footing. Malarial measures are not effective. Malaria has multiplied in the last six years by three times. There are no health visitors. *Dais* under the Municipal employment scheme do not do any effective work. The health propoganda as now carried on is practically wasted. There are no maternity homes provided by the Municipality." Taking into account all these defects, are you surprised that the death rate is higher than the birth rate?—No. The wonder is that the death rate is not worse than it is.

A-1326. *Mr. Lalji* : The mill-owners pay municipal taxes ?—Yes.

A-1327. What service does the Municipality render to them in return ?—The same service as it renders to all other citizens.

A-1328. Mention a few ?—They get their water.

A-1329. You want education ; you want maternity homes ; you want all these things to be provided by the mill-owners. What does the Municipality give in return for the taxes paid by the mill-owners ?—The mill-owners do not pay for their drainage when they do not get it. When the drainage is established, they will pay for it.

A-1330. Have you asked the Government for any grant for drainage works ?—Yes, but no grant has been given.

A-1331. What reason did they give ?—Want of money.

A-1332. So the Government is to blame ? You say that the Municipality has provided for ten qualified midwives, and that the people do not take advantage of them. If that is so the people are to blame, and not the Municipality. Again, you want to provide maternity homes, but if the people will not take advantage of them, why should the Municipality go to that expense ? You talk about the low wages paid to workers in the textile industry, but are the wages paid in other industries higher ?—No. I say the wages should be increased in those other industries too.

A-1333. If 60 per cent. of the people come from outside Ahmedabad in order to join the textile industry, surely the wages in the textile industry must be better than those paid outside ?—I do not know.

A-1334. Do the labourers spend money on liquor ?—Some do.

A-1335. What amount ?—I cannot say.

A-1336. Have you asked Government to stop the liquor traffic ?—We have.

A-1337. Has the Government done anything ?—Not in that direction.

A-1338. Does the money spent on liquor by a workman improve his general health ?—No.

A-1339. Do you know that three-quarters of the *chawls* in Bombay are lying empty ?—I have heard so.

A-1340. You know that the Government cannot even get 6 per cent. out of those *chawls* ?—It may be so.

A-1341. Something has been said about the mill-owners investing a crore of rupees from their profits in the building of *chawls*, which would add to their benefit. Do you know that the mill-owners have been investing their profits in the building of new mills, thus providing employment for an additional large number of workers ? Do you think that is a wrong policy, especially taking into account the fact that those workers are paid at better rates than they can get outside ?—They may be getting better rates, but they are not getting better health facilities.

A-1342. You do not mean to say that the condition of the labourers in textile industries is worse than it is outside ?—Certainly.

A-1343. They are paid more ?—It is not a question of payment at all, but of health conditions.

A-1344. Surely you will admit that their condition is a little better than that of outside labourers ?—I cannot say that.

A-1345. *Mr. Asale* : With regard to the question put to you as to whether mill-owners pay taxes, do not the labourers pay taxes also ?—Indirectly.

A-1346. You say that the mill-owners charge Rs. 4 to 6 per apartment to the labourer. Do you think that is a fair rent ?—In the majority of cases it is heavy.

A-1347. Do you not think the basis adopted by the Advance Mill should be applied to the other mills ?—Yes, I should be very glad if all mill-owners were as sympathetic as the owners of the Advance Mill.

A-1348. What percentage of labourers have built their own houses ?—I have no figures, but a fairly good number.

A-1349. Are these labourers low-paid men ?—Yes.

A-1350. By residing in such houses do you think their health is deteriorating ?—Very much so.

A-1351. Therefore is it not proper for the employers to accommodate their servants in good houses in order to improve not only their health but their efficiency ?—That is what I say.

A-1352. You have suggested that land should be acquired by the Government outside the city on which to build houses. Do you think such houses would be suitable to the labouring classes whose places of work are far removed from that spot?—By “outside the city” I mean outside the city walls—near the mills.

A-1353. What should be the living wage of a worker, a single man, in Ahmedabad?—It should be more than what he is paid at present. What exactly it should be is for the Government to find out.

A-1354. Do you not think that the mill workers suffer more from diseases than other workers?—I think in some of the mills which are of the old type they are bound to suffer more because there is no proper ventilation, humidification and so forth.

A-1355. *Colonel Russell*: Have you got any figures to prove that?—No; it is only by experience that I am speaking.

A-1356. *Mr. Asavle*: Do you not think that the inhaling of the fibres and dust of cotton bring trouble and disease to the mill hands?—Yes; the fibres easily go into the lungs, and that is why we have recommended the use of vacuum stripper at the card room.

A-1357. Do you know what is the average age of a male worker?—He is a middle aged man.

A-1358. Will the average be 35 to 40 years?—30 to 35.

A-1359. Is it not a fact that only the head jobbers and the *mukadams* live longer?—I have no statistics to prove that.

A-1360. *Colonel Russell*: You do not mean to say that the average worker in Ahmedabad dies at the age of 30 to 35?—No.

Mr. Asavle: My intention in asking the question was to show that many of them die at the age of 30 to 35 and those who live cannot work beyond that age.

A-1361. As regards crèches, you say that half the number of mills have provided crèches. Do you not think it will be in the interests of the workers as well as the employers if it is laid down by law that all the mills should make this provision?—That is our contention.

A-1362. As many of the troubles of the labourers are due to want of education, do you not think that even the adult mill workers should be given education by introducing night schools?—The union is doing that to a certain extent.

A-1363. I am not referring to the union; I want that the mills should introduce night schools?—It would certainly help a great deal if that were done.

A-1364. Do you not think that it will help both the labouring classes and the employers?—Certainly.

A-1365. In the same way as many private concerns have a provident fund system, do you not think that if all the employers here were to adopt a similar system for the benefit of their employees, it would help not only the labourers but also would be convenient to the employers?—Certainly. As I said before, the provident system is in vogue in the Advance Mill.

A-1366. You think that the other mills should also introduce that system?—Yes, gradually.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. W. H. PHILLIPS, Inspector of Factories, Ahmedabad.

A-1367. *The Chairman*: Mr. Phillips, you are the Inspector of Factories in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-1368. Will you first tell me what is the area that you have to cover and the number of factories?—My area extends from Bulsar in the south as far north as Jacobabad, Karachi and Sind.

A-1369. And the number of factories?—Industry generally, in round figures, 200 perennial factories and 340 seasonal industries.

A-1370. With what staff do you cover that large area?—I have one Assistant Inspector of Factories, and myself.

A-1371. Do you feel that that staff is adequate?—No. We hope to get an additional Inspector next year or so, but at the present time there is financial stringency to consider. When I cannot get even an extra clerk I do not suppose I can get another Inspector.

A-1372. In your memorandum to the Commission you suggest two improvements, one with regard to the safety regulations, that accidents to any person within the precincts of a factory should be reported?—Yes, that would cover a number of non-workers, and in some cases children, who come into the factory compound bringing food for their parents.

A-1373. Then your proposal would be that the Factories Act should be amended so as to require the notification of any accident to any person within the factory compound?—Yes. I have given one reason and that is that in certain seasonal factories we find it necessary to prohibit the presence of children, who cannot be legally employed, in certain parts of factories where there is machinery.

A-1374. Your second suggestion refers to a new provision in the Factory Act requiring first-aid boxes in all factories, particularly in smaller factories?—Yes. Our experience is that in a number of smaller factories, seasonal ones in particular, they have very little material available to treat any wounds.

A-1375. Has the first-aid box been standardized?—Not at present.

A-1376. It would not be difficult to prescribe a standard?—No; I think we can have it on the same lines as in England.

A-1377. The cost would not be large?—The cost would not be very great.

A-1378. But the benefit will be very great?—Yes.

A-1379. *Mr. Clow*: In Karachi we found that in a particular flour mill they had a 12 hour shift?—They work on 12 hours shift but none of the workmen are supposed to work for more than 10 hours; the mills have got an exemption from the rest interval. As a matter of fact, the majority of people employed in the flour mill sit down and watch the machine.

A-1380. The workers' complaint to us was that they worked for 12 hours?—They are on call for 12 hours but their actual working hours are probably 7 or 8.

A-1381. Though the table showed two hours interval, we found on inquiry that the machine was not stopped for those two hours?—No, it is not.

A-1382. How can you satisfy yourself that they are not really working more than 10 hours?—I have been in these flour mills and I know that the men do not work all the time; they may be sitting down in one of the departments, they may be sleeping—and I myself have seen some sleeping—or they may have their meals.

A-1383. If you do not insist on the interval being given, as is done in the case of factories elsewhere, how can you satisfy yourself that individual workers are not working more than 10 hours?—There might be cases, but I do not believe that is so.

A-1384. Do you not think it is desirable that in cases like that where the nominal hours are 10 with 2 hours rest; the intervals should be prescribed for each class of workers in the register?—Sometimes it is extremely difficult. If one machine stops you upset the whole mill.

A-1385. The workers can be divided into groups, not classes of the same type of workers?—That is so, but it is very difficult if the workers in one department avail themselves of the interval at one and the same time. For instance, there may be four men in a department and if two are away the others may have trouble in replacing a belt quickly and getting the machine going again.

A-1386. The thing that I suggest has been done elsewhere in India, in Lahore?—These exemptions are not drawn up by me; I have simply to work them.

A-1387. Exemptions are granted by the local Government?—Yes.

A-1388. What is the nature of the exemptions?—They exempt from the necessity of fixing a definite rest interval.

A-1389. *The Chairman*: Will you consult your colleague in the Punjab in regard to this matter?—Yes, I will.

A-1390. *Mr. Clow*: What is the normal procedure as regards prosecutions?—If I detect anything which is at all serious and which, in my opinion, justifies a prosecution, I have to write to my Chief Inspector, giving him full details, and he sanctions the prosecution or otherwise.

A-1391. How many warnings do you normally give?—It depends upon the type of breach. If we find that women and children are employed at nights, we do not give warnings.

A-1392. We came across a tannery at Karachi in which the sanitary conditions were very unsatisfactory. It has been inspected a number of times and many warnings have

been given?—In connection with sanitary conditions we have not had many prosecutions.

A-1393. There was also trouble about employing children under age. You noted the fact at your inspection?—It was not my name; At one time the factory inspection department was combined with the boiler inspection department and the Boiler Inspector, in addition to his normal duties, had to do factory inspection as well, and he never had the time to institute prosecutions.

A-1394. It is impossible to have efficient factory inspection if it is combined with boiler inspection?—Yes.

A-1395. *Mr. Joshi*: Has it come to your knowledge as Factory Inspector that in Ahmedabad there is a practice prevalent to some extent of children being hired out by their parents to contractors to work in the spinning department?—Yes, that practice was prevalent some years ago, and I together with the previous Certifying Surgeon made a detailed enquiry into that and made a report to my Chief Inspector; the details of that report were published in our Annual Factory report.

A-1396. Can you say that the practice does not exist now?—I cannot say that, but I know it is very much less than it used to be for the simple reason that the number of children employed in the mills is only 2 per cent. of the total number of persons employed.

A-1397. It has come to my knowledge that the practice still exists, and I want to know exactly how that transaction takes place?—As I say, to the best of my knowledge, at the present time that system is very nearly dead. But what used to happen was that a jobber or some worker in the mill would bring back two or three children from the villages and they used to live with him; he paid the parents a certain amount and kept the children's wages to provide them with food, clothing and housing. After all in many other countries you have more or less the same thing. As long as it is done properly there is nothing to say against it.

A-1398. Do you mean to say that in other countries the practice of parents hiring out their children on certain payments prevails?—It has been known in England, I believe; you may not call it the same thing. A certain portion of their wages goes back to their parents and the rest is kept for feeding the children.

A-1399. So long as only a portion of the earnings is sent to the parents, the man by bringing such children makes a profit?—I have no personal knowledge, but I think he does.

A-1400. In the statement appearing in your memorandum you have given 318 to be the total number of *chawls*; I take it you mean rooms and not *chawls*?—Yes; it should be 318 rooms.

A-1401. You say that you prohibit the employment of children under section 19-A of the Indian Factories Act. Can you say from your experience whether it will not be better on the whole that the presence of children in factories should be prohibited?—You will make it extremely difficult in certain areas because the children have to bring food for their parents; that is the custom in Ahmedabad.

A-1402. Are you aware that this practice leads to some accidents to children in factories? Recently, there was, I am afraid, an accident where one of the children was crushed by a motor lorry?—That was a baby and not a grown up child; the accident happened because the mother left the baby in a bad place; the mother is as much to blame as anybody else.

A-1403. The child was taken by the mother because the Factory Act allowed the child to be brought to the factory?—If the Factory Act prevents babies from being brought to the mill they will be left at home and given opium perhaps.

A-1404. Cannot the provision of crèches outside the mill compound solve that difficulty?—The whole thing is who is to provide the money.

A-1405. That is a different problem?—At the present time there are 32 mills which have crèches. That is a very big increase on the number I found here in 1923, when I joined here.

A-1406. *The Chairman*: May I put it this way. You will agree that if married women are employed a proper provision for their children ought to be made by their employers; is that your view?—That is my view. But I do not know that I am altogether in favour of having compulsory crèches. We have been able to do a lot by persuasion so far in some of the mills; you get very much better results where a thing is done voluntarily.

A-1407. You think that by making it compulsory you will get a low standard while if you do it by persuasion you will get a higher standard?—Yes.

A-1408. *Mr. Joshi* : You say in your memorandum " The majority of factories provide sanitary accommodation on a better scale than that which exists in the home surroundings. " I would like to know your object in making that statement ?—Because the general tendency is to run down the millowners and to say that mills are filthy places ; the general belief is that they are filthy and very bad. But they are not worse—in many cases they are better—than the conditions in homes in the city here.

A-1409. Do you think that conditions in factories need improvement ?—Yes ; we have not reached the height of perfection.

A-1410. May I take it what you meant by that statement was that the conditions in the home surroundings must be improved very much ?—Yes ; after all the men are only working for 10 hours in the factories and they live in homes for a longer period.

A-1411. You certainly do not mean that the conditions in factories do not need any improvement ?—No, I am all for improvement, but that cannot be done until the Municipality has done something.

A-1412. As regards the reduction in the hours of work you say " The chief obstacles to this appear to be the poor efficiency and carelessness of many workers. " Have you got any figures to show that the efficiency of these workers is poor as compared with the wages paid ?—That statement was made as a result of many conversations I have had not only with European managers here but also with Indian managers, spinning masters and weaving masters. When you examine one of these men you will see that their ideas on this subject coincide with mine.

A-1413. You know that a change from 12 hours of work to 10 hours was made some time ago. What is the experience of Ahmedabad ? Has the production gone down ?—That is a doubtful thing ; it depends on many things. But in several cases the managers have told me that the production has not gone down to anything like the extent they expected but that it compares very favourably with the old 12 hours output except of course in certain departments.

A-1414. The Tariff Board made some investigations on this point, and the Government of Bombay in their memorandum submitted to the Commission say that the experience of some mill-owners (not all mill-owners) has however been that owing to the increased labour efficiency (efficiency has not gone down) and improved conditions such as the installation of humidifiers, the production in the spinning department has been reduced to 10 per cent. while there has actually been an increased production in the weaving department. How do you reconcile this statement with your statement about the poor efficiency of the workers ?—It all depends upon what you start with. The statement refers to the increase but that does not mean that it is good even after its increase. It is still poor. I was thinking particularly of the output per man and quality of the output as compared with other countries and not the output per machine.

A-1415. The investigations that have been made show that the production has not suffered very much on account of the reduction of hours ?—I agree with that ; it has not suffered terribly, but what I mean is that if you reduce the hours to eight from ten you will get a very much bigger difference than you would between 10 and 12.

A-1416. A statement is generally made that the workers in the textile mills do not do full 10 hours work. Have you made enquiries as regards efficiency in Ahmedabad mills ?—It varies, in the best mills, in the weaving departments, from 85 per cent. to anything from 70 to 75 in the worst ones.

A-1417. So on the whole if the hours are reduced and if the workers give better work on account of the reduction of hours, no loss need be apprehended ?—I do not agree with you there, because although the best is 85 per cent. the greatest practical efficiency you can get is not 100 per cent. There are always many little things which cannot be overcome owing to human and machinery imperfections.

A-1418. Can you say that this lower efficiency—not 100 per cent. efficiency but 85 per cent. efficiency—is perhaps due to the fact that the hours are longer than the workers can work properly ?—I do not think so in the best mills.

A-1419. The memorandum submitted by the Sanitary Association says that " Phthisis is the chief disease probably amongst the mill hands as the result of inhaling the floating cotton fibres, " and so on. Can you say that phthisis is one of the industrial diseases ?—No, I cannot. The Chief Inspector of Factories in Bombay had arranged to have a certain enquiry made by the Certifying Surgeon with regard to this disease. But that was upset by the strike in Bombay.

A-1420. But you have no experience on the point ?—No.

A-1421. Do you insist that the water provided in the mills for drinking purposes should be sufficiently cool and provided in a separate shed?—Yes, but you cannot expect it to be cooler than the supply which is obtainable in the city.

A-1422. Could they not cool it by adding ice or putting the water in porous earthen pots?—The custom is to have these big porous pots.

A-1423. Have you sufficient power to insist that suitable water is supplied?—The working of the Factories Act is: "suitable and sufficient supply of water." And the rules also lay down that there should be one gallon of water per person per day.

A-1424. *The Chairman*: You do not agree that some of the factories here are failing in that regard?—We had a certain amount of trouble at one time when there was a shortage of water. The Municipality was responsible partly and some mill-owners also were responsible to some extent, in not having made proper arrangements for storage of a sufficient supply of water.

A-1425. But you have sufficient power to see that this is done?—Yes, we have sufficient power. There will not be the same trouble next year as we had last year when there was even a strike on this point in one mill.

A-1426. *Miss Power*: With regard to enforcement of regulations you give an account of the number of prosecutions and the total fines for each year. They vary extraordinarily. The average fine was Rs. 17 in 1926, Rs. 32 in 1927 and Rs. 49 in 1928. Would you explain these variations to us?—In 1926 there were a number of cases against seasonal factories. Generally when cases are taken against these small seasonal factories in the districts we have no real complaint against the magistrates if they do not inflict very large fines, especially if it happens to be a bad year for cotton and if they know that the factories are not doing very well. Under those circumstances the magistrates do not inflict very large fines.

A-1427. Why were there a number of cases against seasonal factories in 1926?—We were able to do far more visits, partly because the Inspectors were changed. I went to Bombay and a new man came here. He was able to go round the districts and he was not known.

A-1428. If you were able to do that regularly, would the number of prosecutions always be as large as that?—I do not think so; it depends on the cotton year. Sometimes when it is a good season or a short season, or if there is variation in the prices of cotton, there is occasionally a rush of breaches of the Factories Act. If the cotton prices go up quickly the people want to get their cotton delivered and on such occasions breaches of the Factories Act become more common.

A-1429. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You say that the magistrate takes all these things into consideration when he delivers judgment.—We try and talk to him about that.

A-1430. You yourself talk to the magistrates. Do you fix the standard of fines?—We cannot fix the standard. The maximum is Rs. 500.

A-1431. Do you bring these facts to the notice of the magistrate?—We do sometimes. The magistrate will ask us what we think. But that is not always the case. The City Magistrate in Ahmedabad always consults me as to what I think reasonable and sufficient.

A-1432. *Miss Power*: Do you get any instructions from headquarters in regard to what should be regarded as a reasonable fine?—Generally, but not always. If it is a case of employment of women and children at night I always press for what has been the maximum so far, Rs. 50 per case.

A-1433. In your memorandum you refer to inspection by *ex-officio* officers. Who are they and how many of them are working in your area?—I could not give you the numbers. They include the Collectors of districts. The Collector of the district has wider powers than any of the others, but he cannot give orders under any of the technical provisions of the Act like I can. He can only see that my orders are being carried out or that the provisions relating to hours of work and sanitary and health regulations are complied with.

A-1434. How is the work of *ex-officio* inspectors co-ordinated with the work of the regular inspectors?—It varies considerably. Sometimes *ex-officio* inspectors are civil administrative officials, and if they are over-worked you cannot expect them to do much in the supervision of factories.

A-1435. Are you in favour of increasing the regular staff or increasing the number of *ex-officio* inspectors?—In several districts it is impossible to increase the number of *ex-officio* inspectors and also if two are appointed for the same area then possibly neither would do his best; for these reasons it would be preferable to increase the regular staff.

A-1436. I take it that they are not technically trained for the work ?—No, mostly they have powers only under the hours of work regulations.

A-1437. In one of the memoranda submitted to us there is a reference made to inadequacy of the toilet accommodation ; it is stated that the people line up outside the mill latrines on account of the inadequacy of domestic accommodation in this respect. Can you say if this is the reason, or if it is due to inadequate accommodation in the factories ?—The scale of accommodation is laid down in the Factories Act. Generally speaking, on going round the bigger mills, I do not find any particularly bad shortage.

A-1438. Have you noticed this in smaller ones ?—Yes, that seems to be the case in smaller ones. The place is not cleaned regularly, and as a result unfit for use. It is somewhat difficult to force the smaller factories to comply with the provisions of the Act.

A-1439. The Certifying Surgeon in his memorandum says that "no regular bathing places are provided." Who do you think should provide them, mill-owners at the factories or the Municipality in the houses ?—There may not be regular bathing places provided for the workers, but they generally use, the ordinary drinking places for bathing.

A-1440. Are you in favour of making a provision in the Factories Act compelling the mill-owners to make provision for bathing accommodation for the workers ?—I think it would be a good thing. In the textile mills only certain persons get dirty, not all. The difficulty is that they have no bathing places when they go home.

A-1441. Is that not an additional reason why the mill-owners should provide such places ?—It would be a good thing if such places were provided.

A-1442. Ideally who should provide such places, the Mills or the Municipality ?—I think the Municipality should be able to do this sort of thing.

A-1443. Are there a large number of places employing ten or more workers but not coming under the Factories Act ?—There are a number of places dotted about, but the number employing 10 and more is not very large.

A-1444. Do you consider that there are some such places where the conditions are such that they should be brought under regulation ?—We try and keep a list of the worst places and watch them. If they employ more than ten we recommend to Government to have them declared ; if there are less than ten in a particular place we cannot register it as a factory.

A-1445. How many has the Government registered ?—About 20 in the whole of the Presidency. We watch their developments and as they extend their activities we include them in the main body of factories.

A-1446. Is this registration of unregistered factories considered an urgent problem at all in this area ?—In Ahmedabad it is not particularly bad ; in Surat there are a number ; in some of the villages they are growing.

A-1447. *Mr. Clifff* : How many have been registered in your division ?—The number is about 10 including Karachi.

A-1448. *Miss Power* : Could you let us have comparatively accurate figures of the number of such places actually in Ahmedabad, for instance ?—We have not the staff to do that thoroughly. When we go round we make a note of the likely places for the future.

A-1449. *Lady Nilkanth* : Has the number of houses increased in proportion to the number of labourers ?—I have no definite figures.

A-1450. *The Chairman* : We had it suggested that the factory population represents 1 in 3 of the general population. Would that, roughly speaking, coincide with your view. Or would you put it as 1 in 4 or 5 ?—I think it would be 1 in 4.

A-1451. *Lady Nilkanth* : It is said that 99 per cent. of the *chawls* are one room tenements. May I know how many persons there are for each room ?—I could not say.

A-1452. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In the Factory Report for Bombay I find the following statement : "Legislation and departmental action has thus led to an almost complete abolition of child labour irregularities". Ahmedabad used to be rather bad for double employment of children ?—Yes.

A-1453. Do you claim that departmental action has led to a complete elimination of this evil ?—We practically found that that was so. We had a very comprehensive check. I checked a group of mills with the help of the Certifying Surgeon and the Assistant Inspector. We were able to find only one boy. That does not mean that we found out everybody ; we only found one where in similar group we would have found about 100 cases two years back.

A-1454. With regard to fines the report of the Factory Inspector says that reasonable fines have been imposed throughout the Presidency. Have you had any case of complaint that the fine imposed was an unreasonable one?—We had no cases in Ahmedabad. Only in smaller districts outside we do occasionally have one or two such cases. But they are all much better than they used to be.

A-1455. It also says that on some occasions you have to prosecute the occupier and the manager jointly and fine them also jointly?—Yes.

A-1456. Do you not think that that is a good practice and, if so, why is that not adopted generally?—For instance, in cases of unsatisfactory fencing of machinery the magistrates do not generally accept the view that the occupier is responsible, especially in bigger factories. And you also have to take a case against the manager. After all the occupier sometimes does not go inside the factory and he is not a technical man.

A-1457. But should he not be made to go inside the factory as well as the manager?—The manager is the man whom we have to take generally. The occupier in most cases will prove that he was miles away up on the hills for the sake of health.

A-1458. It rests with you Factory inspectors whether to press for a fine on both the occupier and the manager or not?—I personally try and do that in all cases of illegal employment of women and children. I find difficulty when it is a question of fencing machinery and we always take the manager in the larger factories although in some small factories occupiers have been prosecuted for failure to fence machinery.

A-1459. *Mr. Joshi*: Is it a fact that in Ahmedabad especially as compared with Bombay, the manager is really intended to be the legal representative of the employer?—Very often the manager is merely a shield; he is not a real manager.

A-1460. Therefore joint prosecution is necessary. Is that not so?—We do that in serious cases.

A-1461. *The Chairman*: But the fine comes out of the right pocket in the end?—The manager does not provide the money; the mill provides the money.

A-1462. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are there then two fines?—In the case of joint fines the total does not exceed the maximum prescribed for the offence.

A-1463. What is the maximum?—It is Rs. 500 for an offence relating to fencing of machinery. I obtained a fine of Rs. 400 recently.

A-1464. The Factory Report says that a fair standard of sanitation is maintained in Ahmedabad inspite of the difficult conditions. What are the difficult conditions?—It is the trouble with the sweepers. Theirs is a hereditary profession. If the manager sends away one man he would not get another.

A-1465. Why do you not adopt incineration or construct septic tank latrines?—We have no power to order any special system. All we can insist on is that it should be kept in a reasonably sanitary condition.

A-1466. Is it not possible to lay out septic tank latrines?—If water is scarce you will have trouble with septic tanks.

A-1467. Is there any reason why you should not adopt other means?—We saw in Ajmer that they were trying a type of incineration on a large scale.

The Chairman: It is dependent on the supply of sawdust?—The average mill-owner will be against having fires in his compound; in many of them there are dumps of every sort, and fire may easily be started.

A-1468. *Sir Alexander Murray*: There are six new mills in Ahmedabad. Is that so?—Yes, actually there are seven working now.

A-1469. Are the climatic conditions of Ahmedabad favourable to the textile industry?—No.

A-1470. Are they as suitable as Bombay?—No, not even as suitable as Surat, or Broach.

A-1471. How is it that no new mills of any description are erected in Bombay, while you have seven new mills here?—The labour conditions are better here than in Bombay; there have been no serious strikes here recently. The mills here appear to have some advantage over those in Bombay.

A-1472. *Mr. Joshi*: Do the Bombay Municipality prohibit the erection of new mills within the municipal area?—Yes, they do in certain areas.

A-1473. *Mr. Oliff*: What is the difference in the labour conditions here and in Bombay?—I meant to say that there has been no recent serious trouble with the labourers here.

A-1474. In dealing with housing facilities you call attention to "one of the best housing schemes provided by the employer...."—As a matter of fact I sent some notes to the Chief Inspector in Bombay and he embodied some of this in the Government memorandum. Then I was told that I must submit a separate memorandum, but I had very little time to make a suitable reply.

A-1475. With regard to medical facilities you call attention to what in your opinion is the best standard among all the mills concerned. You do not mean to give what is common to all the mills?—I have only given what is best from the point of view of medical facilities.

A-1476. Are you in favour of the employer being asked to provide housing and medical facilities?—I am really doubtful whether it would be in the interests of the workers to be provided with houses by their employers. For instance, there was a strike here and although the labour union tried its best to prevent penalization of the strikers, it is doubtful whether they succeeded.

A-1477. Will the same principle apply to medical facilities also?—Extension of medical facilities would repay the owners.

A-1478. *Mr. Ahmed*: Strikes would be fewer if weekly payment of wages were adopted. Do you agree with this view?—I know of one mill where this weekly system was introduced. The workers then came to the manager and requested him to go back to the old system. They were against this weekly system.

A-1479. *The Chairman*: That is very interesting. Which mill is it?—The Marsden Mills. I have heard of others and I could supply the names if required.

A-1480. *Mr. Ahmed*: What is your opinion?—I think the workers are more in favour of a fortnightly system, which is the usual system in Ahmedabad.

A-1481. If weekly system of payment were introduced would not the labourers be able to pay their debts more easily?—I do not think so. For instance, Seth Ambalal Sarabai introduced the system of lending money to the labourers at cheap rates of interest. But he found that men borrowed more and their actual interest charges amounted to the same figure as before. The men were no better off.

A-1482. Will not the men have an advantage if co-operative credit societies were started and loans given to them at small rates of interest?—That would only help certain classes of people.

A-1483. With regard to advances from the co-operative society they take them for the whole month and pay interest for one month. If weekly payment of wages were introduced the workers need not pay interest for the whole month; it would be enough if they paid only for one week?—That is only if they pay interest.

A-1484. So you agree that it is necessary to provide the labourers with good accommodation and sanitary surroundings?—Yes, but not necessarily by the mill-owners. It is doubtful whether it is all in favour of the worker if accommodation is provided by the mill-owners.

A-1485. You think that the working hours should not be one stretch of 11 hours?—No, at present they are divided into two halves of five hours each with an interval of one hour in the middle for rest.

A-1486. *Diwan Chaman Lal*: With regard to the double shift system, in your experience, have you seen men working both shifts day and night?—Yes.

A-1487. *Mr. Chow*: Is working double shifts day and night by the same individual a common thing?—It is not at present.

A-1488. How do you find that out?—It is a most difficult thing to do. I got one case.

A-1489. *Mr. Lalji*: Out of ten working hours how many hours is a worker actually on his machine?—About 8½ to 9 hours.

A-1490. We find from the report that employment of women is gradually increasing. It was 4,500 in 1914 and 11,400 in 1928. Can you give the reason for the increase?—Some of the workers came here from outside; and when they more or less settled down they brought their wives also. Secondly it may be due to the stopping of employment of children. That is one of the chief reasons.

A-1491. Why has that been stopped?—Because certain managers thought that we were too strict.

A-1492. If these children do not go into the factories what do they do between the ages of 10 and 14?—I agree with the idea underlying your question. I know that it is doubtful whether children kept out of the factory are not getting into far worse mischief outside.

A-1493. *Mr. Clow*: Is there compulsory education here?—No.

A-1494. *Mr. Asale*: If compulsory education is given will the children then be employed in mills?—A certain number will even then be employed.

A-1495. Have you inspected the factories before and after the working hours to find out whether the owners are employing their workers during these periods also?—Yes, I have done so. I have referred to them in my annual reports.

A-1496. How many cases of breach of the regulation did you find out?—I am afraid I cannot give you the figures from memory.

A-1497. Did you prosecute the offenders?—Yes, I can give you a list of the prosecutions for factories working outside the legal hours.

A-1498. Have you visited the factories on Sundays and other holidays?—Yes.

A-1499. Did you find any men working there illegally?—We did not find breaches of the regulation regarding Sunday employment, except in some of the small factories.

A-1500. What about the Bombay Mills?—They are outside my jurisdiction.

(The witness withdrew.)

**BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
EIGHTEENTH MEETING**

AHMEDABAD

Friday, 15th November 1929.

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POEB POWER.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).
Mr. HOOSEINBHROY A. LALLJI, M.L.C.	} <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i>
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.	
Lady V. R. NILKANTH.	} <i>Lady Assessors.</i>
Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA.	
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.	} <i>Joint Secretaries.</i>
Mr. A. DIEDIN.	

Mr. CHAMAN LAL G. PAREKH (President), Mr. SAKARLAL BALABHAI (Vice-President), Mr. SHANTILAL MANGALDAS, Mr. KASTURBHAI LALBHAI and Mr. GORDHANDAS J. PATEL, on behalf of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association.

A-1501. *The Chairman* : How far does your Association represent the whole of the millowners of Ahmedabad ?—(Mr. Parekh) : There are 87 members on our printed list ; that is about 85 to 90 per cent. of the industry of Ahmedabad.

A-1502. I understand your Association represents not only the owners of the cotton mills but others ?—Yes. The 85 to 90 per cent. which I have mentioned refers only to the cotton mills.

A-1503. Within your Association do those who are the owners of cotton mills form a separate committee or department ?—No.

A-1504. When you are dealing with matters solely concerning the cotton mills, do the other members take part in your deliberations or only those who represent the cotton industry ?—It all depends on the nature of the question. In general other industries do not take part in deliberations as to matters concerning only the cotton mills ; the other members do not take much interest in questions regarding the cotton mills.

A-1505. Then I may take it that your Association does constitute an executive organization of the employers in the cotton industry which is the main industry of Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-1506. And it is in that capacity that you have made the present agreement with the Labour Union for arbitration on matters affecting labour in your industry ?—Yes.

A-1507. I notice from the papers submitted to us that, as the result of arbitration which took place in the month of November last year you came to an agreement that the union subscriptions should be collected in the mills by deductions from wages and paid over to the trade unions ?—Yes, all the mills collect the subscriptions. It is not actually deducted from the pay, it is a separate collection. The subscriptions are collected and the money is sent by the mills direct to the Labour Union.

A-1508. That arrangement was said to be for trial for at least six months ?—Yes.

A-1509. Now twelve months have elapsed and is that system still going on ?—Yes.

A-1510. As employers are you satisfied with that system ?—So far there are no complaints and we are satisfied.

A-1511. With regard to the cotton mills does your Association meet at regular stated intervals, monthly or quarterly?—We have a Managing Committee appointed by the general Board which meets every week to discuss the questions which come before the Committee.

A-1512. And does that Managing Committee deal with all the matters that are arising from time to time in the cotton industry with the Labour Union?—Yes.

A-1513. Does that Managing Committee itself meet the officials of the Labour Union?—Not every week, but if there is any dispute, we call the Labour Union leaders and discuss with them any points on which there is a difference of opinion.

A-1514. Then you do frequently meet the officials of the Labour Union?—Yes.

A-1515. Do you in that way clear up a number of small questions which are not important enough to go to arbitration?—Yes, we settle between ourselves any minor disputes or minor complaints of the Labour Union as far as possible.

A-1516. I notice that in your memorandum you say that no joint machinery in your opinion is necessary, following the phrases of our questionnaire with regard to joint councils or committees?—This is not a joint committee. When there is any complaint coming from the Labour Union we discuss it among the members of the Managing Committee and we come to a decision. Then we send for the leader of the Union and we try to settle it between us. But we do not deliberate with them before we come to any decision.

A-1517. If I may say so, you are not very far away from the system of a standing joint committee which would periodically review the circumstances of your industry?—We do not meet at present periodically.

A-1518. You only meet, I understand, when some question has arisen?—Yes.

A-1519. It would not seem to be a very great departure from your present practice to meet at stated periods and consider together the improvement of the industry, apart from complaints. However, I must not press you on that point. In your memorandum you tell us something about the organization of your industry, about the managing agent representing a firm of agents, and so on. Is there a uniform system in your mills with regard to the share of the agent; I mean are the agents here all paid on the turnover or are they paid on the profits?—It is on production or sales; none are paid on profits.

A-1520. Have you as an Association any considered policy with regard to the housing of your workers, or is it left entirely to each individual mill?—At present it is left to the individual mills.

A-1521. We noticed, as might be expected, a great variation between the best and the less good. You no doubt are aware of that difference; but I take it from what you have said that there is no concerted policy in your Association for the improvement of the housing conditions?—No.

A-1522. Is it your view that further housing should be done by the millowners or by the municipality?—By the municipality or jointly with the millowners.

A-1523. Are you prepared to meet the municipality with regard to a joint scheme for improvement of the housing?—It all depends on the circumstances: what are the terms proposed by the municipality and the condition of the industry.

A-1524. Again we have noticed with pleasure what some of your members have done with regard to providing crèches for the children where you employ married women; but again apparently the policy differs very greatly mill by mill. May I take it that there again as an Association you have no declared policy?—We have declared a policy that there should be crèches, but we leave everything to the individual mills. We agree there should be crèches in each mill for the children as far as conditions permit, but, of course, we cannot enforce it.

A-1525. I observe, not from your memorandum, but from one we have had submitted to us by the Government of Bombay, that there is a proposal under consideration between yourselves and the Labour Union for the establishment of a joint employment agency. Has that proposal made any progress since these reports were written?—I am told by our Secretary that there was a proposal from the Labour Union about this joint labour exchange, but the Managing Committee has not come to any conclusion and has not had the time to consider it.

A-1526. In the report of the Bombay Government it is stated that it is understood that the Labour Union at Ahmedabad has under contemplation the establishment of a labour exchange under the joint management of the Labour Union and the Millowners' Association. The details of the scheme have not yet been worked out, but it is reported

that the scheme, when finally evolved, is likely to meet with the approval of the Millowners' Association?—(Mr. Patel): There was a proposal from the Labour Union to the effect that an exchange ought to be set up in Ahmedabad. It was discussed with me personally by the authorities of the Labour Union, and they promised that they would prepare a definite scheme. I asked them to prepare that scheme and submit it to us in writing. Since that time we have been awaiting a definite scheme from the managing committee of the Union.

A-1527. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: There has been a certain amount of criticism of the policy of the managing agents taking their remuneration on production and not on profits. Would your Association object very strongly if their form of remuneration were altered to one on profits instead of on production?—(Mr. Parekh): Yes, we would object.

A-1528. You consider your present policy is more favourable to the millowners than a system of remuneration on profits?—Yes. The position of the managing agents here is quite different from that in Bombay and other centres. The managing agents collect the capital in the beginning, giving a portion of the commission to each partner or shareholder according to the capital he subscribes. The managing agent or the chief partner of the firm is not getting the whole of the commission.

A-1529. Therefore it would not be possible to make any alteration, owing to what has happened in the past?—Yes. It is suited to the local conditions.

A-1530. How do the wages in the mill industry compare with those industries outside the mill industry in Ahmedabad and with wages in the rural districts surrounding Ahmedabad?—The men in the villages are not better off than the labour in the textile industry.

A-1531. Is the man employed in the textile industry better off than in any other industries in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-1532. And you say men employed in the mills are better off than the men in the villages, even allowing for the payments in kind which are given in villages?—Yes.

A-1533. If your hours of work were shortened would you expect your output to suffer?—It would suffer a lot.

A-1534. Did your output suffer much when the hours were reduced from 12 to 10?—Yes, the spinning section suffered a lot; it suffered exactly in proportion to the reduction in hours.

A-1535. Did the weaving section suffer?—Not to the same extent.

A-1536. If there were a further shortening of hours, would you expect both sections to suffer?—Certainly.

A-1537. Why would you expect that to be so?—Because by reducing hours we have come to the proper efficiency in the weaving section.

A-1538. In other words, your efficiency was so much lower before that they could catch up by increased efficiency?—Exactly.

A-1539. But you think that now, having become more efficient, there is no scope for improving that efficiency?—Yes.

A-1540. And am I right in thinking that the installation of modern machinery which is semi-automatic would not allow much room for increased personal efficiency; that if your machinery is better and produces more, the increased production depends more on the machinery than on the man?—It depends on both the man and the machinery.

A-1541. You do not agree that if you improve your machinery the labour has not so much to do with increased production?—No.

A-1542. Are you quite sure that your labour has reached the highest form of efficiency, for instance, would you say that a man looking after one side spinning 10's counts is doing more or less work than a man on one side spinning 60's?—The man doing 10's will be doing more work.

A-1543. Therefore the man working on 60's could improve his efficiency if he is not doing as much work as a man on 10's?—But the production will not be increased. (Mr. Sakarlal): The man who works on 10's has to mind a smaller number of spindles than the man who works on 60's so that their total work comes to the same thing.

A-1544. Do you not think on 60's you could look after twice the number of spindles that you could look after on 10's?—No, not twice the number.

The Chairman: I think it depends on the mixing.

A-1545. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What is the cost of land in Ahmedabad in the city ?—It all depends on the locality.

A-1546. Where your mills are, in the city ?—In the old days they were in the heart of the city but nowadays new mills are built very far from the city.

A-1547. What is the value of the land in the city where the old mills are ?—It varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 a square yard. Where the new mills are being built it costs about Rs. 1 or Rs. 2. But here in Ahmedabad most of the mills have got the land on lease.

A-1548. I suppose it would not be possible for the mills inside Ahmedabad to arrange for any housing for their employees because the cost of the land would be too high ?—Yes.

A-1549. What is the point of view of the trade union to this question of houses being provided by the employers ?—They are keen on having houses supplied by the millowners.

A-1550. You are quite sure the trade union would encourage the mills to supply houses ?—Yes.

A-1551. They would prefer that rather than that the houses should be provided by the Municipality or other sources ?—They of course submitted the scheme to the Municipality for the housing of labour.

A-1552. I am asking the question because some unions have objected to the employers supplying houses for their own employees ?—They are not so particular so far as I understand, so long as they get houses.

A-1553. In some places where we have been it has been suggested that the payment of wages should be weekly. Would you as an employer have any great objection to that ?—Oh yes, as an employer I should have great objection, because we should have more absenteeism. It generally happens that on the day after the payment of wages there are some absentees. We should also have more changes in our hands.

A-1554. Would your labour prefer to be paid weekly or fortnightly as at present ?—They have never demanded it up to now, so that we do not know their views.

A-1555. I have been told that a certain mill did try paying weekly, but the labour objected. Do you know anything about that ?—No.

A-1556. Would you say that a large majority of the mill-hands are in debt ?—Some section may be in debt, about half. We have no data on that matter.

A-1557. If they were paid weekly do you think it would enable some of those who are in debt to get out of debt ?—They would be in more debt because they would spend what they got every week.

A-1558. They would not pay their debts off ?—No.

A-1559. Is it the custom here for the mill-hands to buy their supplies for cash or on credit ?—Some for cash and some on credit.

A-1560. Is the cash price much lower than the credit price ?—It might be, but not necessarily. Probably they would have to pay a little more if they buy on credit.

A-1561. *Mr. Cliff* : Do the employers pay fortnightly here ?—Yes.

A-1562. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Might it not be found that if a man was paid weekly he could then buy his food for cash and get it cheaper ?—They have the habit of buying on credit and they would probably buy on credit even if they had the money.

A-1563. So that they would not be any better off if they were paid weekly ?—No.

A-1564. Have any of the millowners co-operative loan societies ?—No, but advances are made by the mills against wages. The employees cannot get advances every day, but before any big holiday advances are given against wages.

A-1565. *Mr. Joshi* : Is interest charged ?—No.

A-1566. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Has any attempt been made to establish cheap grain shops for your millhands ?—Some mills have done so.

A-1567. Are they popular ?—They are not so popular.

A-1568. Why not ?—Because they do not sell on credit unless the employee has a certificate from the timekeeper and so on ; they have to go through formalities and so the work-people prefer to stick to their old customs.

A-1569. Do you think it may be that even if an employee is not in debt, he would prefer not to leave his *bania* because the day might come when he might not be working and might want to borrow from the *bania* ?—Yes.

A-1570. Do you think that might keep him away from the mill shop ?—Yes.

A-1571. You have said that your Association is working very closely with the trade union?—Yes.

A-1572. Do you think it might be of advantage if you set up a permanent body partly composed of members of your Managing Committee and partly of members of the Union, to go into minor questions and see if they could settle them without going to the main body?—It is done in that way, but it is not a regular joint conference as suggested by the Chairman. Generally any complaint comes to the Secretary. If the Secretary cannot settle it with the Labour Union, he puts it before the Managing Committee. We are satisfied with the present arrangement, so that there is no need to go into the matter at present.

A-1573. Has the Secretary authority to settle any complaint where he thinks the Labour Union is right?—The first complaint is made in the mill. Each mill has one or two members of the Union working in the mill. Any complaint by the labour is first made to those men. The union member goes to the head of the department, the head jobber. The head jobber then goes to the head officer. If nothing is done, the work-people complain to the Labour Union, and the Labour Union writes to the Association. The Secretary enquires how the matter stands, and, if he thinks fit, he tells the mill to remove this cause of complaint; if the mill does so, the matter does not come to our Managing Committee at all.

A-1574. If the Secretary thinks the complaint is justified, he tells the mill they are wrong?—Yes.

A-1575. And the manager of the mill takes his advice?—Yes; if they think the Secretary is wrong, they will say they are not prepared to do it, and then it is bound to come to the Managing Committee.

A-1576. Your bleaching is done by contractors?—Yes, there are certain sections done by contractors.

A-1577. Is there any measure of control over your contractors? I mean do you know or bother as to what wages they pay their men?—No, we do not.

A-1578. Your only control over them is to see that they deliver you good bleached cloth?—Yes.

A-1579. You cannot control the way they do it?—No.

A-1580. Or the hours of labour?—They have to work according to the Factory Act because they are working in the mill itself.

A-1581. But I understand some of your contracting is done outside the mill?—Then we do not interfere.

A-1582. And as no power is used, the Factory Act does not apply. They can work much longer hours; that does not concern you?—It does not concern us.

A-1583. When cloth is damaged by a weaver, do you fine him or do you make him take the cloth at cost?—It depends on the extent of the damage done. If it is badly damaged we give the cloth back to him.

A-1584. Does he object to that?—No, he does not complain.

A-1585. Is it true that in the majority of cases he either does not lose or loses very little by getting the cloth back and disposing of it?—Yes.

A-1586. He would much prefer to have the cloth back than be dismissed?—Yes.

A-1587. Would he prefer to be fined?—It depends on the amount of the fine.

A-1588. Do you find it possible to prevent the jobbers you employ taking bribes from the workmen?—We do our best to stop bribery. We rely on the heads of the departments who look to the assistant; the assistant relies upon the jobbers.

A-1589. Then you do ultimately rely upon the jobber?—We have to.

A-1590. Is there a surplus or a shortage of labour?—Neither.

A-1591. In the morning are there a number of work-people outside your gates waiting for employment?—Yes.

A-1592. Would there be any objection to the assistant calling them in and engaging them directly?—If we are short of men he may do that.

A-1593. I suppose you only employ the jobber when there is nobody suitable waiting at the gate?—Yes.

A-1594. Does the jobber or the assistant select the men?—The jobber, because he is responsible for the job.

A-1595. Do you find that the labour unions are in favour of jobbers or against jobbers ?—They admit jobbers to their union.

A-1596. So that the labour union are in favour of jobbers ?—Yes.

A-1597. Do the labour unions ever complain about jobbers taking bribes from the men ?—Yes.

A-1598. But why should they if the men are in their own union ?—There is a clear understanding that if a man is found taking bribes or anything of that sort they will bring it to the notice of the assistant. They ask the mill to dismiss him.

A-1599. Are you in favour of having an employment officer ?—No.

A-1600. You prefer to leave it to the jobber ?—Yes.

A-1601. Are you in favour of the establishment of employment agencies by the Municipality or by Government ?—No, not at present ; we do not need it.

A-1602. You do not think it is necessary ?—No.

A-1603. Because you find that labour comes to you as you want it ?—Yes.

A-1604. Would you suggest that every company should insure itself under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—It is not necessary, because generally all mills do insure under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

A-1605. But you would not suggest that there should be any compulsion ?—It should not be made compulsory.

A-1606. You would be against compulsion ?—Yes.

A-1607. Why would you be against compulsion ?—Because it is a question of taking risk ; it is purely self-insurance.

A-1608. But suppose an employer has not enough money to pay, the workmen might suffer ?—Yes. For instance, every employer of big labour, having one thousand workers under him, may not be in a position to pay premium for such a large number of workmen.

A-1609. *Mr. Joshi* : So your view is that compulsion is necessary in the case of employers who have a smaller number of labour ?—It may be done in the case of smaller companies, but compulsion is not necessary as far as we are concerned.

A-1610. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : So far as big companies are concerned, I take it there might be an objection in that the insurance companies might raise their rates if they knew it was compulsory ?—Exactly.

A-1611. Do you consider that standardization of wages is a good thing or not ?—We have had no occasion to consider that point.

A-1612. You do not think there might be an advantage in having the wages standardized for all the industries ?—In Ahmedabad we have practically got standardization of wages.

A-1613. Do you mean to say that the rate of wages is the same in every mill in Ahmedabad ?—In the spinning department they all have a uniform rate ; only in the frame department piece-wages are given. As regards daily wages they are practically uniform in all the mills ; if at all, there might be a difference of half a rupee or quarter of a rupee a month this side or that.

A-1614. As far as daily wages are concerned you would not have any objection to standardization because you say you have already got uniformity ?—As we ourselves have made standardization there is no necessity to standardize them again. Some mills have been situated in a better position and may get labour at eight annas or a rupee less than the other mills, and I do not see why that mill should be penalized by standardizing the wages especially when it can get labour at one rupee less owing perhaps to the fact that more facilities are offered by that mill to the labourers.

A-1615. You would leave the differences as they are ?—I do not think the difference is much ; it all depends on whether the machinery is new or old. If both new and old machinery is working in the same mill, there is a difference in rating.

A-1616. You say there is a bigger difference in piece-work than there is in time work because of the difference in machinery ?—Exactly.

A-1617. Would you say that the municipal service given by the Municipality here is satisfactory, generally speaking ? Does the Municipality do its work satisfactorily for the rates that you pay ?—It does its work most unsatisfactorily.

A-1618. I understand you are in favour of the mills making provision for crèches ?—Yes.

A-1619. Would you be in favour of that being made compulsory by law?—No.

A-1620. For any reason?—If there is any compulsion we have to abide by a number of rules and regulations.

A-1621. Would you say that if it were made compulsory certain millowners might substitute boys for women?—I cannot say that.

A-1622. Then why do you object to its being made compulsory?—As I said, we have to abide by a number of rules and regulations which might create unnecessary hardship. The Inspector's orders will have to be carried out every time, which means not only botheration to us but more expense to the industry.

A-1623. Would you agree that there should be a supply of drinking water in all the mills?—We have it here.

A-1624. A sufficient supply?—Yes. The municipality, of course, do not supply so much, but several mills have got their own wells which supply water in case of need.

A-1625. I understand the trade union complains that some mills do not give a proper supply?—It may be in the suburb.

A-1626. Do you think that they should be given a proper supply?—The municipality should give.

A-1627. But the mills?—The mills are already giving.

A-1628. Would your mills always be prepared to put on extra taps if the labour ask for them?—Yes. We generally have some *bhisdis* to store up water in the mill compound.

A-1629. You think that the Labour Union is wrong in complaining that certain mills are not giving sufficient supply of water?—That is not a regular complaint; when we receive any complaint we immediately try to remedy it.

A-1630. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I see that the Factory Inspector's Report for 1928 says that Ahmedabad is not climatically so suitable for spinning as other parts of India such as Bombay, yet I see you are building several new mills. I want to know why inspite of climatic conditions the industry has developed so well in Ahmedabad and why you are now building several new mills here whereas in Bombay we find that no new mills have been built for several years?

The Chairman: Do you not think, *Sir Alexander Murray*, that modesty will prevent them from speaking?

The witness (Mr. Satarial Balabhai): That is a question for the Tariff Board.

Director Chaman Lall: It is a very important question.

The witness (Mr. Satarial Balabhai): There are various reasons for that and if we begin to explain them it will take a very long time. Because several new mills are being built in Ahmedabad that does not mean that the condition of trade here is better than elsewhere. There are various reasons for that.

A-1631. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Give me three reasons?—One reason is that there is no other trade in Ahmedabad in which people can invest their capital.

A-1632. Is there any other trade in Bombay?—There are many export and import trades.

A-1633. That is one reason; what is your second reason? You said that you have only one industry in Ahmedabad and to find an outlet for your money you have got to put it in cotton mills. May I know how you made that money?—From the cotton mills and several other minor trades.

A-1634. You said there is no other trade?—We have minor trades.

A-1635. Chiefly you made money from the cotton mills?—Yes.

A-1636. And now you put more into cotton mills?—Yes.

A-1637. Is it the case that as a result of building these new mills the industry has expanded more rapidly than have the amenities of the municipality; that is to say, the amenities which the municipality supplies, namely, water, drainage, conservancy, etc., have not kept pace with the expansion of the mills?—Yes.

A-1638. What special steps are you taking to see that the new mills are properly equipped with housing, water, drainage, conservancy, etc.?—We have our own wells.

A-1639. You make your own wells for the supply of water?—Yes.

A-1640. Do you also make your own drainage to carry away the surplus water?—There is no drainage.

A-1641. So the surplus water lies about ?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): That is at times carried by bullock carts ; if the compound is big, we sprinkle the water by means of pumps.

A-1642. What have you done in the way of sanitary and latrine accommodation ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai): We keep our own staff.

A-1643. There again you cart it ; there is no drainage ?—No.

A-1644. Have any of you septic tanks ?—There might be only one.

A-1645. Why do you not have them ?—It has been found in Bengal, and I think in other parts of India too, that septic tanks are very neat and good and help you in getting rid of the trouble of employing sweepers ?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): I understand it requires more water.

A-1646. Yes, it requires water ?—We are short of water, and that is one of the reasons why we cannot have it.

A-1647. Then I see that the Factory Inspector says that sanitation and cleanliness in factories here are at a higher scale than they are outside the factories, i.e., in the town. I suppose you agree with that ?—Exactly so.

A-1648. But he also says that he gets only a reasonable amount of co-operation from the factory managers. What does he mean by that ? When the Factory Inspector asks you to do anything do you not do that ?—As far as possible, we always try to meet his wishes.

A-1649. In the Factory Inspector's Report it is stated : " A fair standard is maintained in Ahmedabad under very difficult conditions, and this is only secured by constant attention on the part of the inspectorate and a *reasonable* amount of co-operation from the factory managers." Why does he say a "reasonable" amount of co-operation instead of "wholehearted" co-operation ?—He can answer that very well rather than we.

A-1650. From your statement I see that 80 per cent. of your labour is permanent labour, that is to say, that has come from the districts and is now working in your mills ?—Exactly.

A-1651. Do you not feel that there is a special responsibility on you as employers of labour to see that these workers, who are drawn from the countryside and are now permanently settled in the town, are properly looked after from the point of view of housing, water supply, drainage, conservancy, etc. ?—We try our best to give all sorts of comforts as far as possible; and every year we are extending the *chawls*.

A-1652. You said that as there is practically uniformity in the matter of wages you experience no trouble, and from the reply you gave to Sir Victor Sassoon I understand you have a committee which meets often to discuss what ought to be done as a body. Why do you not discuss as a body questions connected with housing so that you can have uniformity in this respect also ?—That is not possible ; each and every member cannot become uniform in building houses because one may be financially sound and the other may not be so.

A-1653. If it is possible for you to be uniform regarding wages, is it not possible for you to be uniform as regards building houses ?—It is not possible.

A-1654. Why ?—As I said, one may be financially strong and the other may not be ; all the mills are not making uniform profits. I think the question is more or less for the municipality to take up.

A-1655. That is quite true. I see that in your memorandum you make a reference to the town planning schemes. You say : " Reservations of certain areas for industrial housing have been made in town-planning schemes." Will you tell us what these town-planning schemes are ?—(Mr. Gordhandas Patel): Three schemes were sanctioned by the municipality here : one was the Ellisbridge town-planning scheme, the second was the Jamalpur town-planning scheme, and the third one was the Kankaria town-planning scheme. In Takaria, Mr. Mirams, the Consulting Surveyor to Government, reserved certain plots for housing of labour. That scheme, unfortunately, has not yet come into operation through some difficulty ; and therefore the other two schemes also are awaiting further progress. We do not know anything further in the matter except that one scheme has been sanctioned.

A-1656. You, as a body, have not made representations to the municipality or to the Government of Bombay for acquisition of land for building workmen's houses ?—No, we are much afraid of Government. In our opinion, the experience derived from the system adopted in Bombay in building *chawls* is not good, if not wrong.

A-1657. You might want to build *chawls*. My own experience is that far away from the mills you can build much more better houses than you could near the mills. Have

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you made any application to the local Government or to the municipality for the acquisition of land for your workmen's houses?—No.

A-1658. Do you not think that should be done?—The schemes are not yet complete.

A-1659. Do you not think that it is your duty to apply?—We think that it is the duty of the Government and the Municipality first, and subsequently it is ours.

A-1660. Do you take an active interest in the Municipality?—Yes. We had our representative a few years back but ultimately we were deprived of that privilege and we are unrepresented in the Municipality to-day.

A-1661. You mean that you had a nominated representative before?—There was a convention established by which Government used to ask us to elect one member who would be nominated on the Board by Government. That convention was established in one instance only though there was an indirect assurance that it would be continued further. We are unable to say why they discontinued it subsequently. Since the last three years we are unrepresented.

A-1662. You have about 60,000 workers with whom you have influence. Do you not think that the workers who are returned can influence the Municipality?—At present the workers have some nominees in the Municipality.

A-1663. You cannot make use of them to get better facilities for you?—They are amenable to the influence of the Labour Union, and they have already placed a scheme before the Municipality which is being considered at present.

A-1664. I take it that you are required to pay terminal taxes. Do you pay them chiefly on cotton coming to your mills?—We pay taxes practically on every article that is consumed, including cotton, coal, stores, etc.

A-1665. But chiefly you pay on cotton?—Yes.

A-1666. You pay a special water rate also, do you not?—Yes.

A-1667. And you pay sanitary cess?—Yes.

A-1668. You do not take any steps even as a body of millowners to see that you get a fair return for the terminal taxes, water rate and the sanitary cess you pay?—We have been clamouring for years but nothing has been done by the Municipality. We pay about one-third of the total municipal revenues, about Rs. 8 lakhs in 28 lakhs.

A-1669. Mr. Cliff: May I know what the objects of your Association are?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): Here is a copy of the rules and objects of our Association.

A-1670. Could you tell me whether the welfare of the work-people is one of the objects of your Association?—It is.

A-1671. Could you tell me whether in pursuance of that object your Association has promoted any scheme for the welfare of the work-people?—We had a welfare fund some-time back—and which is still with us—but owing to certain reasons we are unable to use it; we have a welfare fund to the extent of 3 lakhs. We were giving a grant of Rs. 15,000 a year to the Labour Union for educational purposes.

A-1672. That, I understand, has now been stopped?—Yes, because there was a difference of opinion. We told the Union to form a scheme and to have our members on the joint committee to conduct the schools. Because we pay our quota, we told them that we must have some voice in the management of the schools. The Union refused to accede to our suggestion and for that very reason we have stopped giving the grant.

A-1673. What is the balance in the fund to-day?—It may be $3\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs.

A-1674. How did you raise that fund?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai): By a certain quota.

A-1675. By each millowner?—Yes, according to the size of the mill.

A-1676. Are you now receiving any contribution to that fund?—No; it was raised once only at a particular time.

A-1677. On one occasion a special fund was promoted?—That is so.

A-1678. Might I ask you whether you have promoted any other scheme of welfare?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): No special scheme was promoted.

A-1679. Will you please look at the memorandum which you have submitted to the Commission and tell me whether in that memorandum there is any suggested change whereby the conditions of the work-people could be improved of which your Association approves?—I am afraid I did not follow the question.

A-1680. I had an opportunity of reading this memorandum, as I hope you had, but I had great difficulty in finding any phrase in the memorandum putting forward any suggestion at all from your Association whereby the condition of the work-people

could be improved. I would like your assistance, and if you could tell me whether in this memorandum any suggestion is made towards that end I would be glad ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : Of what type ?

A-1681. The questions which have been put in respect of many subjects asked whether there is any possibility of improvement. I want you to take this memorandum if you will and to tell me where you suggest there is the slightest possibility of improving the conditions of the work-people engaged in the mills at Ahmedabad ?—(Mr. Gordhandas Patel) : We have already stated in the memorandum that a constitution exists between the Labour Union and the Association ; that constitution definitely provides that any thought or suggestion about the improvement of labour or any complaint about the labour conditions in any of the mills should be immediately brought to the notice of the Association by the Union. As the point referred to by you is thus covered by the constitution which exists between the Union and the Association, we did not think it necessary to discuss that in our memorandum.

A-1682. Shall we go back for a moment ? One of the objects of the Association is the promotion of welfare of the work-people. The reply is that there exists a constitution between this Association and the Union. I assume from that, that it was not found necessary to state in this memorandum any improvement which could be suggested. Is that correct ?—Yes. The fact is that under the constitution even minor complaints are made, which are immediately attended to and redressed. We therefore did not think it necessary to make any separate suggestions.

A-1683. Shall we follow that a little further ? One of the objects of the Association is the promotion of welfare of the work-people. Seeing that there is no improvement suggested in this memorandum, will you tell me what is the last suggestion you made to the Union for the improvement of the work-people ?—The question of housing, improvement in education, improvement in crèches, the number of crèches to be increased in mills—these were discussed within the last six months between the Union and the Association.

A-1684. With what result ?—The result is gradual. The mills have been more careful now in providing crèches. Certain accidents which took place in certain crèches were immediately brought to the notice of the mills and proper arrangements were made to avoid similar accidents in future.

A-1685. That is with regard to crèches. What have you done in other respects, say, with regard to education ?—The Union conducts schools. With regard to drinking water complaints were made which were immediately brought to the notice of the Municipality and redressed.

A-1686. Complaints from whom ?—Complaints from the Labour Union.

A-1687. I am confining myself to the employers' association and am endeavouring to find out in what respect the employers' association is carrying out one of its objects.—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : The mills are increasing the number of crèches ; the schools are increasing, and so on.

A-1688. With regard to prompt payment of wages did the Provincial Government ask you for your observations ?—(Mr. G. Patel) : We have already stated that the Provincial Government asked for the opinion of the Employers' Association with regard to that point.

A-1689. Could you tell me what they were ?—As explained by our President, we gave it as our opinion that the present system was satisfactory and required no change.

A-1690. Sir Victor Sassoon was asking you about payment of wages weekly. I am now dealing with the subject of prompt payment of wages, i.e., payment of wages as early as possible after the day on which it falls due.—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas) : We say that certain payments should be made only after certain number of days elapse after they fall due.

A-1691. How many days do you want ?—8 to 10 days.

A-1692. Both in respect of time-work and piece-work ?—Yes.

A-1693. Why do you want 8 to 10 days after the day on which it falls due ?—We have to make calculations of the wages due to piece-workers.

A-1694. What period is necessary with regard to time-workers ?—The same period, because paysheets are not made separately for piece-workers and time-workers. From blow room to spinning room certain workers are piece-workers and certain others are time-workers. We have to pay them all at the same time.

A-1695. Why do you want 8 days in the case of time-workers where there is no calculation to be made ?—We have no such intricate calculations to make in the case of time-workers. But our object in delaying payment for 8 or 10 days is to

retain a certain amount of caution money in our hands. If we paid them in full settlement immediately after their wages fell due, they would have a tendency to change mills frequently. We would then have no permanent labour force. If on the other hand we had a certain number of days' wages as caution money there would be a check on that tendency.

A-1696. You want time to calculate the wages in the case of piece-workers and you want caution money in the case of both. Are there any other reasons?—No more.

A-1697. Of the two which is the more important?—It is more important for us to have some caution money to ensure a certain amount of continuity in our work-people.

A-1698. In your view that is the chief reason?—Yes.

A-1699. What was your reply to the Bombay Government with regard to fines?—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas). We have stated in our memorandum that fining exists to a negligible extent, that affairs are not so bad as they are described to be and therefore no action was called for.

A-1700. What is the maximum amount of fine for damaged work?—That depends on the nature of the damage. It may be one anna, or half anna or even quarter anna.

A-1701. Has your Association got any record of fines?—No.

A-1702. So you sent your observations to the Bombay Government in the absence of any record of fines?—Yes. But we discussed the matter in the Managing Committee which represents 20 to 25 mills.

A-1703. Did the Bombay Government ask you with regard to the amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Yes, we have sent our observations already.

A-1704. Will you tell me what they were?—I shall hand over a copy of our memorandum.

A-1705. Has your Association made any observation which is to the benefit of the worker? What are the alterations which you have recommended to be made in the Act?—(Mr. Patel). We have suggested that the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation should be given some discretion with regard to the number of days that should elapse before a workman gets compensation. In some cases there are several claimants in a family asking for compensation and the Commissioner should in such cases be given the discretion to withhold payment of cash for some time. We have also suggested that certain other classes of labour which are not included at present, might be included in the Act.

A-1706. In the Annual Report of the Union for 1928 it is stated that "cases of beating became so frequent at one time that the Union contemplated very drastic steps." Then it quotes a resolution of the Managing Committee of the Millowners' Association. Is that a resolution which the Managing Committee of your Association passed?—Yes.

A-1707. Has beating diminished since then?—Yes, certainly. (Mr. Patel). We have had no complaints. There is an award about beating and if there is any breach, a complaint is made and the matter is settled immediately.

A-1708. But your Managing Committee apparently viewed this as an evil when it went to the length of passing this resolution?—Yes.

A-1709. One of the objects of your Committee is to promote the welfare of the work-people. You say that has considerably diminished. But does it exist actually to-day or not?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai). It does not exist.

A-1710. But the Secretary of your Association says that you have had no complaint.—There are no complaints.

A-1711. Do any of the members of your Association keep a record of the sickness of the work-people?—No.

A-1712. But do any of the millowners pay sick wages?—Some of the mills may be paying sick wages according to the nature of the illness.

A-1713. Can you arrange for your Association to give us a record which will show the mills together with the number of work-people employed, which provide and to what extent in respect of housing medical facilities, crèches and schools?—Our printed list contains that information.

A-1714. But this document does not give the number of work-people?—No.

A-1715. Could you give me the information in relation to the work-people employer in each mill separately?—Yes, we are giving that information to the Government Inspector every month.

A-1716. What is the total amount spent on welfare per head of your people per annum ?
—We have no data.

A-1717. In your memorandum, in answering a good many questions as to what you do, this phrase: "Some do so and so" occurs. The whole implication of the memorandum is that the standard which some people maintain is used to the defence of the Association. Could you tell me what it costs the employers per head in welfare work covering the whole of the work-people in all the mills. (Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) I do not think we can do that, because the heads of our departments are looking after crèches and so on and it is impossible to put a money value on the services they render and say how much is spent on welfare work among the workers.

A-1718. I want to remind you that welfare of the work-people is one of the objects of your Association ?—Yes.

A-1719. Would it be possible for you to try and assist the Commission so that we might see what you spend per head of the working people ?—I shall try and do that.

A-1720. Is it the policy of your Association in view of the near advent of the Maternity Act, to reduce the number of women employed ?—No.

A-1721. Has your Association decided on any policy ?—No.

A-1722. So that if a Mill officer told me this morning that it was the policy at that mill to reduce the number of women because of the maternity benefit, what would you say about that ?—The Association is not aware of that. That is not the policy of the Association.

A-1723. Is that a right policy ?—No, that is not.

A-1724. *Divan Chaman Lal* : Could you tell me what efforts you have made to put into effect the recommendations of the Tariff Board with regard to the cotton textile industry ?—It would be convenient if you could specify the points on which you would like to have an answer.

A-1725. Have you carried out any improvements in organization of your industry on the lines recommended by the Tariff Board ? Could you oblige us by giving a statement as to the action you have taken in pursuance of the recommendations of the Tariff Board ?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai) We will try and do that.

A-1726. The report of the Tariff Board says that the mill industry in Ahmedabad is in a much better position than that in Bombay. Is that a fact ?—It is when compared to Bombay. The balance sheets are a proof of that.

A-1727. Are your wages lower than the wages paid in Bombay ?—No, they may be higher, but not less than Bombay.

A-1728. The Tariff Board have given statistics which show that Ahmedabad wages are definitely lower than Bombay wages ?—(Mr. Patel) That may be so according to the cost of living figures. But there is really no difference.

A-1728a. Take the manufacturing charge per loom. The Tariff Board says that it is Rs. 453.7 for Bombay and Rs. 450.29 for Ahmedabad. I shall now come to wages and show that the wages paid to spinners and weavers here are lower than those paid in Bombay. You find the high costs of labour referred to in page 109 of the Tariff Board Report. In August 1923 the monthly earnings of men in Bombay were Rs. 36-10-7, in Ahmedabad it was only Rs. 33-0-9. For women they were Rs. 17-5-5 in Bombay and Rs. 18-2-7 in Ahmedabad. The standard muster roll for 1926 (April 1st) gives the following figures for Bombay and Ahmedabad. Blow room tenters get Rs. 29 in Bombay and Rs. 23-10-0 in Ahmedabad; card room tenters get Rs. 27-4-0 in Bombay and Rs. 24-7-6 in Ahmedabad. Frame tenters get Rs. 37-12-0 in Bombay and Rs. 29-6-0 in Ahmedabad. Ring frame side boys get Rs. 29-12-0 and Rs. 26-7-6 respectively. Winders get Rs. 21-4-0 and 23-1-0, respectively. They get a little more in Ahmedabad. Weavers get Rs. 47-12-0 and Rs. 47-15-9, a slight difference. Folders get Rs. 29 and Rs. 25-11-3, respectively. In the case of folders you have Rs. 4 in your favour. From what I have shown, could you not say that generally speaking the workers are paid better in Bombay than in Ahmedabad ?—No, if you took into consideration the cost of living. Moreover in the case of women your figures themselves show that we pay more than Bombay.

A-1728b. I am taking these actual figures given by the Tariff Board. Do you challenge them ?—No, we do not.

A-1728c. Again the production is the same in Ahmedabad and Bombay according to the Tariff Board. They say at page 121 that production is quite as much in Ahmedabad as in Bombay.

The Chairman : I do not quite see what you are leading up to.

Diwan Chaman Lall : In reply to a question from Sir Victor Sassoon it was stated that the mill industry in Ahmedabad was the best paid industry. I am trying to show that in spite of the fact that they are getting as large a production from their workers in Ahmedabad as they get in Bombay, they pay less wages in Ahmedabad than are paid in Bombay.—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*) : Sir Victor Sassoon asked whether the mill hands were better paid than the villagers. There was no comparison between the industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad or in any other place.

Mr. Cliff : They referred to other industries in Ahmedabad.

A-1728d. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you challenge the finding of the Tariff Board that production in Ahmedabad is quite the same as production in Bombay?—We are not in a position to challenge or accept those findings unless we know on what materials they were based. They might have compared Bombay and Ahmedabad figures, but we have not the Bombay figures. Under the circumstances we cannot say, yes or no to that.

A-1728e. Could you tell me whether your industry is better paid than the Railway industry in Ahmedabad?—No, we have no figures to compare.

A-1728f. How then did you say that your industry was better paid than any other industry?—But we do not take Railways as an industry. Do you?

Mr. Joshi : Railway workshops?

The Chairman : The answer given by them referred to other industries which exist in Ahmedabad. I did not take it myself that it referred to a nation-wide industry such as Railways.

Mr. Cliff : Why then the witness also said that there was no other industry in Ahmedabad.

The Chairman : I think this is a kind of question on which we shall have to make up our minds.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I was trying to elicit some information if they could give statistical proof of it.

A-1729. You stated that 80 per cent. of your labour force was permanent. Would any permanent welfare schemes be feasible from the point of view of their permanency?—If Government and the Municipality come forward with a scheme and bear a portion of the cost, we will be glad to bear our share of it. At the same time Government must not forget its duty to protect the industry right through.

A-1730. You are quite willing to pay your quota if Government and Municipalities come forward with schemes for the permanent benefit of the permanent labour force. But would it be feasible?—Of course if the funds of the industry permit.

A-1731. I am eliminating all those factors. You see a great deal of absenteeism, going back to the villages and so on. You have 80 per cent. of your labour force permanent and your entire labour force is recruited within about 50 miles of Ahmedabad. Is any permanent scheme, for instance sickness insurance, feasible provided funds are forthcoming?—That does not come in the way of the permanent labour force. As for that I may tell you we are improving our housing accommodation.

A-1732. Take unemployment. You say that you do not want public employment agencies. The Labour Union says in its report that their difficulty arises from the defects inherent in the prevailing system of employment, and that the only remedy is to replace it by an automatic labour exchange?—We have discussed that matter. That is under consideration. But the union has not put forward any definite scheme.

A-1733. But for the moment you have decided that you do not want a labour exchange. We may modify that in the light of further schemes to be put forward by the labour union.

A-1734. With regard to unemployment insurance you also say that it is unnecessary. But you admit that there are dismissals and discharges and that large numbers of people are coming from the villages in search of work. Now there must be a certain amount of turnover of unemployment. Do you agree to that?—That is very negligible.

A-1735. Have you seen the Bombay Strike Enquiry Committee's Report?—Yes.

A-1736. In this report they have thrown out certain suggestions in anticipation of that the Labour Commission might or might not recommend, which are to be made applicable to the whole of the Bombay Presidency.

Sir Victor Sassoon : That is not correct. The Committee was making those suggestions only in cases where the industry was adopting rationalisation.

Diwan Chaman Lall : If a scheme like that were brought forward would you have any radical objections to that on principle?—We cannot express an opinion unless a definite scheme is put forward.

A-1737. Is it not the right and duty of the State as well as the component parts of it including the employers to see to it that a man who is unemployed does not starve?—Yes, I agree, it is for the State to do that.

A-1738. So that if the State realizes its responsibility and promulgates a scheme for relieving unemployment, will you, as Mr. Cliff reminded you, remembering that one of the objects of your Association is to promote the welfare of the workers, agree to work that scheme?—If that State scheme apply to textile labour only we will oppose it.

A-1739. Irrespective of the fact that it is the duty of the State and the employers alike to see that an unemployed person does not starve?—Yes. But if it is applied to the whole of the labouring classes including the agricultural classes and the middle classes, we will certainly support it.

A-1740. With regard to humidification, is your kata-thermometer system a success?—To some extent it has been a success.

A-1741. Is the carrier system a success?—Yes, to a certain extent. It is still under trial. It is being watched whether it is a paying proposition.

A-1742. In how many mills is the *kata* system in existence?—It is in existence in all the mills. Under the Factories Act we have to maintain that.

A-1743. But is that working in all the mills?—Yes, we have to send readings to Government every month.

A-1743a. Why do you say that it has been a partial success?

The Chairman : The Kata-thermometer is not a system of humidification. It is only an instrument for registering temperatures.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I wanted to ascertain whether the system of registration is a success or not.—The Kata-thermometer is an instrument with wet and dry bulbs registering the humidity of the air. That is not a system of humidification.

A-1744. In how many mills have you got the carrier system?—About ten or fifteen mills are equipped with these arrangements. They are all working partially successful.

A-1745. *Mr. Lallji* : Can you tell us what the return is on the whole of the capital invested in the textile industry? What is the return you get?—(*Mr. Patel*) : It was $3\frac{1}{2}$ in 1924; $4\frac{1}{2}$ in 1925; $4\frac{1}{2}$ in 1926 and $4\frac{1}{2}$ in 1927. With regard to the percentage on block account, the figures are as these.

A-1746. What would be a fair return on capital invested in trade generally?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*) : Between 8 and 9 per cent.

A-1747. Would it be fair to say that one-fourth of the population of Ahmedabad depends upon the textile industry for its living?—Yes.

A-1748. Does this population pay municipal taxes, directly or indirectly?—It does.

A-1749. Is it not the duty of the Municipality to provide for education, housing, and other things?—Yes.

A-1750. Does the Municipality do so?—No.

A-1751. Does the budget of the Municipality show a surplus?—Yes.

A-1752. What does the Government do for the welfare of the workers in the textile industry?—Nothing.

A-1753. What is the reason for the absence of a large number of men from work after pay days?—Sometimes it is liquor, and sometimes they while away their time outside.

A-1754. If you were to make weekly payments, do you think there would be more absenteeism from those causes?—Yes.

A-1755. You will admit that the houses of the labouring classes generally are very poor?—(*Mr. Parekh*) : The old ones are, but the new houses are being built on a different style.

A-1756. How many new houses are being built?—The number is increasing every year.

A-1757. Does the Municipality or the Government build them ?—No.

A-1758. Do you think if the mill labourer was more literate there would be less need to provide for medical aid ?—Yes.

A-1759. Have you asked Government to start free and compulsory primary education for the children of the labouring classes ?—(Mr. Patel) : Yes, I did so on behalf of the Association in the Council.

A-1760. *Mr. Cliff* : Did the Council pass a resolution ?—Yes. The scheme has been hanging fire for the last four years.

A-1761. *Mr. Lalji* : Do you know that the Bombay Government have not sufficient funds to help the scheme ?—That is what they say.

A-1762. What do you believe ?—We believe there is a good deal of scope for retrenchment in other directions.

A-1763. *Mr. Asale* : Have you any scheme in mind whereby unemployment may be reduced ?—(Mr. Parekh) : There is so little unemployment here that we have not had any reason to consider any scheme.

A-1764. Do the piece-workers keep account of their work ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : There is a board at every loom on which the amount of work the workers do is recorded. The workers know the rates, and they can check the figures.

A-1765. Are more tenements at present required for the mill hands, or not ?—(Mr. Parekh) : Yes.

A-1766. Is it not a fact that when there is a strike in the mill industry the employers have always demanded that the houses occupied by workmen shall be vacated immediately ?—No, it is not so here.

A-1767. You have stated that the improvements which have been made in the erection of *chawls* for workmen since the last three years has produced a good moral effect on the workers. Was there previously a bad moral effect ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : It does not mean that. It should be "a better moral effect".

A-1768. You have stated that the physique of the workers is fairly good, but are not the mill workers always suffering from tuberculosis, phthisis and bronchitis ?—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas) : Not always. There may be some cases, as there are among other labouring classes.

A-1769. Do you not think more medical aid should be provided for the mill labourers ?—We are providing it, and there are also the hospitals.

A-1770. If a worker falls ill on Sunday or holidays, where can he get medical aid ?—He can go to the civil hospital.

A-1771. Is it open on Sundays and holidays ?—Yes.

A-1772. *Lady Nilkanth* : You say you make provision for drinking water. How is that provided ?—By storage tanks.

A-1773. You have *chatties* in every mill ?—Yes.

A-1774. You said that the Municipality does not provide any amenities to the mill people. May I know if there are municipal schools in mill areas or not ?—There are none suitable for the work-people.

A-1775. Is it your opinion that the mills get lesser amenities from the Municipality than the other population of the city ?—We think so.

A-1776. Do you think that if you were to provide welfare schemes for the benefit of the labourers you would have to spend so much that your profits would suffer ?—What kind of welfare schemes do you refer to ? Certainly if each mill were to build a separate hospital it will cost a lot.

A-1777. Let me put it this way. I exclude housing for the present. If your Association were to enforce on all the mills to have a special standard of welfare work, that is, crèches, medical health and provision for elementary education, do you think that it would involve great expenditure ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : It all depends upon the nature of expenses we are called upon to make.

A-1778. Do you think that all the mills stand in the same position with regard to this matter, or that some can afford and some cannot ?—All the mills, in our opinion, stand in the same situation.

A-1779. Do you think the Ahmedabad Municipality could undertake to house all your labourers ? As many of you have been Municipal Councillors yourselves, you know how far the Municipality can help. Do you think the whole burden should be taken up by the Municipality ?—Municipality and Government.

A-1780. *Miss Cama* : If serious accidents to workers occur in your mills where do you send them for medical treatment ?—To the civil hospital.

A-1781. Is that a private hospital or a Government one ?—It is Government.

A-1782. Do the millowners pay towards the maintenance of that hospital ?—We pay to one department, for training nurses. Some mills pay certain contributions.

A-1783. How many crèches are there in all the mills ?—(Mr. Gordhandas Patel) : About 39.

A-1784. Will you call them good crèches ?—Of course, they are.

A-1785. *Miss Power* : What do you feel about the accuracy of the statement of the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad : " With the legal prohibition of the presence of children in workrooms, the provision of some sort of a crèche becomes an unavoidable necessity. Satisfactory arrangements in this respect exist in 21 mills. In the other mills the attitude of the management is marked by culpable indifference. Enclosed in dirty rags or bits of hessian cloth, children of a very tender age are left in the mill compound under improvised and often precarious shelter with nobody to look after them. Establishments employing women should be compelled by legislation to make suitable arrangements for the children accompanying the women ". Do you regard that description of conditions as an exaggeration ?—Yes.

A-1786. You were speaking before about the co-operation between the Millowners' Association and the Textile Labour Association and the fact that complaints came from the union to your Association. What machinery have you set up in your Association for dealing with those complaints speedily ?—We at once inform the mill which is concerned with the complaint.

A-1787. You may inform the mill that a complaint is made, but what arrangements are made for the speedy redress of the complaint ?—If the mill does not redress it we again remind it ; but if it is a serious complaint, we get it redressed by arbitration.

A-1788. If you look at the Textile Labour Association's report you will find they state that important grievances of which the redress would involve some outlay on the part of the mills are left to hang for years. They go on to say that they suggested to the Millowners' Association the appointment of a Joint Committee and a sub-arbitration board, but that it was regretted that you have failed to carry out these suggestions. What was your reason for failure to comply with the suggestion of the labour union ?—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas) : We do not think that is necessary, because even now as it is we always come to a conclusion. If there is any dispute we notify the Secretary of the labour union, and we solve the problem between ourselves. But if it is very grave it goes to the permanent board of arbitrators. A sub-committee of arbitrators cannot serve the purpose because the millowners as well as the labour will not have the same confidence as they have in the permanent arbitrators.

A-1789. They also say that 50 complaints are outstanding from the year 1922 and 78 from the year 1923 ?—Complaints are always bound to come. (Mr. Gordhandas Patel) : These complaints, I think, refer to the provision of dining sheds. There was a complaint that each mill should provide a dining shed. But on account of the difficulty of space and the permission to be received from the Municipality certain mills are not in a position to build dining sheds.

A-1790. If you add up the number of complaints outstanding since 1922, I imagine that there must be far more than would be covered by those involving big structural suggestions of the kind you have made just now which, I admit, do involve delay. Some of these complaints must be in respect of matters which could be put right more quickly ?—Some complaints were about the arrangements for drinking water, and they were set right.

A-1791. Are we to take it that the suggestion of the trade union to have this joint committee has been definitely turned down by your Association ?—Yes because we think there is no necessity to have such a joint committee. The present arrangement is very elastic ; as soon as a complaint is made, the authorities of the Association and the Union go to the mill concerned and try to redress it ; if it is not redressed, then it comes to the Committee, and finally goes to the Arbitration Board.

A-1792. Would your Association be in favour of Statutory orders laying down minimum welfare regulations which should have the force of law such as are operative in Great Britain ?—Not at present.

A-1793. Why not ?—Unless we consider all the details and the cost involved in carrying out the scheme, it will not be proper for us to give an off-hand opinion ; we have to consider how far it will affect the cost of production also.

A-1794. I am talking about the principle of passing such orders, not about any definite regulations which would be made under them?—We are not prepared to commit ourselves even as far as the principle is concerned.

A-1795. *Mr. Joshi*: You state you are willing to co-operate with the Municipality as regards housing. May I ask whether you would be willing to pay more and reasonable taxes as your contribution towards the solution of the housing problem if the Municipality agrees to do something in the matter?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*): If there is further protection given to the industry.

A-1796. Am I to understand that if Government puts more money into your pocket you will spend a share of it in this direction?—No. The industry is now depressed, and as long as funds do not permit, we cannot do anything.

A-1797. You say that the percentage of absenteeism is about 3 per cent. on the average. Therefore you can have no complaint about absenteeism. Yet I see in another part of your memorandum you say that absenteeism is due to illiteracy and indolent habits. Why do you call your people indolent if there is only 3 per cent. of absenteeism among them? What is the general efficiency figure in Ahmedabad in the weaving department?—From 70 to 80 per cent.

A-1798. May I take it that your workmen work for ten hours intensively during the day?—They do seven hours' work.

A-1799. If a man works seven hours intensively near a machine, can he be called indolent?—No, "Indolent" means absence without reason.

A-1800. Do you know what is the general percentage of absenteeism amongst better-class people, say, Government servants?—No.

A-1801. I will tell you. Government provides generally 10 per cent. for leave reserve. How can you call a man indolent when his absenteeism is only 3 per cent., while the Government provides 10 per cent., leave reserve for its servants. Suppose you were asked to work seven hours a day continuously without a minute's rest?—It is not without a minute's rest. The men are at the machines for ten hours, but they come out every ten or fifteen minutes during every hour.

A-1802. I am taking your efficiency figure of 70 to 80 per cent., which means that your work-people give you continuous work for seven hours?—Not continuous.

A-1803. Have you any objection to the Government ratifying the Convention regarding the provision of statistics of unemployment?—(*Mr. Patel*): We have no objection to that.

A-1804. You state that unemployment in the textile industry is negligible. I suppose you mean from the point of view of the whole industry; but what about the individual worker? You do not mean to say that, for instance, ten days' unemployment is of no consequence to an individual worker?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*): We do not admit that he is unemployed for ten days.

A-1805. Does it happen in Ahmedabad that certain departments of certain mills are closed for some days?—Very rarely.

A-1806. Does every Department of every mill continue working for the whole year?—Yes.

A-1807. Do you put up notices as regards piece-rates in your mills?—Yes.

A-1808. Would you have any objection to putting a section in the Factories Act, making that compulsory?—(*Mr. Parekh*): No.

A-1809. Would you have any objection to making the provision of cooling plants compulsory by legislation?—Yes.

A-1810. Why?—Because some of the old mills are not suitable for such an installation.

A-1811. Would you object to its being made compulsory for new mills?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*): It is under trial still; it is not decided yet whether it is a paying proposition, so we cannot commit ourselves.

A-1812. You say "Sickness insurance and introducing of similar systems are neither suitable nor necessary under the existing conditions. Difficulties arising from non-acceptability of Western medicines, paucity of medical men, migration of labour, and finance are not found in Ahmedabad". As you do not seem to have any difficulties as regards sickness insurance, why are you against it?—Because it is not workable.

A-1813. On the other hand, there is no difficulty about finance or about people taking Western medicines. You also admit that there is no paucity of medical men, or about

the labour being migratory. These are the difficulties which are usually put forward against the introduction of sickness insurance, but you state that these difficulties do not exist here, therefore what difficulties are there against sickness insurance?—Epidemics.

A-1814. Despite epidemics life insurance companies in India are prospering, are they not?—We do not say that life insurance companies are prospering.

A-1815. You will admit that there are people who insure their life in India in spite of epidemics?—Yes.

A-1816. Do you admit that during sickness, work-people do not receive any pay, and therefore incur debts during that period?—It has not been brought to our notice.

A-1817. Is it not your business to enquire about the welfare of your men?—Our business covers welfare work of all types.

A-1818. As employers you never worry as to what happens to your work-people during sickness?—(Mr. Patel) We provide medical aid and dispensaries. Beyond that we cannot do anything.

A-1819. With regard to provision for old age, you say this would be desirable, but you do not want to make such provision simply because your people are vicious, they drink, they eat opium and they gamble. May I ask if there are any members of your Association who subscribe to *pinjrapole*—towards the maintenance of lame and old cattle? If you do, do you think there is anything wrong in making provision for old people even though they may be opium eaters or drinkers or gamblers?—(Mr. Sakarlal Ballabhai) It is the duty of all men to look after the old and lame.

A-1820. Mr. Joshi: You state that the workmen's compensation law throws some financial burden upon the industry, and you mention Rs. 800 per mill of 25,000 spindles and 500 looms. How does that compare with the total expenditure?—(Mr. Parekh) It is very negligible.

A-1821. So that the cost of the workmen's compensation law need not be considered?—Not by itself; but the cost of these various things together comes to a big sum.

A-1822. Mr. Clow: How many mills are in all working on night shift?—Four or five.

A-1823. Is the tendency to increase the number of night shifts?—It has decreased by 50 per cent. during the last six months.

A-1824. Why is that?—Because it does not pay to run a night shift.

A-1825. If it does not pay why are new mills being erected?—Because we think that by building new mills, with new machines and up-to-date improvements they will pay better than the old mills. We have no other trade in Ahmedabad and we are investing our capital in these new mills in order to try and overcome our present difficulties.

A-1826. In your memorandum you complain of the competition of Indian States. What States are you thinking of?—The surrounding States, especially Baroda and Indore.

A-1827. If there are advantages to be derived from placing mills in Indian States why does not the new capital find an outlet there instead of in Ahmedabad?—We are more centralized here, and the mill agents are able to look after both the old mills and the new mills which are being erected.

A-1828. As regards the managing agency system, do I understand that the managing agent raises the capital from private persons, and distributes part of the commission as a kind of dividend?—Suppose I am a partner in the managing firm, I subscribe to the extent of a lakh of rupees. I go to my friends and ask them to subscribe a proportion, and out of that lakh of rupees I hand over to them their share. I take whatever balance remains. In other words, I underwrite.

A-1829. And you get a part of the annual commission?—Yes.

A-1830. Is every mill here managed by a managing agency?—Yes. There is no exception.

A-1831. Why is it not possible to manage mills more directly by a Board of Directors and a managing director without the intervention of managing agents?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai) Because it is very difficult to obtain the capital. The capital is brought in by the managing agent, and unless it is forthcoming no mill can be established or run.

A-1832. Do you consider the present age of children as fixed by the Factories Act suitable? Do you not think 15 is rather young as a full time worker?—No.

A-1833. As regards absenteeism, I understand that you only show absenteeism if a man is absent without having supplied a substitute?—Yes.

- A-1834. If he supplies a substitute, you do not mark him as absent ?—That is so.
- A-1835. Suppose you marked him as absent whenever he was not there himself, what would be the percentage of absenteeism then ?—About 2 per cent. more.
- A-1836. We noticed during our inspection of the mills that there seemed to be very few old men working. At about what age does a man cease work?—They may go to their villages in their old age.
- A-1837. Is a great proportion of the labour permanent here ?—When they go away they go back to their villages.
- A-1838. Are all the weaving sheds working on the two loom system here—one man to two looms ?—Yes.
- A-1839. You have not tried working more ?—No.
- A-1840. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In regard to the *chawls* which some of the mill-owners have built here, has any statement been worked out as to what return the mill-owners get on the capital invested ?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai) Yes, it is three per cent.
- A-1841. What is the rate at which you borrow money for the purpose of building these *chawls* ?—6 per cent.
- A-1842. So that there is a clear loss of three per cent. on the housing accommodation given to the workers ?—That is so.
- A-1843. You say that the number of women workers has been greatly reduced in the Ahmedabad cotton mills during the last two years. What is the reason that has led to this reduction in the employment of women workers ?—(Mr. Patel) There has been a tendency on the part of labour unions to say that women workers ought not to work in the mills.
- A-1844. The mill-owners themselves have not discouraged the employment of women ?—No.
- A-1845. They would employ women as before, if the women were willing to come ?—Yes.
- A-1846. That leads me to my next question. Are the earnings of the men members of the family enough to maintain the whole family including the women ? Do you maintain that a family can live in comfort on the earnings of the man, taking a family as being one male, one female and two children ?—The women may be going to other work in the city.
- A-1847. That means that there are other sources of employment in Ahmedabad for women ?—That is so.
- A-1848. That is the reason why there is no unemployment in the city?—Exactly.
- A-1849. *Mr. Asarje* : What are those other sources of employment ?—Hawking of vegetables, plying of lorry, road repairs, and several other things.
- A-1850. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You say that the restriction of 60 hours has produced a good effect on the operatives but that it has increased the cost of production in the industry. Later on you say “ No further reduction in the hours of working should be made. Workmen get sufficient time after 6 p.m. when the mills are closed, for recreation and rest. The period of rest in the afternoon is one hour at a stroke, and this also tends to give them sufficient rest during the interval.” You then go on to say “ Further reduction in working hours would enhance the cost of production to such a degree as would harm the industry and render its position to compete with other manufacturers very weak.” What has been the effect on production of the reduction of the working hours from 12 to 10 ? Can you give us any statement which would show that a given number of workmen were producing so much in 12 hours, and that they are now producing so much in ten hours ?—(Mr. Parekh) We will make out a statement.
- A-1851. I notice you say “ and render its position to compete with other manufacturers very weak.” To what other manufacturers are you referring ?—Manufacturers outside India—Japan mostly.
- A-1852. Then your position is that any measures of this kind will so adversely affect the industry that it will suffer heavily in consequence of foreign competition ?—Exactly.
- A-1853. You say “ Labour questions are increasingly handled by Government, and during the last six years several enactments have been made—the Workmen’s Compensation Act, Trade Disputes Act, Trade Unions Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Humidification and Ventilation Rules ” and so on. Can you tell us what has been the cumulative effect

of these measures, on the textile industry and also what the effect will be in future if further measures of a similar kind are adopted ?—We will try to submit a statement to you on that.

A-1854. *The Chairman* : I may take it from your memorandum that you have generally found that the changes made in recent years have been for the benefit of your workers, and that you have not been exactly ruined by them ?—No, not ruined, but we have been affected to a certain extent.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
NINETEENTH MEETING
AHMEDABAD

Saturday, 16th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*),

<p>The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVAS A. SASTRI, C.H., P.C. Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.</p>	<p>Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
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Mr. HOOSHEENHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C. }

Lady V. R. NILKANTH. } *Lady Assessors.*
Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. }

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
Mr. A. DIBDIN. }

**Mr. AMBALAL SARABHAI of The Ahmedabad Manufacturing and
Calico Printing Co., Ltd.**

A-1855. *The Chairman* : I understand that you are the owner of two large mills in Ahmedabad ?—I am the senior partner in the firm of managing agents.

A-1856. Of the Calico and the Jubilee Mills ?—Yes.

A-1857. You yourself are responsible for the control and management here of those mills ?—That is so.

A-1858. How many workers do you employ in these two mills ?—About 5,000.

A-1859. Are those divided between the two mills equally ?—In one mill we have about 3,000 and in the other mill about 2,000.

A-1860. And you yourself give your personal attention to the control of those two important mills ?—I control the management.

A-1861. In your memorandum you tell us that you are making an experiment in the appointment of an employment officer to get over some of the difficulties that we often hear of in the recruitment of labour in your mills, and you tell us quite frankly of some of the difficulties which you have found in that experiment to diminish the difficulties that sometimes arise in leaving complete responsibility for engagement of labour to the jobbers ?—That is so.

A-1862. You tell us, as might be expected in such an experiment, that considerable difficulties arise ?—That is so.

A-1863. May I take it that you are persisting in that experiment and hoping that experience will help you to make it satisfactory ?—I have no doubt about it.

A-1864. You have no doubt that it will succeed ?—It will take some time, but it is bound to succeed.

A-1865. With patient perseverance you feel that it will succeed and you will get over many of the difficulties of the system which is so common ?—That is my view.

A-1866. Do you keep any complete register of the workers who come to your firm?—Yes; those who are employed are entered on a waiting list, and then whenever there is a vacancy a selection is made from those on the waiting list.

A-1867. Where you have migratory labourers coming in from the outside, do they return again and again to your works, or is there any record to show how frequently they return to the same works?—There are not many names registered so far, because, people who are not supported by jobbers are afraid of getting their names registered, because if they get employment they are afraid they will be sent away from some excuse or another; so that the list is not very comprehensive or complete; but we get a few men and they keep on coming to us from time to time and get employment as substitutes.

A-1868. Do you aim at giving encouragement to these migratory labourers to come again and again to your works?—Yes, by employing them whenever we need them.

A-1869. When they come back do you give a preference to those who have worked with you before?—We always do.

A-1870. And do you give any inducement to them tending towards regularity in that respect?—In certain departments we pay attendance bonus, but not for people who go away for a short period and then come back; they do not get any inducement at all.

A-1871. In your memorandum you deal with the question of unemployment insurance and you tell us that in your opinion it is unnecessary and uncalled for, that in your view it could only be possible if it covered a larger field than merely industrial workers?—That is so.

A-1872. You then make an interesting reference to the use of men of University education?—We are making an experiment in that way.

A-1873. Are you finding that men from the Universities are in an increasing measure turning their thoughts towards industrial employment?—I think so.

A-1874. That would seem to be a very valuable development. We have heard something of it elsewhere. You are doing your best, I take it, to encourage young men of University qualifications to apply their abilities to industry?—We get a number of applications, so that I feel that they like to go into technical lines now.

A-1875. And so far as your experiment has gone has it been successful?—I am quite satisfied with it.

A-1876. You have already some men of that type who are proving themselves capable and satisfactory?—Yes, that is my experience.

A-1877. I think I may take it from what you tell us that you have an advantage here in Ahmedabad that for the most part the real heads of the firms are on the spot dealing from day to day with their problems?—That is so.

A-1878. Not at a distance?—They are in close touch with the management.

A-1879. That accounts, perhaps, for some of the success of your experiments. You tell us that a few graduates were taken as apprentices in 1919 and a regular scheme was introduced in 1921. At present in your mills there are 12 graduates in the technical departments and 10 in the commercial department?—That is so.

A-1880. We take note of that as a valuable experiment of which I take it you are confident there will come success?—I think so.

A-1881. You also tell us in more details of your experiments to deal with your workers and to eliminate some of the troubles that have arisen from leaving too much responsibility to the jobbers?—But our efforts have not been successful, as I have stated.

A-1882. So I note; you tell us an attempt was made to do without jobbers, but the system was too novel and it had to be given up?—That is so.

A-1883. But I take it that your experiment with the employment officer, while it is not aimed at altogether doing away with the jobber, is intended to remove the evils which sometimes grow up where the jobbers are not men of the right quality?—Yes, that is one of the objects.

A-1884. You make a reference to workers committees, you tell us there can be no objection on principle to the formation of workers committees, but you tell us that there is suspicion and distrust on both sides. Would you like to develop your views on the possibility of workers committees?—The union do not view with favour any workers committee; I have discussed it with the Labour Union, and they think that it will come in conflict with their shop stewards, they think it will interfere with the Union movement and divide the workers. That is one objection of the Union. The second objection

is that the Board and I realize that if we give some advisory functions to the committee to begin with, they will ask for some further concessions, they will want an effective voice in management a little later, and it may lead to labour troubles.

A-1885. You are aware, no doubt, that this experience of yours is not one which refers to India alone; the same suspicion has occurred in other countries in the early stages of such a proposal as this, but that with patience both the union and the employers come to see that there is a field for joint works committees without any weakening of the union and to the advantage of both labour and employers?—That is my view, and on principle I approve of it; but I do not think the union movement and the employers are in a condition to work this system at present until the union movement has more settled in the country; until then I do not think it is possible to work it without disastrous results to both.

A-1886. But a movement of that kind cannot make progress except with patient endeavour on both sides to make it a success; it needs, of course, to be established with the approval and co-operation of the union and of the employers?—The difficulty to-day is that only spinners are in the union; there is no union for weavers, I mean not on a large scale. There are very few men in the weavers union. So that when we have got a certain number of workers in the union, and in other departments not in the union, we are not able to discuss questions of general importance, such as intervals for food, fines and other things, because those who are in the union will want to advocate the policy of the union, and those who are not in the union may want something else. So that unless we get all the workers in the union, I am afraid this experiment will not succeed.

A-1887. Then you think it needs more complete organization on the workers' side before there is a basis for real success?—That is what I think.

A-1888. In your memorandum you tell us some interesting things about housing arrangements; can you tell us in a few words what in your opinion is the main obstacle to an improvement of the housing conditions in Ahmedabad?—Want of will.

A-1889. On whose part?—On the part of all.

A-1890. In that you include the Municipality, the employers and public opinion generally?—The workers, employers, Municipality and Government.

A-1891. Have you any suggestion to give us as to how those obstacles can be overcome?—By the Municipality undertaking big housing schemes, in my opinion, or subsidising a housing scheme. We are considering such a proposal in the Municipality at present.

A-1892. Taking for the moment the housing for which the millowners are responsible, we notice a very great variation between the best and the worst; is it not possible for the millowners to try to level up the worst to the standard of the best for the credit of the industry here?—My own view is that it is not a function of a millowner to provide houses for his workers; it is the function of the public body to do so. The millowners may pay their contribution to the local body for the purpose; millowners may be taxed to provide interest and sinking fund and other things, but there cannot be uniformity if every employer builds separately; it must be done by the local body.

A-1893. But am I right in saying that you yourself have done a great deal in the way of housing of your own workers?—We have done very little, and I do not think we can do much in that direction.

A-1894. And the union, I understand, prefer municipal housing to employers' housing for certain obvious reasons?—At present I do not think they care who builds their houses as long as the houses are built.

A-1895. But do you not think that the employers as a whole, who have considerable numbers of *chawls*, could raise the standard, bring up the poor ones to the standard of the best?—I think it ought to be done; the municipality ought to enforce it not only on the employers but on all *chawl* owners, whether the *chawls* belong to the mills or to private landlords.

A-1896. Then do you think the municipal regulations are not adequate or that they are not adequately enforced?—Both. I have stated that.

A-1897. I understand that recently a new standard has been introduced into the municipal regulations?—That only prevents back to back rooms; that is the new regulation, as far as I am aware; but there are many more things that require to be done in this direction.

A-1898. Then you think that a higher standard of municipal regulations is required?—It is very necessary.

A-1899. And, more than that, a greater determination to enforce that standard ?—That is so.

A-1900. *Mr. Sastri* : Taking up this housing question, did I understand you to say that you do not consider it is the duty of the millowners to provide accommodation for their employers ?—What I say is this, that the millowners may contribute, but not at their own expense provide land, build houses and so on.

A-1901. Then you consider the municipalities are the proper agencies to take up the matter ?—That is so.

A-1902. Would you say that the municipalities should finance these housing schemes out of the ratepayers' contributions, or would you allow that while the municipalities may be the managing agencies for building and so on, they should recoup themselves out of contributions made by the millowners in this behalf ?—In the present financial position of the municipality, they will have to get it from the millowners ; the difference between the economic rent and the rent that the workers can actually pay will have to be borne by the millowners.

A-1903. Then the municipalities will build and also regulate building by private enterprise, so that there may not be great disparity between the standards set up by the municipalities and by these private builders ?—No attempt has been made by the municipality so far and it is difficult. I personally do not favour the municipality building them ; the municipality should subsidize private owners and the workers to build houses. To begin with, the municipality should build a few, and then offer a subsidy to the workers and then to the landlords on different grades. Then we must see what the result is, and then adopt the policy we find best under the circumstances.

A-1904. Do you look forward to the occupiers of these houses being able to pay economic rents ?—Some workers can, some cannot.

A-1905. And I suppose those who cannot, comprise the great majority ?—The rent will have to be less than the economic rent.

A-1906. Do you say that wages should be increased so as to enable these people to pay the rents ?—That brings up a very big question.

A-1907. Otherwise I think there is a risk of the ratepayer being taxed for the purpose of housing these labourers ?—My information is to the effect that Rs. 60,000 per year is the total that the municipality should require for the purpose, and that they can certainly get from the mills.

A-1908. Now we come to something definite. You think the mills here can bear the additional burden. I am not asking you yet whether they will bear it. You think they can bear it ?—My own view is that they ought to.

A-1909. I suppose you are one of the few who hold that opinion among your class ?—I do not know that.

A-1910. With regard to hours of work, are you in sympathy with the demand that they should be reduced as low as 8 ? I am not asking you as a humanitarian ; I am asking you whether you favour the demand as a practical thing at the present time, and, if you do not, will you kindly explain your reasons to the Commission ?—I do not think it is possible to do it in the near future. If we reduce hours the rates of wages will have to be put up by 25 per cent. in order that their present earning should be maintained. I believe that the workers can certainly do considerably more than they do at present and earn more, but they will not agree to it to-day. If the hours are reduced without doing either, then the industry cannot bear the charge.

A-1911. Will you explain a little further why there is this reluctance on the part of labour to increase their output ?—Their standard of living is low and on the present wage they do not feel the pinch that is required in order to give them an impetus to earn more. That is one thing ; the second thing is that they are afraid of unemployment ; they feel that if they take up more work it means unemployment for the other people. The third reason is that their home surroundings, education and so on, are so low that they do not realize the benefit of it. We have tried an experiment for about a year ; we worked 8 hours, and we had naturally at that time to ask our workers to attend more to their work than they had with 10 hours' work. We found our workers wanted to go back to 10 hours and be more lenient than to work 8 hours.

A-1912. They would rather work 10 hours loosely than work 8 hours rigorously ?—That is what we were told by the workers some time ago when we were working 8 hours.

A-1913. Do you think that defect in labour can be cured or combated by any means?—Yes, I have made a suggestion in my written evidence with regard to unemployment. There are so many new mills being put up just now; some mills do night work and others would like to do night work if they could get the men. If the union agrees not to make any more members and these men who are working in the mills are found work in new mills, then it can be done in such a way that in a few years it will mean more work without unemployment.

A-1914. Are the union prepared to restrict their membership?—They cannot possibly do it until the millowners agree not to employ non-union men.

A-1915. So that very good understanding between millowners and operatives would be required?—Yes, and that is why I think it is not possible.

A-1916. Do you think it is worth while making an attempt?—It will not succeed at the present time.

A-1917. We heard some days ago here that the difficulties of labour are in part due to the fact that the managing agents appropriated to themselves a somewhat undue share of the profits of the industry. Have you anything to say on that head?—There are some people who believe that the Ahmedabad mill agents get more than Bombay, but I have looked into the figures and I find that is not so. I have figures which I have given to the Tariff Board showing a comparison between the charges on the mills in respect of the agency in Ahmedabad and Bombay. I find that Ahmedabad mill agents do not get more. I mean the charge on the mill is not more; they may be getting slightly more but the mill does not pay more.

A-1918. Then from whom do they get the excess?—The Ahmedabad mill agents do many things which the Bombay mill agents do not do, for instance, selling; the Ahmedabad mill agents give more attention to it and pay a lower commission to their selling agents than they do in Bombay. I made a comparison of a mill with 25,000 spindles and 825 looms, and I found that in a lean year in Ahmedabad the charge is Rs. 3,000 per year more, but in a good year in Ahmedabad it is less by Rs. 4,000 than it is in Bombay. Then the Ahmedabad mill agents are large shareholders in the companies, so that if they were not taking it as commission they would get it as dividend. For this purpose I have not taken that into account; if that were taken into account, it would come to much less than Bombay.

A-1919. So that you think on the whole that the proportion of profit that the managing agents take is not susceptible of much reduction?—If it is reduced the industry will not succeed as well as it does in Ahmedabad. One of the reasons why the industry has made such progress here is that the agent has a great stake in the capital and he makes a good profit on it.

A-1920. He puts more work into the business?—That is so; he has such a great stake in it.

A-1921. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Yesterday we were informed that the profits on the block account of the Ahmedabad mills come to about 4 per cent. Is that true?—Very nearly.

A-1922. Then how is it that you are able to declare dividends on a much higher scale?—Because of the reserves in the depreciation funds and the undistributed profits. The capital is a very small part of the total funds of the company. The Ahmedabad mills work with a smaller capital; they take greater risks in the beginning; that is why the dividends are high.

A-1923. But the dividends must come out of profits. In a statement that has been circulated to us it is stated that the average dividend was 18 per cent., after providing about 35 lakhs for depreciation and about the same amount as managing agents' commission. If you only make 4 per cent. on the block account, which is the capital invested in machinery and buildings, how is it possible to call that industry a success?—The return is very inadequate but the dividend can be explained. If the capital is 20 lakhs and the reserves are 80 lakhs, then 4 per cent. on the total will come to 20 per cent. on 20 lakhs. It is not satisfactory, but it is not as unsatisfactory as in other places. It is because of the reserves and other things that the dividends are maintained. The reserves are not usually deposited but are invested in machinery and buildings; most of the mills invest their reserves and depreciation fund in extending the mills, so that on the block account it is a very poor return.

A-1924. *The Chairman*: You mean that the nominal capital of the company may represent only a quarter of the money that is really sunk in the industry?—In many cases less than a quarter.

A-1925. So that the 18 per cent. on the nominal capital has really no relation to the percentage of the profit on the whole of the money sunk in buildings and machinery?—That is so; it is a very poor return.

A-1926. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What would be the position of a new mill?—A new mill with up-to-date machinery will earn more than 4 per cent. now.

A-1927. You appreciate that unless the return was something in the nature of 6 per cent. there would be a loss to the company, as they would be paying out more in interest than they received in profit?—Yes; it will pay more than 6 per cent., but how much I must work out.

A-1928. *The Chairman*: May I take it that a new mill at any rate anticipates say 10 per cent., or else the enterprise would hardly be justified in taking the risk?—It certainly anticipates 10 per cent. on the paid-up capital, not on the block. If a company has a block capital of 20 lakhs, of which the paid-up capital is 5 lakhs, and the profit is 2 lakhs, that is 10 per cent.

A-1929. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Assuming an old mill is making 4 per cent., with the same management, what would a new mill make?—As it was about two months ago, I think it would make about 8 per cent. which is double.

A-1930. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What do you mean by the following remark in your memorandum:—“Moreover, one country cannot reduce its hours while another country competing in its home and foreign markets does not do so, unless it has the independence to adjust its tariffs and pay bounties as may be necessary to make up for what may be lost by reduction in the hours of working and by improving generally the condition of workers”?—I had in mind Japan, where the hours of work are much longer than they are here; and wages I think work out less than they are here in certain departments; so that I think unless we have fiscal independence with regard to tariffs and other things it will ruin the industry. In foreign countries we cannot compete at all and we find it very difficult to hold our own in India to-day.

A-1931. What do you mean by what you say in your written memorandum with regard to the attitude of Government towards trade combinations and industrial disputes?—I had in mind what Government did in Bombay at the time of the Bombay mill strike and communal riots. As to what I say as to acts of commission and omission on the part of the Government, I can only mention a few. We are told that everything is held up for want of money, but look at the expenditure on New Delhi.

A-1932. That is the Imperial Government; I am speaking of the Provincial Government?—Because the Imperial Government have not got money, they cannot stop the provincial contributions, and the provinces cannot give us money for improvements because they have to make contributions to the Imperial Government. Bombay lost heavily with regard to the development scheme and could not balance their budget. Look at the expense, in a poor country like India, of keeping body-guards, maintaining the pomp of the Moghuls, and special trains, when hospitals have not got bandages, and people cannot be educated. Then the rate of exchange of the rupee at 1s. 6d. instead of 1s. 4d. has, in my opinion, ruined the country a great deal. With regard to omission, what is being done about land policy, education and public health?

A-1933. Housing is closely connected with public health, is it not?—Yes.

A-1934. In every town where a municipality exists, it is the duty of the municipality to look after public health?—That is so.

A-1935. Therefore the first duty of a municipality is to see that all the sanitary measures which are required for public health are taken by it at the expense of the general rate-payer?—Yes.

A-1936. How has the municipality discharged its duty in Ahmedabad in regard to public health?—Very badly.

A-1937. What is the total municipal revenue in Ahmedabad?—I think it is about 35 lakhs.

A-1938. And what is the population?—They do not keep proper statistics, but I think it is about 3,20,000.

A-1939. So that roughly speaking the incidence of taxation per head of population is Rs. 11?—Rs. 9.

A-1940. In Bombay it is nearly Rs. 28, is it not?—Rs. 22 or Rs. 23.

A-1941. That means that there is a great disparity between the municipal taxation on the population of Bombay and on that of Ahmedabad?—Yes. Karachi is about Rs. 16. Our Rs. 9 includes about one-third or one-quarter coming from the mills, so that it comes to less on the rest of the population.

A-1942. There is no obligation upon the municipality to build houses for the people ?—I think it is the function of the municipality to bring down mortality.

A-1943. Their obligatory duties include medical relief, general sanitation and building regulations to ensure that buildings are constructed in a sanitary manner by the owners, but I have never known there is any obligation on the municipality to build houses themselves ?—I think local bodies in England give subsidies and help. I am asking for an all round extension of the housing programme, but in so far as it affects the mill hands, that amount may be recovered from the mills in additional taxation.

A-1944. Your position is this, that the provision of sanitary houses by private enterprise is not possible, as it does not pay, and therefore public bodies and Government should subsidize the building of houses ?—That is so.

A-1945. Do you think the general public would be able to bear the burden of this additional taxation ?—As far as the mill housing is concerned.

A-1946. I am speaking with regard to the whole population ?—But it may be put in such a way that the general public will not grumble about it.

A-1947. You think it is a practical proposition ?—I think so.

A-1948. Mr. Clow: In your memorandum, you refer to the landed interest being strongly represented on the Municipal Board ?—That is so.

A-1949. Most of the mill hands are at present enfranchised ?—Yes, they are.

A-1950. Are not they able to secure effective representation ?—The landlords in whose *chawls* they stay manage to get their votes.

A-1951. Have you any suggestions for overcoming that difficulty ?—Civic consciousness.

A-1952. But that is not a thing one can build up in a day ?—We shall have to wait till it comes.

A-1953. You have no shorter method to suggest ?—Government can come down and say: "You shall do this to improve sanitation and housing"; but they do not.

A-1954. That would be rather interfering with local self-government, would it not ?—I think they interfere where they ought not to and do not interfere where they ought to.

A-1955. Under the head "Value and defects of system of employing jobbers" you refer to your endeavours to get the educated young men to replace jobbers, and you say there is great difficulty, as the nature of the work appeals only to a few. What is the scale of pay that a young man can expect on entering that occupation ?—We have tried it and many left us; I wanted them to learn the work to begin with. A jobber will get about Rs. 120 a month after he has been trained for a year or two.

A-1956. During his training what would you give him ?—We offered to pay Rs. 30 as a sort of scholarship, but then the work does not appeal to them.

A-1957. Why—because it is manual ?—They are not used to these long hours and this class of work and the conditions in the mill.

A-1958. In your memorandum under the head "Value and defects of system of employing jobbers" you refer to surplus labour at present, but I think in answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that the difficulty of working nightshifts was that you could not get enough labour—Not the right type of labour! those who get employment during the day time do not prefer to work in the night, and the people you get at night are indifferent work-people. It is only those who cannot get day work who take night work.

A-1959. The mills in which working conditions are good have much less difficulty in getting the labour they want ?—That is so.

A-1960. Are the mills in which conditions are poor compelled to offer higher wages ?—I have no personal knowledge of that; if they do not pay higher wages they will get an inferior class of men.

A-1961. You refer to objections urged by the labour union against doing without jobbers. What is the nature of these objections ?—They have got the jobbers in the union now and they have got to support them.

A-1962. You have made an interesting suggestion as regards workmen's compensation, You suggest that every child under 15 should get Rs. 60 per year until it reaches the age of 15. Is that to be given irrespective of whatever wage the father was earning ?—That is my view.

A-1963. And of the number of children there are?—Yes. At present there is no provision like this; this is the minimum I propose for each child.

A-1964. So that if a man earning a small wage died and left a considerable number of children, the family would get very much more than they got while he was alive?—I do not think Rs. 5 is enough.

A-1965. Suppose he left five children—he might not have been earning Rs. 25 a month?—I do not think there can be five children under 15, because the mortality is so high.

A-1966. I think you will find such cases. Later on you suggest that the husband should only get half the amount due in case of death of a woman. At present he gets a much smaller amount than the wife gets owing to the smaller wage earned by the woman?—Both men and women are employed in the spinning department, and it is in this department that most of the accidents take place—very few in the weaving—and wages for men and women are the same in the spinning.

A-1967. That is not true of every occupation?—I am talking of the textile industry. I want a general application of my proposal, but if you find that you should pay more in other industries you can do so. This is the minimum that should be given; this is good, to begin with, for the textile industry.

A-1968. You suggest also that a man below 20 should not be employed on the night shift?—That is my view.

A-1969. At the same time you suggest that night and day shifts should change over. Would not that make difficulty? It would virtually exclude men under 20 if the shifts had to change over?—No. I think that half-timers should not be kept on. If the mills work night shifts they will not employ men under 20.

A-1970. But if you want to change shifts?—There are few mills that will work at nights, and they need not employ men under 20.

A-1971. With regard to 60 hours' work per week you say that the worker's efficiency has increased and the output has gone up, but it has not gone high enough to compensate for the loss to the owners due to the lesser number of hours of work. Have you any figures of production that would help us to come to a decision in regard to this matter?—I tried to find figures yesterday, but from memory I can tell you that I have taken figures just a year after we went into ten hours, and I found that out of 16½ hours' reduction, we had made up in the weaving about 11 per cent. and in the spinning about 5 per cent. This is from memory; I have not estimated it recently.

A-1972. You will be prepared to admit the possibility that after the system of shorter hours had been in force some time, the efficiency would further increase?—Per hour it will go up slightly; but you cannot expect any great efficiency.

A-1973. But I think you said that you made calculations two or three years after the present system came into operation?—No, after a year.

A-1974. As regards your answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola in respect of the reduction in the hours of work, you spoke of the danger of ruin to the industry. I take it that you were referring not to the conditions at present but to the conditions if hours were further reduced?—The condition of the industry is not at all good to-day, according to my view, and it will be very bad if a further reduction is made. But I am not recommending increase to 12 hours.

A-1975. But leaving aside Bombay itself, in practically every important centre of the industry production is increasing or has increased notably in the last two or three years?—That is due to better cotton and better machinery being used and not to the tariff policy of the Government.

A-1976. Then that does not suggest any danger of ruin?—I do not think the industry is in a sound condition to-day.

A-1977. With regard to "intervals" you say "The objects with which the interval is given . . . will be better served if it is given twice instead of once a day. But under the existing conditions it is neither desirable nor possible to make the change." You mean desirable but not possible?—It is not desirable this way that the work-people will not go out at that time.

A-1978. Why not?—They get food from home; some day it may be half an hour late and some day it may be half an hour earlier and as such they will be very greatly inconvenienced.

A-1979. Would it not be of benefit to the industry if wages were standardized?—It is not possible; it would be a benefit if it could be done, but I do not think it could be done.

A-1980. It could be done by a statutory wages board?—The conditions with regard to the raw material used, machinery and work vary so much from mill to mill that standardization is not possible.

A-1981. It has been attempted in Bombay?—Yes, with most disastrous results.

A-1982. The results are due to standardization?—I think it was very unscientific.

A-1983. With regard to fines you say "Deductions are made from the weavers' wages as compensation for the damages sustained through their carelessness in weaving cloth." Are they in any case given the damaged cloth?—If the damage is serious then it is given; if it is slight it is not given.

A-1984. It was suggested to us yesterday that where they were given the damaged cloth they suffered very little loss. Do you agree with that view?—I do not desire to express my personal opinion on that matter.

A-1985. You have given us very interesting statistics at the end of your memorandum. In your Jubilee mills there are twice as many men under 30 years of age as there are after. Can you give us an explanation?—As far as men are concerned, I think some of them go to weaving.

A-1986. But this relates to both spinning and weaving?—I sent a letter to the Secretary to the Commission informing him that we have 1,900 men in the mills and we could get reliable information—what we considered was good enough—from 1,380; these figures are based on 1,380.

A-1987. That is a representative sample I take it?—I really cannot say so, because of the percentage of males and females. There are very few females in the spinning; so the percentage taken on weaving and spinning generally does not give you a fair idea of the percentage of women employed.

A-1988. Take Appendix IV of your memorandum which shows that about half the number of employees have not more than four years' service. That seems a very large proportion of men leaving before they attain any long service?—That is so.

A-1989. What is the explanation for that?—I have not really looked into that.

A-1990. Is it that the conditions of the work are so arduous that the men cannot endure them for a long time?—They may be going from one mill to another due to the insanitary conditions of their homes, or they may be going to their villages and coming again. Though they join us again their service is not treated as continuous.

A-1991. You do not keep a record?—He might put in continuous service for some time and then go to his village for a year and again after that period rejoin us in that case he is treated as beginning his service afresh. The statement does not represent that the men leave the work after a few years' service but that they are fairly continuous in service for three years.

A-1992. Mr. Joshi: You state that a large portion of the labour in Ahmedabad is not permanently settled; you give the extent of permanent labour as 15 per cent. It might be that the causes of the labour not being permanently settled are, firstly, the housing conditions. Do you think, under present housing conditions, any worker would think of permanently settling in Ahmedabad?—They have got interests in villages and upcountry, and even if they are better housed they will not become permanent residents of Ahmedabad.

A-1993. Of course, there are several reasons, but bad housing may be one of them. The housing condition in towns like Ahmedabad, where people do not get a small suitable house or fresh air, is perhaps one of the causes why the labour force does not settle permanently?—If they own their houses here, then it will be all right, but even if housing conditions are improved they will not settle down permanently here.

A-1994. Nobody will like to settle down permanently in a *chawl*; if he has a small cottage of his own he would like to settle down?—Yes, if they have their own houses.

A-1995. It may also be due to another factor, namely, that old age is not provided for; nobody would like to settle down unless he knows that old age is provided for?—I do not think so. If he is to be provided for old age by going to the village, he would give preference to the village rather than to the town. There is no provision for old age here or there.

A-1996. Most of them do not possess land in villages and their condition therefore is the same; but village life may be cheaper?—That means having two establishments.

A-1997. Why?—Because his children will be working in Ahmedabad. Whatever he saves by the lower cost of living in the village he will spend more than that in running two establishments.

A-1998. Then again his connection is completely out off when he comes to towns like Ahmedabad ?—He goes periodically to his village on holidays.

A-1999. So he has some establishment there ?—A house he may have.

A-2000. He shuts his house when he comes to the town ?—Either he lets it out or closes it down.

A-2001. Dealing with methods of recruitment you say "The Employment Department has not yet been able to show any good result, the reason being the disfavour with which it is viewed by the heads of the departments." I want to find out the reason why the heads of the departments look on this experiment with disfavour. Is it their desire to please their jobbers ?—No. I think the jobbers want to make money and they want to put up the head of the department to oppose it by telling him "the agent does not trust you, and so it is not better for you to have any hand in the matter of employment."

A-2002. The head of the department believes the words of the jobber ?—He feels his vanity is hurt when a subordinate tells him that the agent does not trust him.

A-2003. Do you also admit that there is some kind of corruption on the part of the jobbers ?—Yes, a good deal.

A-2004. It might be that the officers are also sharers in that corruption ?—I do not think so.

A-2005. As regards a Public Employment Agency you state "It is not, however, called for under the present conditions in Ahmedabad." Will it not help the workers if there is a public employment agency inasmuch as their going about the various mills for employment may be reduced ?—I have given reasons why it will be difficult to make a proper use of the agency. The men are required in the mills early in the morning and until the mills start working we will not know the number of absentees. The central agency cannot therefore be of any help in this regard.

A-2006. The central agency might start work early in the morning ?—As the agency cannot be informed of the number of men required until the mills actually start working, it will take time for the agency to send the men. The mills will not be agreeable to this procedure. As far as daily substitutes are concerned the mills always give preference to the men who call at the gates of the mills every morning.

A-2007. I am not speaking of the ordinary substitutes who wait at the gates. What I want to know is whether the agency cannot be of help when the mills want more men, not substitutes ?—The mills give preference to the substitutes who worked in the mills before ; there are some substitutes who come every day, and when there is a permanent vacancy the substitute is given the preference.

A-2008. As regards unemployment insurance you say that legislation preventing fragmentation of land and uneconomic holdings may prevent unemployment. I thought that legislation preventing fragmentation of land may create unemployment in villages ?—I do not share that view.

A-2009. It is not a question of views. If a worker has got some land he sticks to that land whether it gives him sufficient employment or not. He is employed, but there is under-employment. But if you prevent fragmentation some people will get sufficient employment while others will be thrown out of employment ?—I know of instances where if there are, say, three acres of land and there are three brothers, each of them get one acre, and all the three work outside instead of one man having the three acres and working it.

A-2010. Textile industry is an industry where there are Indians as well as Europeans as foremen. Do Indians compete successfully with Europeans as foreman, such as weaving masters and spinning masters ?—Yes.

A-2011. Dealing with Works Councils you say "A recent scheme was not viewed with favour by the Labour Union and had to be abandoned." Is not that due to the fact that the labour union feels that the workers' representatives on the Councils may not be wholly elected by the union ; if the Labour Union is represented on the joint council by the Union itself it will not have any objection ?—According to our scheme we wanted it to be entirely elected by the men, and the Chairman to be one of the assistant managers.

A-2012. Was it to be a wholly elected and not a joint committee ?—No nominated persons were to be on that committee.

A-2013. Except the Chairman ?—The Chairman had to keep accounts and to write down the proceedings.

A-2014. As regards housing, you seemed to admit that housing for working classes was not at present an economic proposition?—What may be economic to a landlord may not be economic to a mill.

A-2015. To a landlord it is not?—To a landlord it may be.

A-2016. To a municipality?—The municipality does not look into the economic side, because there are other considerations.

A-2017. But suppose they want a sort of economic rent, they will not get it?—According to my calculation, the deficit will be Rs. 60,000 a year.

A-2018. Does not the fact that the workers are not able to pay economic rent, show that their wages are low?—It all depends on what they pay; they pay about Rs. 5 or 6, and they will not pay more than that to the municipality.

A-2019. Even if they get better housing?—It will involve cost to the municipality to put up better houses for which they will not be prepared to pay more.

A-2020. The majority of them at present pay between Rs. 4 and 6?—Yes.

A-2021. Rs. 4 to 6 is a fairly high percentage of the total income. The average income in Ahmedabad may be about Rs. 25?—No; more than that.

A-2022. Between Rs. 25 and 30; it cannot be more?—No, it is more.

A-2023. Will you give figures?—No, I have not got them.

A-2024. The Labour Office figure is between Rs. 25 and 30?—Unless you know what has been really taken in for the purpose of calculation, it is difficult to give an opinion. I think that it is at least Rs. 40.

A-2025. Rs. 40 is the average?—Not of a worker but of a family; Rs. 40-50 will be the income of a family.

A-2026. You take the income of the whole family, including the income of the wife and children?—I say that they keep one room, and the rent is not paid by one worker but by the family.

A-2027. You have already given us some figures which are very useful, but I thought that you might help the Commission by getting some figures as regards absenteeism on account of sickness. Will you kindly do this?—I shall ask our office if they can get figures, and if they can we shall make an effort to supply them.

A-2028. In answer to a question you stated that there is a reluctance on the part of the workers to increase production?—Reluctance to do more work.

A-2029. That is to increase production is it not?—Increased production can be brought about by more application.

A-2030. Yes, by the effort of the worker. But he does not want to produce more?—He does not want to take up more work than at present.

A-2031. Which will result in increased production?—Yes.

A-2032. Is it due to the fact that when a worker increases production his rate is cut down?—He does not increase the hours.

A-2033. Not increasing the hours, but when he gives you better production the rate is cut down so that his total earning for the month remains the same?—Not the same; we pay 50 per cent. more.

A-2034. You have got some scheme for increased production?—If a man looks after two sides in the ring department he gets 50 per cent. more than on one side.

A-2035. I am not thinking of one man managing more looms. A man working on two looms gives you certain production, but suppose on the same two looms he were to give you better production?—We give bonus for higher production.

A-2036. So you have got a scheme. What is your objection to giving the worker the whole benefit of the increased production?—The primary object of our running the industry is not to find employment for men.

A-2037. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Mr. Joshi's point is supposing you have got a weaver on piece-work and he gets an increased production, he will then get more money at the end of the week. Would you reduce the rate if you found that he was getting a large production?—Not at all.

A-2038. *Mr. Joshi*: My point was this: I have had a talk with several workers and I asked them why they did not show better production. One of the reasons which they gave was that if they showed better production, at the end of the month the rates were

changed so that the total income did not go up?—I do not share that view. The workers in Ahmedabad are in such a position as not to permit such a thing.

A-2039. The rates are not varying?—No, otherwise there will be a strike.

A-2040. Under the head "Diseases" you say "Diseases of the respiratory tracts are more prevalent among the workers in the Spinning Department". We also had a statement from the Sanitary Association that phthisis is more prevalent in the textile industry. Will you therefore agree if I were to state that these diseases are a sort of industrial diseases due to the industry itself?—No.

A-2041. What are they due to?—If they put vacuum strippers on cards these diseases will go down.

A-2042. So long as that is not done the disease is really due to the industry itself?—To the absence of vacuum strippers.

A-2043. But till then it becomes an industrial disease?—I do not admit it.

A-2044. Due to the work in the industry, not due to the general surroundings in the city?—No. There are so many reasons; it may be early marriages, bad houses, insanitary conditions, illiteracy, and want of vacuum strippers in the spinning department.

A-2045. As regards the hours of work, you state that if the production increases there will not be difficulty in reducing the hours, but the workers do not show increased production and therefore there is unwillingness on the part of the millowners to reduce the hours. The workers do not give you continuous work because the hours are longer; they cannot work continuously for 10 hours and so they only give you 8, 8½ or 9 hours work but not continuous work for 10 hours.

Sir Victor Sassoon: When do they do continuous work for eight hours?—No, they do not do, there is an hour's rest in between.

A-2046. *Mr. Joshi*: I am talking of 10 hours work; they do not work 10 hours because they feel that it is too much. You are not prepared to reduce the hours because you feel that the workers may not work continuously if the hours are reduced. Somebody must make a beginning; this seems to be a vicious circle?—We have made a beginning from 12 to 10.

A-2047. Yes, but this 10 hours system is going on for the last 10 years. You showed by your figures which were taken one year after the experiment was begun that the production was reduced to some extent but not to the extent to which the hours were reduced.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Did not the witness say that he experimented with eight hours?—I tried it.

A-2048. *Mr. Joshi*: I want to know whether you can give us figures of your production for these ten years so that I can make a comparison to see whether there has really been any reduction?—A comparison is not possible because we have changed our plant; we are using better machines.

A-2049. You cannot really say that on account of the reduction of hours the production is less?—Not much in my mill.

A-2050. So an experiment has to be made regarding the reduction of hours. The vicious circle is this: You are not willing to reduce because you feel that the workers may not give you 9 hours full work, and the workers also feel that unless the hours are reduced they cannot work continuously and intensively?—The vicious circle is here that the workers who can do more work do not wish to do it and those who can earn more wages do not wish to earn them.

A-2051. But their fear is that the rates will be reduced?—I say there is no foundation for that. I am speaking for Ahmedabad, and I know that the workers are so strong that even if there was any suspicion they could get it redressed at once.

A-2052. *Mr. Joshi*: Do you agree that the hours in Japan are not longer than in India?—They are longer, according to my information; I may be wrong.

A-2053. According to the information which we have in a report made by the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners, they have, since the end of July, reduced the hours to 17 for two shifts, that is, 8½ hours a shift?—I have drawn my information from the same book and I find that the workers doing day shift can work up to 12 hours. Up to 1931 they can work for 12 hours.

A-2054. I do not think so. Now they have two shifts of 8½ hours each?—Formerly their monthly hours were 468 but under the new system they go up to 476.

A-2055. But on the whole the daily working hours are not longer ?—They get only 2 holidays a month instead of four.

A-2056. They have two shifts of $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours each ; there are two holidays in a month, that is, half a day more per week or $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours more. It really means their daily work is $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours ?—They have only half an hour rest in between instead of one hour we have.

A-2057. Whatever it is $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours are the total working hours. They work from 5 to 11, that is, 18 hours ; half an hour rest for each shift ; that comes to 17 hours. So $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours is the net working period and 9 hours is the gross working time. Their net working hours are $8\frac{1}{2}$ while our net working hours are 10. They get only two rest days in a month, that is, half a day in a week. So they work for $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours more during the whole week ?—Let me calculate. Instead of four days rest in a month they have only two days, or half a day in a week. Therefore they have to work on the average $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours more on this account every week. That increases the average number of hours per day by $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Adding that to $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours we get an average of $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours per day.

The Chairman : I think the position is quite clear now. Under the Japanese arrangement the length of the shift is shortened, but the total number of working hours is greater.

A-2058. *Mr. Joshi* : They work for $6\frac{1}{2}$ days at $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours each or for about 56 hours per week, so that the Japanese hours are shorter than ours by about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Yes.

A-2059. You agree that their wages also are not smaller than ours ?—Are you taking per person or per loom ? It may be higher per person, but per loom it is less in Japan.

Mr. Joshi : Now we have seen that their wages are higher, but their hours are shorter

Sir Victor Sassoon : But their efficiency is greater.

Mr. Joshi : Efficiency is another question. But from these two points of view Japan has no advantage over India.

Sir Victor Sassoon : They have a great advantage in efficiency.

Mr. Joshi : That will have to be calculated. In Japan women are allowed to work at night.

A-2060. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Not now. They can work even now till 11 o'clock. Again mills working only day shifts can go up to 12 hours. But here we are working only day shifts of ten hours.

A-2061. But can you show that there are actually any mills in Japan which work 12 hours ?—There is an exemption provided in the Act, and that would not have been there unless there had been a necessity for it. Clause 2 of Factory Legislation says that exemption is granted to cotton textile mills where only one shift is worked by which up to 1931 they may work 12 hours.

A-2062. That is the Act. But are there in practice any mills working 12 hours ?

The Chairman : I think the Bombay Labour Office will be able to give us reliable information.

A-2063. *Mr. Joshi* : With regard to unclaimed wages you say, "Wages claimed within a period of six months from the date on which they are due are paid out on proper identification." Why do you restrict the period to six months when the general law of limitation is three years ?—They ought to give us notice when they leave. But in special cases we pay them.

A-2064. But under the ordinary law they are entitled to their wages up to a period of three years. Why do you restrict that period ?—If they do not give us notice when they leave we do not propose to pay except in special cases.

A-2065. But you have not referred to this condition of notice in your memorandum ?—I shall do that now.

A-2066. The rule is that the wages will be forfeited after six months if they leave you without notice ?—Yes.

A-2067. Is that the rule in your mill ?—Yes.

A-2068. *Miss Power* : In your memorandum you say, "In the interest of the welfare of their families and children, it is undesirable that married women should be employed in the Spinning and Frame Departments." Why do you distinguish between the employment of women in one department and in another ?—In the winding and reeling departments the women might come and go as they liked. They might come late or go early if they wanted. But in the spinning and frame departments they have to be at the mill when the mill starts and leave the mill when it closes.

A-2069. Is it your contention that the bulk of married women work fewer hours than those worked by the rest?—No, they do not do less. But they may come half an hour late or go home early.

A-2070. If you restrict them to winding and reeling departments will you not be diminishing the volume of employment available for women?—I am talking of married women only.

A-2071. But between 80 and 90 per cent. of employed women are married?—That is so.

A-2072. So that you would really be restricting the volume of employment for women if you confined them to the winding and reeling departments?—Yes.

A-2073. We were told yesterday that the policy of the mill union was to discourage the employment of women. The Millowners' Association also told us that there was a decrease in the number of women employed although the number of mills in actual operation has increased. Do you agree with this policy of the union?—I consider women inefficient and I want to reduce their number in my mills.

A-2074. But the bulk of the women employed are wives of spinners and men who get the lower ranges of remuneration. Are they not?—Yes, they are. But we retain such women as are wives or relatives of male workers in our mills. We do not want to keep women who come alone.

A-2075. The average wage of a spinner is, we are told, round about Rs. 26 compared with approximately Rs. 44 for a weaver. If you discourage employment of women who are wives of spinners, do you suggest that the spinners' earnings are sufficient to maintain their families?—No, we do not discourage such women whose husbands are employed in our mills. But we do not want women.

A-2076. I am talking of the policy of the trade as a whole?—I am speaking only of the policy of my mill.

A-2077. Do you think the statement that it is the policy of the union to discourage the employment of women is correct?—The union wants the wages of male workers—the spinners—to be doubled and that women must be kept out of work.

A-2078. What lies behind the discrepancy between the earnings of spinners and weavers, which is so much bigger than in England?—I have stated already how the wages system was developed in India. It was only a drift without any definite plan. I think there should not be such a big discrepancy.

A-2079. Is there not arbitration on foot to raise the wages of spinners?—The only remedy lies in putting the one up and bringing the other down in order to narrow the difference.

A-2080. With regard to the type of buildings that are put up what sort of supervision is exercised over the plans and estimates before the buildings are erected? To whom are they submitted for scrutiny?—I believe they have to be sent to the Municipal authorities to see whether they conform to the by-laws or not.

A-2081. But is that what actually happens?—Yes.

A-2082. Are they not submitted to the Factory Inspectors?—No, I do not think so.

A-2083. Do you not think it is advisable that that should be done?—That is my view. What I had in mind was not factory buildings so much as residential houses.

A-2084. I meant factory buildings. In your memorandum you deal with the question of education for the children of your workers. Is there a system of compulsory education in this Presidency or not?—There is in theory.

A-2085. Does that work in Ahmedabad or not?—Government do not give permission to make it compulsory.

A-2086. So that there is no compulsory elementary education now?—No.

A-2087. Are there enough municipal schools at present for the number of children of workers who wish to go to school, or whose parents wish them to go to school? Or is there a shortage of seats in the existing primary schools?—I do not know sufficiently well to express an opinion about that.

A-2088. In your memorandum you say that the "number of workers' children taking advantage of this facility is negligible—six in the Calico Mills and nine in the Jubilee Mills." The number is extraordinarily low. Is this indicative of Ahmedabad as a whole or due to the very few children you employ?—That refers only to secondary and college education, for which fees and books are given free to the children of employees. That does not refer to elementary schools. And we have only six half-timers in our mills.

A-2089. Yours is a very advanced Mill. Could you tell us the percentage of children of your employees who are attending elementary education classes?—No, we have not the figures.

A-2090. Could you try and get the figures for us?—We shall make an effort to collect them and send them to the Commission.

A-2091. Could you tell us at the same time when you supply these figures whether you think that that is characteristic of the mill population as a whole, or whether it is rather better in the case of your mills? I want to get some idea of how many children are being educated?—Yes, I shall do so.

A-2092. *Miss Cama*: You say that your efforts to get a lady doctor for your mill hospitals have not been successful so far. What efforts did you make?—We advertised several times.

A-2093. And no lady doctor came forward?—No suitable one came forward.

A-2094. *Lady Nilkanth*: You said that the millowners made a profit of 4 per cent. on their investments, while they had to borrow money at 6 per cent. Could you explain what that means?—They make 4 per cent. on the block, i.e., on the total capital invested in building and machinery. But for working capital they borrow at 6 per cent.

A-2095. You are making an experiment of employing graduates as probationers in your mills. I have heard some millowners say that they would prefer uneducated and less educated people to graduates. You have stated that the work of the graduates is satisfactory. But have you found their work to be so good as to induce you to prefer them to uneducated and less educated people?—Yes, I do prefer them.

A-2096. But there are many people who say that educated people are no good for such work? Do you share that opinion?—That has not been my experience.

A-2097. You deduct 1 per cent. of the wages as contribution to the Servants' Self-helping Fund to pay for the various welfare activities in the mills. Do your workers mind this cut so much as to transfer their services to mills which do not make this deduction from their wages?—No, they do not. We have no difficulty whatever in getting men.

A-2098. Do you contribute anything to the Fund?—We make up the deficit whenever the income falls short of the expenditure.

A-2099. Is it a large amount that you have to pay?—No, it is a very small amount.

A-2100. Are managing agencies hereditary in Ahmedabad and in Bombay?—That is the case in Ahmedabad. In Bombay also that has been the case for a number of years.

A-2101. But does that go from father to son?—Not necessarily. It may go to a partner in the firm, or to a nominee or anyone else.

A-2102. *Mr. Asale*: You stated that you were not a member of the Millowners' Association?—No.

A-2103. Do you generally respect the decisions of the Association in all matters of general policy as they do in Bombay?—I do and I have got to.

A-2104. What have you done to check corruption in the employment of workers?—I am making the best efforts I can.

A-2105. In your memorandum you say that the workers "can afford to buy better food than what they usually eat." How can the workers do that with the low wages you pay?—I meant that they could buy more wholesome food with the money they spend at present. For instance, they could avoid all these spices which are unnecessary and unwholesome.

A-2106. Would it not be better in the interests of the workers if the Mills themselves opened cheap grain shops and supplied wholesome food?—We are trying to open a canteen for the workers.

A-2107. In your memorandum you say that "a special fund has been created to enable the workers to obtain loans for short periods." Are your workers always indebted to the Pathans and the *Sowcars*?—I think they are. I have not collected any definite information, but that is my view.

A-2108. When you have provided them with a fund for getting loans, does it not follow that they are always indebted?—I am not in a position to make a definite statement. However I believe they are indebted.

A-2109. Why are they so indebted?—For the same reason that you find in higher strata of society.

A-2110. But do the workers enjoy the same comforts and amenities as people in higher strata of society?—But they have the same human weaknesses; they are common to both.

A-2111. You say that your cricket and tennis clubs have proved a success. But do the workers really enjoy these games?—I think so from the number of workers that go in for cricket. They make full use of the cricket club. They do not so much play tennis though that also is open to them.

A-2112. When do they play cricket?—After 6 o'clock.

A-2113. After doing hard work for 10 hours during the day?—I do not admit the statement that they work hard for 10 hours during the day.

A-2114. In your memorandum you say that the "widows and orphans of ex-workers who are destitute receive financial assistance from the mills." But is it not necessary to make a legal provision for old age for the workers themselves who leave the mills after a long service of fifteen or twenty years?—That is not possible at present, until we get complete responsible government.

A-2115. If a provision like the Provident Fund was made, would it not be useful both to the worker and his family?—If that could not be applied universally for all classes of labourers I do not see that should be done for a particular industry.

A-2116. You say that "the last wage cut was made in 1923." What was the percentage of the cut?—15½ per cent.

A-2117. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Was that not a fixed amount?—I think that was about 2½ annas in the rupee. I do not know definitely.

A-2118. *Mr. Asavle*: In your memorandum you say that "it cannot be said of the Indian cotton industry that the wages paid are starvation wages in any sense of the word; on the other hand they are higher than what are paid in other occupations....." Do you suggest that you pay more wages than the railways or other factories?—Yes.

A-2119. Can you give an example?—I am talking of Ahmedabad and Gujrat.

A-2120. What about the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway workshops? Do they not pay their workers more than you pay yours?—Their workshops are in Rutlam and Ajmer; they are not in Ahmedabad. In Ahmedabad there are very few workers employed by the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway.

Mr. Sastri: Moreover the memorandum refers to wages paid "in other occupations which are open to the type of workers who generally work in the mills."

A-2121. *Mr. Asavle*: But are the wages higher than those paid in any other occupations?—Surely our workers get more than what many school-masters and Government servants get.

A-2122. *Mr. Asavle*: But do not school masters have additional income from private tuition, etc.?—But they are not supposed to have any according to Government rules.

A-2123. But are they not actually having additional income from other sources?—Even that does not come to much, if any.

A-2124. With regard to wages claimed six months after they fell due, why do you refuse to pay them? Are they not hard earned?—We do that when they leave us without notice. But if they have sufficient grounds for having left us without notice, such as illness or other emergency, we pay them as a special case.

A-2125. *Mr. Lallji*: In your memorandum you say that "there are a number of men every morning at the starting time who apply to be taken as substitutes." Do you refer to the *badlis* here?—Yes, there are a class of men who do not like continuous work and always like to be *badlis*. There are others also who work in different mills till they get a permanent employment.

A-2126. In your memorandum you say also that the "labourers in town looking for industrial work" should be sent to villages and that "cottage industries should also be started and encouraged." What sort of cottage industries would you suggest?—It requires an economic enquiry to solve this problem. It must be different in different provinces according to the needs of the province and the different conditions existing there.

A-2127. But do you find a lot of people coming down to Ahmedabad for employment?—Yes, they do.

A-2128. You say that the education received by an educated man does not encourage him to seek anything except professional and desk work. What sort of education would

you like them to have so as to make them fit for textile industry or any other industry ?—At present the Universities are working on the principle of mass production like factories. It ought to be changed.

A-2129. Would you suggest technical education ?—Whatever education they get, it should be such as to develop their character. They should not be ashamed of manual work entailed in an industrial occupation.

A-2130. Are you generally reducing the number of half-timers in your mills ?—We have got 16 half-timers in the Jubilee Mills and 7 in the Calico Mills. I do not know what other mills are doing.

A-2131. But why is the number so small in the Calico Mills ?—Because the Calico Mills thought of it before the Jubilee.

A-2132. If you do not give employment to half-timers between 12 and 15, will they not be a burden on their parents ?—I do not think they should be employed before 15.

A-2133. But should they not be given some occupation ?—They must go to school.

A-2134. But if they do not go to school do they not get worse ?—When there is a hard case we employ them.

A-2135. With regard to bonus or profit sharing you say that no scheme based on separate profit of each company will work well in the cotton industry. Why is that so ?—The profits of the different mills vary such a lot and the distribution will be so uneven that it will bring about controversy and dissatisfaction.

A-2136. From appendix VI of your memorandum it is seen that the majority of your workers (53·2 per cent.) pay Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 as rent. Appendix V shows that 44 per cent. of your workers live 3 to 5 in a room and 14 per cent. live 6 to 8. Adding the two we find that a majority of your workers (58 per cent.) live 3 to 8 in a room and pay Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 as rent. How much per head do your workers generally pay as rent ?—If five persons stay together paying five rupees, then it works out to Re. 1 per head.

A-2137. What rent does your worker pay on an average ?—Four to six rupees.

A-2138. Is that for one man ?—That is for a family.

A-2139. Does that consist of two workers ?—Two workers or two workers and a half-timer.

A-2140. What percentage of wages does he pay in rent ?—A family earning Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 pays Rs. 5 to Rs. 6.

A-2141. If new and better *chawls* are provided will the workmen be willing to pay more ?—Under the municipal scheme they propose to charge a rent of Rs. 5-8-0. The estimates are prepared on that basis.

A-2142. In Bombay the labourers are not prepared to pay more for better tenements. They stay four or five together in a single tenement and do not want improved housing accommodation. Are conditions similar in Ahmedabad ?—I think they will be prepared to pay Rs. 5 or Rs. 6, but not more.

A-2143. *Colonel Russell* : I am not quite sure exactly as to your opinion as regards the housing question. In your written memorandum you say : "The problem of housing, closely bound as it is with the health and productive capacity of the worker, is of no less importance to the employer than to the employee." What exactly do you imply in that statement ?—We should get more return from the municipality for what we are paying, because we should have more contented and efficient men.

A-2144. You mean that would give you better efficiency ?—Contented workers, better health and more efficiency.

A-2145. You would agree that you would get all these if better houses are provided ?—Yes.

A-2146. Is it not that an argument for spending money on houses ?—Yes, but who should spend it is the question.

A-2147. In connection with the same matter, what is the end you have in view in developing the welfare activities that you describe further on, namely, orches, medical facilities, schools, playgrounds and so on ? Is it an eye-wash or what ?—Mixed motives.

A-2148. Eye-wash is included ?—No. I have only two things in view, one is that better relations should exist between the workers and the employers, and secondly, we want to do the maximum for the men who are working for us.

A-2149. Is it meant to increase the efficiency ?—I do not think so ; it has not increased the efficiency.

A-2150. With regard to building by-laws you said to Miss Power, I think, that building plans were sent to the Municipality?—That is so.

A-2151. Is there any use practically in doing so seeing that conditions are as they are in the Municipality?—The by-laws are defective, to begin with, but we have to make the best use of what we have.

A-2152. Who examines the plans in the Municipality?—There is a qualified engineer.

A-2153. They have got one?—Yes.

A-2153a. Dealing with medical facilities you say: "Our efforts to get a lady doctor have not been successful so far." Will you tell us what salary you offered?—We offered Rs. 200 to 300.

A-2154. But you could not get one?—We could not get an M.B. and B.S.

A-2155. You wanted an M.B. and B.S.?—Yes, we could not get one.

A-2156. Not even for that salary?—No.

A-2157. What is the explanation for that?—I do not know; we could not get a qualified person.

A-2158. Did you advertise?—Yes, and we wrote to the Grant Medical College and others, but we could not get a suitable lady doctor. Let me make it clear: we did not want to permit private practice.

A-2159. You say with regard to "bathing and washing" that there is no drainage in the locality and hence this scheme has been held up. Would it not be possible to carry all the drainage into a septic tank or some sanitary arrangement of that kind?—We have got a septic tank, but it is not a success; there is something wrong, and we are looking into it.

A-2160. That is a matter of management?—Yes, that is so.

A-2161. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it due to lack of water?—No; there is some mistake in the original design, and we are looking into it.

A-2162. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Would you consider three annas a day spent by a worker on food to be a sufficient amount to keep him in physical well-being?—That would depend on the size and the physique of the worker.

A-2163. Let me put it to you this way. You think a worker who spends three annas a day can afford to purchase commodities with the three annas to give him two decent meals a day, to keep him in physical well-being?—He will do fairly well if he cooks it at home; he may not be able to buy it cooked.

A-2164. Now that you have considered this matter, what could he afford to buy for three annas a day to cook at home, supposing they are messing together, four in a family?—It will not be very good.

A-2165. The report on an enquiry into the working classes family budgets in Ahmedabad shows that workers here earn between Rs. 30 and 40 a month which, I understand, was the average wage that you gave. On pages 40 to 43 of the report you will notice that totals have been worked out and food expenditure calculated for a family with a unit of 3.48, and if you total up the figures they will come to less than three annas per head per day. Will you refer to your own statement with regard to "dietary" in which you state "Workers can afford to buy better food than what they usually eat." Is there any margin?—I do not wish to pronounce any opinion.

A-2166. I am putting you the figures as quoted in the report?—I cannot accept the figures without inquiry.

A-2167. Suppose I put it to you this way, even if you do not accept them without an inquiry. The figures there given of expenditure on food and on clothing total up to the average income between Rs. 30 and 40. Supposing that is correct?—I believe that a man spends more than 3 annas a day.

A-2168. That is a matter we can consider a little later. Let me put it to you this way. There is your statement that they can afford to buy better food than they are eating at the present time, and if the margin as laid down is 3 annas...?—But I do not accept that figure.

A-2169. You do not?—No; without inquiry I am not prepared to accept it.

A-2170. Would you prepare a statement showing in what particulars that figure is correct?—It requires looking into details as to how that figure was arrived at; I cannot know what items were taken into account in making that calculation.

A-2171. At any rate your opinion is that you would not consider 3 annas a day for an adult spent on food to be a sufficient amount?—It is inadequate.

A-2172. You said that the average house-rent that is paid is about Rs. 4 to 6. Have you any experience of what it costs to keep a stable for a horse here?—I have no experience; I do not know what a stable would cost.

A-2173. Dealing with methods of recruitment, you have referred to the question of jobbers. Could you give me some information, out of your own experience, in regard to the practice that prevails of employing children who are hired out and keeping them there and the jobbers living practically on their earnings?—I have heard of it in Ahmedabad, but I have no information that such practice does exist; that is my personal opinion.

A-2174. Do you happen to remember a particular case that happened not very long ago in which a boy was brought into a mill by a jobber and the jobber lived on his earnings, and eventually there was a fight and this boy of 18 when he grew up refused to pay the jobber. As a result of the fight he killed this jobber and he was prosecuted and sent to a borstal jail?—I do not remember. It is an evil that ought to be remedied.

A-2175. You cannot tell me anything about the extent of this evil?—I cannot; I know it is there.

A-2176. Does it happen, for instance, that a weaver looking after two looms gets hold of a boy to look after another two looms; he gets remuneration for looking after four looms?—We do not permit that in our mills.

A-2177. Could you tell me if that practice prevails?—I do not wish to speak about other mills.

A-2178. It is your concern to see that you make good profits out of your industry?—Yes.

A-2179. It is your concern to see that there is no unnecessary absenteeism due to sickness or other causes?—Yes.

A-2180. And it is your concern to see that the efficiency of your workers is kept at a high level?—Yes.

A-2181. Do you not think that bad housing conditions affect all these factors?—I do.

A-2182. Then would you not consider it a part of your duty to provide decent housing for your workers?—I am prepared to make my contribution to the municipality; all the mills should be taxed for that purpose.

A-2183. Are you aware that in Japan 80 per cent. of the workers who work in the mill industry are housed by the employers under excellent housing conditions?—There is no analogy between Japan and India; we are a dependency while Japan is not.

A-2184. When it is a question of cost of production you want to make an analogy with other countries but when it is a question of housing you bring in the question of dependency?—What one country does may not be right for another country under different conditions.

A-2185. Do you not think it is right that your labour force should be contented and efficient and that for that purpose it should be properly housed?—I say the municipality should do that, and the mills by way of taxes should pay the deficit between the rent they get and the rent they ought to get.

A-2186. *Mr. Cliff*: Let us take the first three statements given at the end of your memorandum. You have added a foot-note. Subject to that foot-note, might these statements be applicable to the other mills in this area?—I cannot say that; it will be a mistake to take these statements as quite reliable.

A-2187. Kindly turn to the concluding part of your memorandum. You were asked questions about the disability under which people are suffering, the lack of responsibility on the part of the Government and so forth. Your view is that when such circumstances exist, the problem of increasing the standard of the worker becomes difficult?—That applies to all people in the country.

A-2188. Would you help me in this, especially with regard to the disability which you have stated. What is the duty of the employer in these mills towards the employee?—In every country every citizen looks to Government to set an example, and it is the duty of Government to see that that is done.

A-2189. Take the people employed in this industry in this area. The position of the work-people is admittedly bad. Everybody seems to be suffering under a disability. What is the most immediate practical step that the employers in this industry could take with regard to housing?—Comparatively speaking, we cannot say that it is worse than in other industries.

A-2190. Would you excuse me for a moment and see whether we can get away from comparisons?—There is nothing absolute.

A-2191. I was wondering whether you could help us at all, faced with the situation that is admittedly bad. There are two conditions, it seems to me, which are stated in your memorandum, one is that the standard of life should be improved, and the second is that the efficiency of the worker should also be improved. That, I think, is running through your memorandum?—That is so.

A-2192. Taking these two things—improvement in the standard of life and increasing the efficiency of the worker—what would you say as an employer are immediate practical steps that might be taken to secure some improvement?—I have suggested elsewhere; I cannot point out to you straight away. If the mills do more work and the wages are put up, the standard of living of the workers and their earnings will go up.

A-2193. You had of course a time in the history of your industry when wages were reduced by, I think, 15½ per cent.?—Yes.

A-2194. That reduction was uniform to all classes of workers, was it not?—I think so.

A-2195. In reply to a question put to you, you suggested that to level up the wages you should raise those which are low and reduce those which are higher. Was that system adopted when the last reduction was made?—I really do not know; I was not in the Association.

A-2196. The Millowners' Association enumerated the policy which ought to be adopted in respect of payment of wages. I believe I am correct in saying that there is now an application before the employers' association that the wages reduction should be restored. Did the employers either in 1923, or after they received this application put forward that policy?—I do not know; I am not in the Association. But there is one thing I would like to say, that in other countries wages have gone up because the number of men, say, working on 1,000 spindles, has come down, whereas in India it is the same now as it was 40 years ago.

A-2197. I am not disputing your facts. What I am asking is whether you could help us in making any suggestion to improve the efficiency of the worker at the time?—I have already said that you must educate them, you must give them better houses, and make them earn more; their standard of life will improve if they do more work.

A-2198. *The Chairman*: You yourself, I take it, are prepared if the Union is agreeable to act with you?—I have offered my spinners Rs. 80 a month but they will not accept it.

A-2199. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that the necessary condition to improve the efficiency is the granting of these other conditions, namely, housing, education, food and other things?—About housing, under the present circumstances, it cannot be done. The Municipality can do it and they can take up the question.

A-2200. I want to know what can be done in the present circumstances?—I am in the Municipality and I am trying to get the programme through.

A-2201. I appreciate that. But at the moment nothing has been done?—5,000 houses cannot be built in three months.

A-2202. What should the employer do when he is faced with the problem?—He should move the Government and the Municipality, agree to pay taxes which are required to make up the deficit and see that the work is carried out soon.

A-2203. He should not make any direct move on his own volition in that direction?—He should do it. About compulsory education I can only do what I can; I am trying to get it introduced in the Municipality. The Municipality is prepared to find money, but the Government are not prepared to give permission for compulsion.

A-2204. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Has the Government refused to give the permission?—Yes, because the Act lays down that if compulsion is applied Government shall make a contribution; they have no money to make the contribution so they say, and they do not give permission.

A-2205. But they do not stand in the way of free education?—No, they will not pay. We want compulsion with free education.

A-2206. *Mr. Ahmed*: You said that you want to raise the standard of living and the standard of literacy of your workers. Do you know that in other countries elementary education is provided by the employers?—I did not see it in England.

A-2207. You have got no night schools for your workers?—No, we have day schools.

A-2208. Has no provision been made by you in regard to that?—The statutory obligation for doing that is on the Municipality.

A-2209. I asked you whether you made any provision?—It is not part of my duty.

A-2210. Do I take it that your part is to take the loaves and fishes of the profits of the concern ?—That is not my part.

A-2211. In view of the fact that no provision is made by the employers, there must be some principle adopted in respect of education, housing and raising the standard of living ?—Yes.

A-2212. You have already said that you are in favour of raising the standard of life of the workers, giving them good housing accommodation and making them learned. I take it that you are also in favour of the principles enunciated by the authors in their books on labour ?—Unless you give the names of the authors, I cannot express any opinion; one author might have written one thing and another might have written entirely different things.

A-2213. There must be some equitable proportion in the distribution of profits, you can take a share and give a share to the Municipality ?—I have made it clear that I want the agency to be the Municipality and the payment to be made by the mills. The work is to be done by the Municipality, and I am prepared to pay for it.

A-2214. So that you would be prepared to pay the cost in proportion to your profits if the Municipality levied a tax from you ?—I am not now talking of any definite proportion whatever. Education is badly needed and cannot wait. The workers must be given adequate accommodation. Let the Municipality do these. If there is a deficit the mills will be willing to pay a share.

A-2215. And you are prepared to pay your adequate share ?—Even more than that.

A-2216. With regard to your concluding words used in your written memorandum, you have referred to some omissions and commissions of the Government, but the Government have not passed any legislation prescribing a minimum living wage to the workers in your industry. They have not also compelled you to spend a certain proportion of your profits on the education of your workers' children. Therefore, have not the Government been too kind to you and neglected to do their duty as far as the labourers are concerned ?—That may be your view. I do not agree with you.

A-2217. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In Appendix I, you give the number of workers in your mills as 1,380. In Appendix VIII—statement showing the extent to which the workers go to their villages—you have tabulated the information received only from 161 workmen. How many workers were asked to give this information ?—All the 1,380 workers were asked, but some were not able to give the information.

A-2218. Do you suggest that only 161 persons were able to give the required information ?—Yes.

A-2219. May I assume that the remaining 1,219 persons have not gone to their villages at all for holidays ?—They were not able to give any information sufficiently reliable to be incorporated in this statement to be submitted to the Commission.

A-2220. You say that your permanent labour force is only 15 per cent. On the other hand the Millowners' Association say that that is 80 per cent. What is the difference due to ?—My figures show only 15 per cent. and not 80 per cent.

A-2221. Here is a variation between practical men. You are a practical man, so are the others. Could you explain what the difference is due to ?—There seems to be a wide divergence in the interpretation of the word "permanent". By "Permanent" I mean permanent residents of Ahmedabad. They mean by the same term, people of Ahmedabad and those coming from within a radius of 50 miles of Ahmedabad.

A-2222. You say that 15 per cent. of your workers are permanent residents of Ahmedabad. Where do the rest come from ?—From such places as the Central Provinces, the United Provinces and Madras.

A-2223. During certain seasons of the year your workers go home. For instance, they go home during the marriage season, during the sowing season and the harvest season. They also go home when they feel it too hot to work here. During those seasons you will be somewhat short of hands and your production will vary. Could you give us for any one of your mills what the production is month by month ?—I have made an enquiry and I find that we have never been short of hands during the year, nor did our production go down at any time.

A-2224. I do not want you to give the actual figures of production lest your competitors might take advantage of that. But could you give a comparative statement for the mills under your management showing what the production is in yards or in tons for the various months of the year ?—I have looked into the figures myself and I find that the production has been the same all through the year for different months.

A-2225. But could you not give the figures?—It would not give you a clear idea. Suppose I took yards as the unit. Then the yardage may vary. If I took tons, the counts might vary, and some may be bleached and some may not be. That would not give you a clear idea. If you still wanted them I would have no objection.

A-2226. *The Chairman* : There are several factors?—Efficiency is the thing really to be taken. That is found to be the same in different months of the year.

A-2227. You maintain efficiency as far as your production is concerned which continues to be the same all the 12 months of the year irrespective of what particular workers are there. Is that so?—If I work coarser counts, production must go down and efficiency also will be reduced. To this extent there is a variation, but not on account of the workmen going away to their villages. It has been found that there is not less production on account of workmen going away to their villages.

A-2228. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Can this be said to be a reason why your efficiency does not drop even though workmen leave for their villages : that you have always suitable men waiting to be taken on?—I think our wages are a little higher.

A-2229. Is not that a cause of your uniform efficiency? I understand that you pay 25 per cent. more than the current rate?—The workers earn more in our mills than in other mills.

A-2230. I have been told that it is 25 per cent. higher than in other mills so that the best labour is always trying to go to you?—That may be a reason.

A-2231. That is why your efficiency does not drop even though the men leave for their villages?—Yes.

A-2232. In your memorandum you say that if a worker who is paid by time leaves for the second half of the day without permission he is marked absent for the whole day. Would you explain the system fully?—A worker who comes in the morning is marked present. But if he leaves after midday without permission he is not paid for the time he has put on the mills in the morning.

A-2233. He is penalized for his absence without permission by forfeiting the wages due to him for the work he did in the morning. That is the position so far as a time-worker is concerned. What is the position with regard to piece-worker in the same circumstances?—The work done by the piece-worker in the morning is noted on a dial. The timekeeper makes a note of that and the company gets the money. It is not paid to the piece-worker who has left without permission, or to the piece-worker who comes in the afternoon. But such occasions are very rare and generally the men leave with permission if they want to leave.

A-2234. Do you work single shift or double shift in your mills?—We work single shift.

A-2235. Do you pay a higher rate for night shift than for day shift?—Yes, we pay 15 to 20 per cent. higher.

A-2236. Is your canteen in operation?—No, we are just furnishing it and getting it ready.

A-2237. Have you ever tried to supply grain at cheap wholesale prices to your workers?—I was talking of cooked food when I referred to the canteen.

A-2238. But what about grains?—We gave it during the War.

A-2239. Was that a success? Was that popular with the men?—No.

A-2240. In your experience although the grain you gave was cheaper, it was not popular with the men?—No.

A-2241. Mr. Joshi was asking about Japanese hours and wages. Supposing you get the same efficiency as the Japanese, would you be prepared to give Japanese conditions of work to your workmen?—I should be very happy to do so.

A-2242. The question of hours of work is very much dependent on the question of efficiency. Is not that so?—Certainly.

A-2243. Are you not giving your workers sufficient opportunities to increase their efficiency and get more wages?—Yes.

A-2244. Did you not offer your spinners as much as Rs. 80 a month? What were the terms of the offer?—Working single side they were earning Rs. 13 or Rs. 14 for 16 days. That came to Rs. 25 a month. I offered to give them another side and pay 50 per cent. more, so that they might get Rs. 21 instead of Rs. 13 and odd or Rs. 14. That came to Rs. 37 or 38 a month. They are now working two sides. I then offered them four sides so that they might earn Rs. 80 a month.

A-2245. What counts will they work at?—70's and 100's, and 40's combed.

A-2246. With high draught?—We have the ordinary rollers.

A-2247. *The Chairman* : Do you weave Indian cottons with 70's ?—No, we weave Sakel, the Egyptian cotton.

A-2248. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You were offering higher wages to your workers if they could look after four sides. But did you consider that the effort of the worker in looking after four sides of 80's to 100's would be more than if he were looking after one side only in 6½ ?—I think it would be less.

A-2249. Have you made any tests from the point of view of the number of breakages ?—We are discussing this with the union. I am making tests and finding out how many yards a man walks every hour, how many piecings he has to do for the different counts from 1's to 100's.

A-2250. But at present you have no figure ?—They are not ready.

A-2251. Would you let us have the figures when they are ready ?—Yes.

A-2252. Generally speaking if a man worked without any great increase in effort and gave you efficiency you are prepared to give him more wages by your managing methods ?—Yes.

A-2253. Is it a fact that your difficulty is that the men are not prepared to become more efficient ?—That is the greatest difficulty to-day.

A-2254. Would you say that one of the reasons is that they fear that there might be displacement of labour ?—I have agreed not to displace any unless there is a vacancy, I have agreed not to give more work till a man leaves.

A-2255. Might it not be said that you would be doing so merely by not filling vacancies ?—Yes.

A-2256. Might it be said that they consider that some of the workers in the mills to-day get their positions which they would not have got if there had been methods of efficiency ?—It is not correct to say that in India. The number of employes in industries is so small compared with others. In England this may be a serious trouble. In India it ought not to be.

A-2257. Suppose the Union came forward and decided to accept methods of efficiency. Could you think of some way by which the total number of men will remain the same ?—We could do that by arranging night work, starting new mills and extending old mills.

A-2258. You consider that if the Indian textile workers were prepared to become efficient, the cost of production would be so lowered to a point at which it would increase the demand and enable the displaced workers to be re-engaged either in the form of double shifts or new mills. Is that not the position ?—I have offered to divide them into two halves and put them on double shifts alternately day and night, and give them higher wages.

A-2259. Have they refused that offer ?—Yes.

A-2260. *The Chairman* : Following the questions of Sir Victor Sassoon, I quite appreciate the difficulty of the trade unions. Of course, their first duty is to look after the interests of their members, and they have apparently a fear which has not been confined to this country, that a change in the direction of improved methods of industry in some way was going to be harmful to their members. That has been a common occurrence in the development of industries in other countries as well as India.—Unfortunately to-day in India the labour unions feel—perhaps they have good grounds for doing so—that employers do not want trade union movements in India.

A-2261. Quite so.—The employers feel that if the trade union movement develops they will make a loss and not be able to run the industry. Whatever that may be, under the present circumstances it is rather difficult to progress until things settle down.

A-2262. That again is not peculiar to India ?—No.

A-2263. That has been the case in other countries also ?—But I wish that India should take a lesson from other countries and not go through needless suffering.

A-2264. That is exactly what I am leading up to. Here you have a peculiarly favourable situation. At any rate you have a larger percentage of workers represented in the union than in other cotton centres.—But only in the ring department.

A-2265. But the changes with regard to improved efficiency apply only to the ring department ?—They apply to the weaving department also.

A-2266. I think a man can certainly look after more looms in finer counts. Taking weaving and spinning together, is it not true that you have here a more widespread organization of the workers than in other centres ? A large percentage of your workers are organized ?—That is so. They are permanently organized, unlike in Bombay where they have periodical organizations.

A-2267. In addition to that you have constant contact between the representatives of the Union and the employers?—I do not know anything about the Association of Millowners.

A-2268. You yourself are in direct contact with the officials of the Union and discussing these questions constantly with them?—We do.

A-2269. You have also what I have not observed yet in other places in India, a permanent arrangement for final arbitration in cases of dispute?—That is so.

A-2270. You have these conditions here which are so far peculiar to Ahmedabad. Do you not think, therefore, that if further discussion takes place and, if as suggested by you, your proposal for a 100 per cent. organization of the union is accepted by them, you may hope to come to an agreement which would have their good will and support?—I tried for that in the Association and I did not succeed.

A-2271. You have not given up trying?—I then left the Association. I tried to organize the thing on the basis of bringing about an agreement that the Association should keep only Union men and that the Labour Union men must work only in the mills of the Association. Then there would be a greater unity in the two camps. That would have been an additional advantage. But that was not acceptable.

A-2272. But you are still continuing your effort to arrive at an understanding.—I do not know whether there is an understanding or not. We yield very often to avoid any rupture or trouble. We often give in. If we have given in 2 or 3 times, we appeal to them to give in once or twice. That is how we do in a majority of cases.

A-2273. All that I am suggesting is that your proposals are so interesting and at first sight carry so much advantage to both parties, that you should persist in your efforts and hope to obtain the co-operation of the Union in course of time.—I am discussing a separate agreement on this basis.

A-2274. You are?—In the beginning the millowners greatly misunderstood that. The labour union wanted to use me as a precedent for other people. They tried to impose impossible terms with the result that the whole thing fell through.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. MESWANE, Mr. KANTEKAR and Mr. MANOHAR,
Representatives of the Textile Brotherhood, Ahmedabad.**

A-2275. *The Chairman*: Mr. Kantekar, you have been good enough to submit to us a memorandum on behalf of the Textile Brotherhood. You have also just handed to us a supplementary memorandum in which you tell us that your Textile Brotherhood was started on the 5th July last year. You give an interesting account of your purpose in forming this brotherhood, and I notice that the members of it are, in all cases, managers, weaving masters or spinning masters engaged in the textile mills. Your knowledge and experience in those capacities will be valuable to us on some of the points which we are considering and I may perhaps put to you one or two questions arising out of your memorandum. The first point is a very interesting one, already under our notice, namely, that of the question of jobbers in factories. You tell us that "A jobber is in no way better than a buffer between officers and labour so far as the labour supply is concerned. His value as a mechanic is nil and hence the system is defective." I would like to have your view as to how you would improve on the present system. For instance, do you suggest that jobbers could be done away with altogether, or do you suggest that their power and influence should be diminished?—(Mr. Kantekar.) Their function as suppliers of labour should cease. They should merely be confined to attending to the machinery.

A-2276. What would you suggest as regards the control and engagement of labour?—There should be a public employment agency.

A-2277. How would that deal with the workmen who attend at the gates of the factory?—We have already stated that "Apprentice classes for different lines of textile industry should be maintained by public corporations and conducted by technical experts in different branches to supply adequate labour. The present primary school should be advantageously extended and the above training classes should be attached to them."

A-2278. But if you are going to wait for that great improvement in education it would mean waiting a long time?—Yes, but a beginning will have to be made.

A-2279. Then do you suggest that no improvement is possible in the jobber system until that improvement in education has been attained?—There is no possibility of

improvement under the present conditions. In a decade or so there should be a better supply of educated labour.

A-2280. I am sure my Commission would like to be able to make a suggestion on the matter which would not mean a decade before it could be carried out?—It is regrettable, but under the present conditions we do not see how there can be any improvement in the system.

A-2281. We have been told in some of the mills that there has been an attempt made to diminish the power of the jobber and to cure this system of taking bribes by the institution of an employment officer. Have you experience in any of the mills where an employment officer has been engaged?—No.

A-2282. Therefore you are not in a position to tell us whether that experiment has diminished the evils of the jobber system or not?—No, I cannot say.

A-2283. Do you think such a system would remove some of the difficulties experienced at present?—I have no experience in the matter.

A-2284. You do not yourself engage any of the labour?—Directly we do not.

A-2285. You have to take the labour which is provided by the jobber?—Yes, and we have to make a selection so far as efficiency is concerned, as we are responsible for the production.

A-2286. You tell us that provision for old age is quite essential, and that it should be on the lines of the Indian Railway institutions. By that I take it you refer to the provident fund?—Yes, or gratuities.

A-2287. Is there no such system in any of the mills here?—None.

A-2288. Do you think it would be practicable and desirable to institute provident funds in the textile mills?—Yes.

A-2289. Dealing with the subject of physical exhaustion, you say that more than one interval should be given if food facilities are to be had in the mills. Does that mean you would like to have a half-hour break in the morning?—Every three hours. After two hours we find the conditions of the Department are such that the nerves of the workmen require resting.

A-2290. Then instead of one hour in the middle of the day you suggest two intervals, each of half an hour?—Yes, but that will only be workable if some convenience is provided in the mill premises, because the workers cannot go to their homes and get back again within half an hour.

A-2291. You think that in the first of these intervals there should be provision made for food?—Yes.

A-2292. Do you think that would add to the total efficiency of the worker during the day?—Yes.

A-2293. Is not that possible under the present Factory Act with the consent of the worker?—Yes, but it is not workable because the workmen themselves do not agree.

A-2294. Why do they not agree?—Because they cannot go to their homes and get back again in half an hour.

A-2295. Would they be in favour of it if there was accommodation provided for them in the mills?—Yes.

A-2296. If canteen accommodation was provided on the mill premises, you think the workers would prefer the double break system?—Yes.

A-2297. And that it would also add to their total efficiency and lessen their exhaustion in their day's work?—Yes. We recognize that it would be a difficult task for the employers to arrange for the time, owing to the question of caste.

A-2298. How many different arrangements would that involve?—Four or five different arrangements would have to be made on account of the caste question.

A-2299. You say that no legal enactment for the payment of wages not later than a certain number of days after they have been earned is necessary?—No regulation is necessary in Ahmedabad.

A-2300. You are satisfied with the present system of fortnightly payments?—Yes.

A-2301. Have you considered the possibility of a weekly payment of wages?—We wanted to try it but the labourers were not in favour of it.

A-2302. *Mr. Clow*: You say that recruitment is 65 per cent. from the U. P. side. You do not mean by that, do you, that 65 per cent. of the employees in the mills come from the United Provinces?—By U. P. we mean only the northern side.

A-2303. The Millowners' Association told us that about 80 per cent. came from Ahmedabad and the neighbourhood—say 50 miles round about. You say only 10 per cent. from local and surrounding villages?—That is our experience.

A-2304. Are there only 10 per cent. Gujratis in the mills?—We have limited ourselves to Ahmedabad proper and ten miles radius.

A-2305. You state that the system of paying wages is found defective. What are the difficulties to which you allude?—In certain sections there is no regular booking in the timekeepers' office, and the labourer has no proof of his attendance at the mill or of the hours he has worked.

A-2306. Are there many complaints?—There are none at present, but it is a loophole in the system which, we think, should not be allowed.

A-2307. You say that in the Spinning Department there is no system of fining. Do you mean there is no fining at all, or do you mean that the weavers are treated more severely than the spinners in this respect?—Yes, that is what we mean.

A-2308. You have given some figures of indebtedness in your memorandum. Are those your own figures, or they have been collected by the Factory Inspector?—We have depended on the Inspector's Report.

A-2309. These figures suggest that the more a man's income rises the greater is his debt in proportion. Is it a fact that as a man's credit rises, his debts tend to rise too? It has been suggested to us that if wages were raised the debt would diminish?—No, we differ from that suggestion.

A-2310. *Mr. Joshi*: You say there is no unemployment amongst skilled labourers. Do your mills close on certain days?—No.

A-2311. You have work for every machine all the year round?—Yes.

A-2312. You state that there is no voluntary retirement. What happens to the men when they become old?—If they are unable to work they absent themselves. Until then they have got to work. Therefore there is no voluntary retirement.

A-2313. We have been told that there is no unemployment in Ahmedabad, but I see that workers appear before the gates of the mills every morning?—Yes, that is so.

A-2314. Do you put up the piece-work rates in your mills?—Yes.

A-2315. Would you have any objection to making such a practice compulsory for all mills?—Why should there be legislation when it is already there.

A-2316. How do you fix the rates for new varieties?—We first of all make tests and then we fix the rate.

A-2317. During the test period the rate is not put up?—No, it is not. But it is put up before the man is paid his wages.

A-2318. You say that a reduction of the maximum hours of work is possible only if the working conditions are improved. Will you explain what kind of improvements you want in the working conditions?—(Mr. Manohar) Better temperature, better spacing of machinery, more up-to-date appliances and labour saving machinery.

A-2319. Can you state whether the reduction in hours from 12 to 10 has caused any reduction in output?—(Mr. Kantekar). There has been no loss of efficiency so far as weaving is concerned.

A-2320. *The Chairman*: Does that mean that in ten hours a weaver turns out as much cloth as he used to do in twelve hours?—Yes.

A-2321. What about spinning?—The output has gone down about 5 per cent.

A-2322. *Mr. Joshi*: You fix the minimum wage of a worker at Rs. 20. Will he be able to maintain a family on Rs. 20?—No. Rs. 20 represents the living wage of one man only.

A-2323. You state that the spinners are paid fortnightly. Am I correct in my impression that in Ahmedabad a fortnight varies. It may mean 12 days, or 14 days, or 16 days?—It is 16 days in all cases.

A-2324. We have been told that so far as efficiency is concerned, Indians do not come up to the standard of Europeans, and therefore the employment of Europeans becomes necessary. I take it that in the textile industry there is competition between Indians and Europeans for the posts of foremen. Do you find that the Indian foreman can compete successfully with the European foreman?—(Mr. Meawane). Yes.

A-2325. Is it your experience that the number of European foremen in the textile industry is becoming less on account of that competition?—Yes, and they are now working on less pay than they were getting before.

A-2326. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is that the reason the industry is not doing so well?—No.

A-2327. *Miss Power*: You advocate a public employment agency. By whom should it be run?—By the Municipality.

A-2328. *Miss Cama*: You state in your memorandum that the medical men have not much sympathy for the poor. What exactly do you mean?—The medical man goes to the mill for one hour, during which time he has to treat very many cases. Therefore in one hour he cannot give the sympathetic treatment to the labourers which he ought to give.

A-2329. You mean to say that the medical man does not treat every case?—No, he has not the time.

A-2330. You think there ought to be a whole-time doctor?—Yes.

A-2331. You do not really mean that the medical man is unsympathetic?—We have seen some cases where the medical man has lacked sympathy for the labourers (Mr. Kantekar). He is only one hour at his dispensary, and naturally, when he has 50 cases to dispose of during that time, he cannot give proper attention to every one, and that is why the labour says that the medical man is unsympathetic.

A-2332. But that is not the medical man's fault?—It is not the fault of the medical man, but the result is there, namely, that the labourers do not get proper sympathy.

A-2333. *Mr. Asarje*: You say that the minimum living wage for one man is Rs. 20. What would be the minimum living wage of a family consisting of a man and his wife, the father and one child?—Rs. 40 to Rs. 42.

A-2334. *Mr. Lallji*: With regard to indebtedness, do you think that one cause of the labourer's indebtedness is the fact that he sometimes spends a little more than he can afford for death and marriage ceremonies?—That is one of the causes of his indebtedness.

A-2335. With regard to the introduction of co-operative societies, you will agree that the labour in the mills is not very permanent, that is to say, a man may remain there for two or three years and then go away?—Yes.

A-2336. How can you form a co-operative society under those conditions?—Once a man becomes a member he will still continue to be a member whether he works in one mill or in another mill.

A-2337. Who will run these co-operative societies?—We could easily raise a loan from the owners of the mills and start them ourselves.

A-2338. Do you want a co-operative society for every mill, or for a group of mills?—A group of mills.

A-2339. You say that a provident fund should be provided by the millowners, but do you not think the difficulty of the labour being less permanent would arise in this connection also?—There should be a stipulated period. For the first two years the employee should contribute himself. After two years the employer should contribute. If the labourer goes away during the first two years, he would withdraw his own money. If he went away after the first two years he would also take away the additional contribution of the employer.

A-2340. What would be the position of *budhis*?—They would not be entitled to any benefit.

A-2341. *Col. Russell*: You stated in reply to a previous question that you want a full-time medical officer in these mills. For what size of mill do you suggest there should be a full-time medical officer?—It would be a group of seven mills of 600 looms and 24,000 spindles each.

A-2342. Under the supervision of one medical officer?—Yes.

A-2343. How many hours a day do you expect the medical officer to work?—Three hours in the morning and two hours in the evening.

A-2344. How could a medical man possibly visit seven mills?—In a group of mills there would be a dispensary.

A-2345. You would have a central dispensary?—Yes.

A-2346. How many workers in the group of mills that you envisage?—About 5,000.

A-2347. *Dewan Chaman Lall*: You state that you are not in favour of unemployment insurance. Has any census been taken in Ahmedabad as regards unemployment?—No.

A-2348. Have you instituted any scientific enquiries into the prevalence of unemployment in Ahmedabad?—No.

A-2349. It is merely your opinion that there is no unemployment in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2350. An opinion which is not fortified by statistics ?—No.

A-2351. With reference to your figure of Rs. 20 as a minimum wage for a male labourer, did you work out that figure on any information supplied to you ?—We made personal enquiries from workmen.

A-2352. Can you supply the Commission with a statement of the details ?—Yes.

The Chairman : It must be remembered that this association only began last year, and although they have given us interesting information and opinions we must have regard to the fact that their experience is not yet very great. ■

A-2353. *Divan Chaman Lall* : You state that the co-operative system is an aid to efficiency. What exactly do you mean ?—(Mr. Manohar). We mean that the spinning and weaving masters should have sufficient confidence in their jobbers, and that the jobbers should have sufficient confidence in their men without having to put other men to watch their movements and work.

A-2354. You mean that there should be co-operation between the staff ?—Yes.

A-2355. Was any attempt made to discuss the matter of weekly payments with the existing labour union, as to its desirability or otherwise ?—(Mr. Kantekar). We do not know.

A-2356. You say that an 8 hours' day is not feasible. Why not ?—Because it would increase the cost of production.

A-2357. You say it is not feasible simply from that point of view ?—Yes.

A-2358. Do you agree that it would increase the efficiency of the worker ?—Yes.

A-2359. *Mr. Cliff* : Do I understand that advances are given each week ?—Each week after the pay is due.

A-2360. Assume that a man commences work on the 1st of November. Do I understand that his pay for the period finishes on November the 16th ?—No, the 24th.

A-2361. The period for which he is paid is 16 days ?—Yes.

A-2362. And he gets paid for that on the 24th ?—Yes.

A-2363. What advances is a man likely to get during that period ?—He will get no advances between November the 1st and November the 24th.

A-2364. In what circumstances are advances given ?—Whenever they are asked for by the worker they are given.

A-2365. Are those advances against pay ?—Yes, against the pay due.

A-2366. Are they deducted at the time the payment is made ?—Yes.

A-2367. Do I understand that they get 25 per cent. of the wages due ?—About 50 per cent.

A-2368. Then they can get an advance of 50 per cent. against their pay ?—Yes.

A-2369. Is that taken once or twice ?—Once only.

A-2370. What do they take these advances for ?—For their household expenses, or drink or holidays or ceremonies.

A-2371. Do the work-people employed in the mills of which you have experience, spend very much money on drink ?—Yes, they do if the drink shops are quite close to the mills. The food waits.

A-2372. Do a very large number of work-people spend their money on drink ?—More than 80 per cent. I should say.

A-2373. Does that apply to men and women ?—It applies only very little to women.

A-2374. How much money would these 80 per cent. spend in drink on pay day ?—I cannot tell you, not being a drunkard myself.

A-2375. You know that 80 per cent. of the people go to the drink shop and the food waits ?—Yes.

A-2376. But you do not know what they spend ?—No.

A-2377. Would it be true to say that the factory has to close down the day after pay day because the labour is not there ?—No, that is not generally the case.

A-2378. After pay day is there any difficulty about the employment of labour at all ?—No.

A-2379. Is there any difficulty about the employment of labour on pay day ?—No.

A-2380. *Mr. Ahmed* : What is the percentage of Muhammadan labourers in Ahmedabad ?—25.

A-2381. Has your Brotherhood any Muhammadan members ?—Yes.

A-2382. Have you tried to stop drinking amongst them ?—We do not drink.

A-2383. I see your Brotherhood has some weaving masters in it. Are they in favour of drink ?—No.

A-2384. Do they speak to the workers about the evils of drink ?—Each of us individually try to improve the conditions in our own mills.

A-2385. What sort of drink do the Muhammadans indulge in ?—I do not know what they drink.

A-2386. You say that there is a high death rate in the mill area. Is that due to the bad atmosphere prevailing there or to certain diseases ?—It is generally due to low vitality consequent upon poor housing, poor surroundings, and poor food.

A-2387. You are in favour of co-operative societies ?—Yes.

A-2388. You can get any number of labourers that you want through the jobber. There is competition amongst the workers to get employment. Is it not possible that there is a certain understanding between the jobber and the men ?—Underground currents are not always perceptible on the surface.

A-2389. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say that the efficiency of Indian workers in recent years has been gradually on the increase. Is that your experience in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2390. Does this apply to weavers and spinners ?—Yes, to weavers specially.

A-2391. In your memorandum you say that Indian labour is less efficient than foreign labour because they are raw hands. What do you mean by "raw hands" ?—Indian labour which immigrates from up-country is raw.

A-2392. All labour coming into a mill for the first time is raw, but you have had workers working in your mills for generations, and they are not raw. Why do you say they are less efficient than foreign labour ?—Only the raw hands are inefficient.

A-2393. In the case of Indian labour, you say if it is given the same facilities as foreigners are provided with, it can still stand in competition with foreigners in efficiency ?—Yes.

A-2394. What are the facilities given to foreigners which are not given to your workers ?—If an Indian worker is transplanted from here to a foreign country, where the conditions are much better in comparison with those available here, he will show as much efficiency as any other foreign worker.

A-2395. You mean to say that if he were sent to Japan he would work as well as a Japanese would ?—Yes.

A-2396. And if he were sent to Manchester he would work as well as a Manchester worker would ?—Yes.

A-2397. Are you willing that the Indian worker should do the same amount of work as a Japanese or Manchester worker ?—He would do the same amount of work.

A-2398. Do you want him to work 4 looms or 14 looms instead of two ?—Under foreign conditions he would work as many looms as the other man was working.

A-2399. How many looms do you think an Indian worker is looking after here ?—Under present conditions he cannot work more than two.

A-2400. What about the spinning mills ?—He can now only work one side, but he could work three or four frames given the same facilities as foreigners.

A-2401. You spoke of certain improvements just now, in the way of labour saving appliances. What do you mean by labour saving appliances ?—Lifts, for instance. At present in our mills loads of material have to be carried from the ground floor to the top floor. Then there is spacing of machinery.

A-2402. Is not that a question of management ?—It is a question of money.

A-2403. Do you say that a weaver would be capable of working four looms if he were given a boy to bring the weft to the loom ?—Yes. He could work four looms if he had not continually to go outside to get the stuff.

A-2404. Are you in favour of the weavers here working four looms with a boy to help them ?—Not under present conditions. They must be supplied with better warps.

A-2405. Are you agreeable that your weavers should work four looms with the assistance of a boy ?—If they get better proportionate wages.

A-2406. What increase in wages would the weavers expect ?—Double perhaps.

A-2407. You are practical men. In your memorandum you say that you are directly responsible for the success or otherwise of the manufacturing process. Yet you maintain that the only way in which it is possible to get a weaver to work four looms

instead of two, with the assistance of a boy, is by paying him double the wages which he is now getting?—That is the attitude of the weavers. Our opinion is not that.

A-2408. What is your opinion?—The expenses entailed in providing better warp and better facilities have to be deducted in the first place.

A-2409. *The Chairman*: The only thing you would say is that the weavers should have a substantial part of the increase?—Yes.

A-2410. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What do the unions say in that connection?—There is no labour union in the Weaving Department.

A-2411. Take the Spinning. Do you agree that a spinner, given good yarn, can look after more spindles than he is looking after at present?—Even if he were paid double the wages which he is receiving at present, he would not be ready to work twosides, I think.

A-2412. Do you not think as practical men that they should be encouraged to work two sides?—Not under the conditions of 10 hours working.

A-2413. How many hours would you suggest?—Nine hours.

A-2414. If they did nine hours, would you be agreeable to my proposition?—Not nine hours continuously.

A-2415. But the workers do not work continuously. Their day is a 10 hour day, but they are not actually attending to their looms for the whole 10 hours, are they? How many minutes do they spend outside?—They spend about 2 hours out of the 10 outside.

A-2416. *The Chairman*: But the spinning frames are running for the whole ten hours?—Yes.

A-2417. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Extra hands are employed to let these men go out. You speak about the oppressive climatic conditions. Why do you yourself work in these hot mills? Surely your primary object is to earn a living for yourself and your family?—Yes.

A-2418. *The Chairman*: The fact of your coming together to form an association shows us that it is your desire to co-operate in improving both the efficiency of your work for your employers and in improving the conditions for yourselves and your fellow-workers?—Yes.

A-2419. *Sir Victor Saseoon*: You are very optimistic as to the efficiency of the Indian workman?—Yes.

A-2420. You maintain that if he is given suitable conditions, such as labour saving appliances, carrier systems, better warp, and so on, he can look after more machines than he does to-day?—And also if he is given a better climate.

A-2421. You do not consider it is feasible for a weaver to look after four looms unless he gets a better climate?—The whole question has to be tackled from top to bottom—better education, better housing and so forth.

A-2422. Unless everything you consider an Indian labourer wants is given to him, including an alteration in the climatic conditions of India, you think we cannot hope for any increase in the efficiency of the Indian workman in the textile industry: he must have education, better housing, new machines and a fresh climate before any improvement in the industry can be expected. Cannot we expect to get some extra efficiency without all these factors?—No.

A-2423. We cannot get any extra efficiency without all these factors?—No. If some of these grievances were removed we might get a little extra efficiency.

A-2424. Therefore we can get more efficiency without supplying all these factors?—Yes, if some of the factors were supplied.

A-2425. I am told that in Japan one weaver can look after 40 automatic looms and that one spinner can look after 6 to 8 sides. If all these factors which you name cannot be given to the Indian workman but only some, could it be expected that one Indian weaver could look after 20 automatic looms?—It depends on the conditions you offer him.

A-2426. I will offer him labour saving appliances, assistance for his weft, a ventilating system, all the conditions that an ordinary good employer would give inside the mill; but I cannot offer you things which are due to the Almighty, such as a better climate or things which might be given by the State or the Municipality. I would give him extra wages—not necessarily double wages—for looking after double the number of machines, as I have to take into account the fact that I should have to spend a lot of money on providing him with these extra facilities and additional help. Taking all these things into account, do you think, as practical men, that one might get at any rate some more efficiency out of the man?—Yes.

A-2427. I understand that one of the mills here is having two sides looked after by one spinner. If the conditions in that particular mill were employed in all the mills, would you say that one spinner could look after two sides everywhere?—Yes.

A-2428. And if I could show you a mill in Bombay in which one man is looking after four looms, would you consider that in Ahmedabad one man could look after four looms under similar conditions?—Yes, but the payment question comes in.

A-2429. I am assuming that the man would be paid more for looking after four looms, but not double?—It should be substantially more.

A-2430. Would you say 50 per cent. more?—It should be 75 per cent. more.

A-2431. You want 75 per cent. more wages to be paid in that event. Have you ever worked out what the cost would be to enable an employer to provide all the conditions which you have named in order that a man might look after four looms instead of two?—No.

A-2432. Might it not be that the employer under these conditions might be worse off than he was before?—But the man would be producing more.

A-2433. Yes, but the net cost of production might be higher?—That would have to be seen. Perhaps it might not increase the cost of production.

A-2434. You want the employer to put in all these extra facilities and yet to give the whole of his savings to the workman?—If possible the cost of production must be lowered.

A-2435. But how can it be if the employer has to give 75 per cent. more in wages? Do you know that in other countries generally 30 per cent. of the net saving is given to the labourer? You want, however, the employer to give 75 per cent. of the gross?—Yes.

A-2436. Now about the question of the jobber. When you, as head of the Department, want extra labour, do you not go first to the mill gate?—Some men stand at the gates.

A-2437. The present system is that the jobber goes and fetches those men for you to look at and select?—Yes.

A-2438. Would you have any objection to a man being specially employed by your Company to bring those men to you, and do away with the jobber?—If such a man had sufficient experience about the worker's capacity for the work, I would have no objection.

A-2439. I take it he would have no way of finding out the man's capability unless he knew him. Take yourself. Suppose you go down to the gate, and you find two men standing there: how are you going to tell how good they are until you have tried them?—Quite so.

A-2440. Therefore if you are going to try them there is no reason why you should not have an officer of the mill to go down and fetch them?—There would be a likelihood of getting in altogether useless labour.

A-2441. Supposing you kept a register of your labour, and supposing that every time a man went away his name was put down with the particulars of what he could do. If an officer of the mill found one of these men who had left coming back again later and applying for a job, he could merely look up the record, he would see all the particulars of what the man could do, and he would say to the man, "I know you are a good man; start at once"?—Yes.

A-2442. He could do that by merely looking up the records. There would be no necessity for him to be an expert?—Quite so.

A-2443. And it would take away from the jobber the power which he now possesses and to which you object?—Yes, but such an officer must understand the work inside the mill.

A-2444. He need not be a very highly technical man?—No, but he would have to be highly practical.

A-2445. All you want is a man practical enough to pick out a weaver, as well as a spinner?—Yes.

A-2446. Therefore it is not necessary to wait for education, and for all the other things you have named, in order to do away with the jobber. You could have this man to do that part of the jobber's work?—Yes.

A-2447. You think that such a system would be possible?—Yes. It would be preferable.

A-2448. Supposing your employer said to you: "This is what I am going to do." Would you be in favour of it?—Yes.

A-2449. Do you know that one employer has tried to do that, but his managing staff has objected to it?—I do not know that.

A-2450. You ask for a provident fund to be established. Do you want that to be for every employee, or only for employees earning a certain amount?—We want it for all permanent labour.

- A-2451. For coolies ?—Yes, for everybody.
- A-2452. You want these people to have a certain amount deducted from their wages and put into the provident fund ?—Yes.
- A-2453. Do you anticipate that they will be prepared to agree to this ?—Yes.
- A-2454. But supposing a man says he does not want to have any cuts made from his pay ?—To begin with there might be some difficulty, just as men do not become members of unions to start with.
- A-2455. Would you force them to become members ?—We would persuade them, not force them.
- A-2456. Would you have a provident fund which would be available for all those employees who cared to take advantage of it ?—Yes.
- A-2457. You ask that the interval should be divided into two half-hour intervals instead of one one-hour interval ?—Yes.
- A-2458. Personally I agree with you. Would you ask that that should be done by law ?—Perhaps the workers would have to be prepared for it.
- A-2459. Supposing the workers object to such a division ?—We would listen to their objections and we would try to convince them.
- A-2460. What would happen if you fail ?—Then it would stand as it is.
- A-2461. Therefore there would be no efficiency ?—Quite so.
- A-2462. Does the worker in Ahmedabad take his meal in the middle of the day ?—Yes.
- A-2463. In Bombay they take their food in the morning. Do they do so in Ahmedabad ?—They take it at about the middle of the day.
- A-2464. They do not take it during the break ?—No, during the rest hour, 12 to 1, they do not take their food here.
- A-2465. What would be your objection, therefore, to having a half-hour break in the middle of the day, if the workers do not take their food ?—Some of the labourers have to go to their places to get their food.
- A-2466. But they do not take it between 12 and 1. They take it during the morning ?—Some of the labourers go outside to take their meals at their homes from 12 to 1.
- A-2467. It must be a very small percentage ?—Not very small—25.
- A-2468. Do you say that 25 per cent. of the work-people do not take their food until 12 o'clock ?—Yes.
- A-2469. Is that the custom in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.
- A-2470. They take no food up to 12 o'clock from the night before ?—In the morning when they come they take some breakfast early in the morning. Then they go at 12, cook their food and come back again at 1.
- A-2471. You suggest that 25 per cent. do that ?—Yes.
- A-2472. Most of the others do not do that ?—No.
- A-2473. I understand you to say that the cotton should be tested scientifically. By whom ? By the Government ?—Inside the mill itself.
- A-2474. You want the mill to arrange to test the cotton ?—Yes.
- A-2475. That is not a matter for the Government, but a matter for the mill agent ?—Yes.
- A-2476. Your complaint, therefore, is against the mill agent ?—We complain against the general system.
- A-2477. You complain that your mill agent does not test the cotton before he hands it over to you ?—That is so in many mills.
- A-2478. The custom here is not to test the cotton before it is supplied to you. Is that your complaint ?—Yes.
- A-2479. Is it true that most of the stores which are used in Ahmedabad are inferior—that you buy cheap inferior stores ?—In some cases.
- A-2480. As a rule ?—As a rule the store is cheaper here than in Bombay.
- A-2481. Therefore you expect to get inferior stores ?—Yes.
- A-2482. You think it is true to say that the stores used in Ahmedabad mills are, on the whole, inferior to the ones used in Bombay ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTIETH MEETING
AHMEDABAD

Monday, 18th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.

Sir ISRAHEM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLEFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
(*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C., *Assistant Commissioner*.

Lady V. R. NILKANTH.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } *Lady Assessors.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. }

Mr. A. DIBDIN. } *Joint Secretaries.*

Col. B. H. NANAVATI, C.I.E., Vice-President of the
Sanitary Association, Ahmedabad.

A-2483. *The Chairman* : You are the Vice-President of the Sanitary Association?—
Yes.

A-2484. We had the pleasure of your attendance last week. I understand you want to put in an additional statement before the Commission. Will you do so?—This is merely an amplification of the answers already given by the Secretary. The dwellings of the mill operatives are very imperfect and insufficient in number and in many cases unfit for human habitation. They are in most cases dark, dingy, little cottages, where air can only enter in through the small main door. I consider it the first duty of the millowners, and to some extent of the municipality, which is responsible for the health of the city, to provide cheap sanitary dwellings for the mill operatives and the poorer people of the labouring classes. Government should also give a helping hand in this direction as far as possible.

As regards the physique of the millworkers, I am of opinion that, generally speaking, it is not quite so good as that of the labourers of a similar class but not working in the mills. The latter have the advantage of working in the open, whereas the former have often to work in more or less closed rooms which are often not well ventilated.

The question regarding drainage in the suburban area was discussed to some extent last time, and I wish to add a few more notes regarding the subject. The construction of drainage in the mill areas is another important subject intimately connected with the health and well being of the operatives of the city in general, which the municipality, with the assistance of the millowners and the agents, should take in hand as early as possible. As mentioned by me on the previous occasion, a conference of the representatives of the municipality and of the millowners was held about two or two and a half years ago under my chairmanship with a view to discuss this important subject.

Some of the millowners agreed to pay a certain proportion of the cost towards the construction of the drainage. All the millowners were not represented at the conference, and therefore no practical conclusion was arrived at beyond the passing of a resolution that a drainage scheme be prepared. I am personally of opinion—and some of the millowners share that opinion—that all the millowners ought to bear a reasonable proportion of the cost of this suburban drainage and if all parties meet with one common aim and object, without taking into consideration the individual interests of the mills, the solution of this important problem ought not to be a difficult one.

The present system of collecting the waste water from mills in adjoining tanks and ditches and then occasionally letting it out into the surrounding areas where the dwellings of some of the mill operatives and other poor people are generally situated, is a serious menace to their health and should be put a stop to as early as possible, as it is responsible to some extent for the abnormal mortality which prevails in the city.

Further, the mortality could be considerably reduced if the municipality in the interests of the city would undertake welfare and maternity work. This city is considerably behind many other cities of equal proportions in this respect. In fact this municipality has done nothing in the matter, and the scheme to institute welfare work and health visitors which was put forward by me jointly with Dr. Solomon about two years ago was not accepted by the municipality. The establishment of ante-natal clinics by the municipality, where women could be examined and advised from time to time during the period of their pregnancy and till the period of their delivery, would prove of considerable value in lessening both infant and maternal mortality. Many diseases, the root cause of severe illness of various kinds, could thus be detected and treated beforehand and the disastrous results which we now occasionally come across, would be avoided. The appointment of a health visitor or visitors is another very important necessity with a view to educate the public on general principles of health and sanitation. This is particularly needed in a place like Ahmedabad where the mortality, both general and infantile, is, as is well known, abnormally high.

With a view to improving the health of the city, I think it very necessary that the municipality should carry on certain important works and which ought to have been carried out years ago. A brief mention of these is all that is possible here.

The removal of all animals—horses, cattle, cows, etc.—which are now unfortunately and for years and years past have been kept stabled within the city walls for trade purposes. The by-laws relating to the building of stables and observance of cleanliness inside them are seldom enforced, and therefore there is not only a huge collection of refuse within the city walls to the great detriment of the public health but the organic matter emanating from it is a source of great danger. Also for want of adequate drainage to carry away the urine of these animals, the urine generally soaks into the ground and gives out a very offensive effluvia which cannot but have a detrimental effect on the health of the people in the neighbourhood. I must add that just a beginning, a mere step, for the removal of cattle—cows and buffaloes only—from the city has just been made, and it is to be hoped that the scheme will be sanctioned before long. But unless all the animals are removed from the city walls to a reasonable distance outside the city, this partial introduction of reform would hardly be a great advantage.

Tuberculosis, especially in the pulmonary form, is largely prevalent in this city. I have made a rough calculation from the number of patients who seek advice from me and I know that out of every eight patients generally one is a consumptive. This proportion was found to be almost correct as compared with the statistics contained in the Government reports which I consulted in connection with a series of public lectures that I gave some time ago on the subject. I am not quite prepared to say whether the disease is more prevalent amongst the millworkers than others, but it is a patent fact that it is very largely prevalent in the city. Amongst a number of causes which are responsible for this are overcrowded, dark and ill-ventilated dwellings of the poor people and absolute ignorance as to the mode of prevention of this disease. The congestion and overcrowding in the city can be removed only by developing the suburbs and providing facilities for people to live there.

A so-called hospital for infectious diseases is no doubt maintained by the municipality, but it is maintained mostly in name only. There is no permanent staff of servants or of nurses either. The building itself is a very miserable one and ill-equipped for the purpose. The prevention of disease is in many cases a simple and easy affair, and if the people were educated through the health visitors so far as to understand the causation of some of the simple diseases and the prevention of the mode of conveyance of infection from one person to another, a great step in the right direction would have been taken to reduce the mortality, and the great incidence of tubercular diseases in general.

The Chairman : We are obliged to you for your statement. It is evident to us that you are an enthusiast in health matters. I do not think that I can do more than add to what I said the other day that we are much interested in the work of your Association, particularly of those representatives of it whom we have seen, Dr. Solomon and yourself. You no doubt have noted that we were told by the millowners that they were prepared to do their share in the mills to which you have referred, not only through their rates but if need be through a special and additional contribution. It is not for us as a Commission to interfere with municipal government but we have no doubt that the work of your Association will be a valuable assistance in co-operating with the municipal authorities towards the carrying out of these improvements. Thank you very much.

(The witness withdrew.)

Miss DINA CAMA, Gujerat Constituency of All-India Women's Conference.

A-2485. *The Chairman* : You are the Joint Honorary Secretary of the Women's Council, Ahmedabad Branch ?—Yes.

A-2486. May I at the outset, on behalf of the Commission, say how much we value your co-operation in the work which is entrusted to us. We regard the interests of the women of India, in the work which we are called upon to perform, as of very high value ; and we are most pleased here, and elsewhere, to have the co-operation of Women's Associations, which are already taking such a large part in the improvement of the social life of the people of India.

I notice from your memorandum that your Association lays great stress on an improvement in the Land Acquisition Act. That has already been brought to our notice. I understand what you desire is that this Act should be extended so as to enable land to be acquired for anybody which is prepared to come forward for the improved housing of the people ?—Yes.

A-2487. With regard to Ahmedabad in particular, you say that the rate of mortality of children is very high, and you suggest that each mill should have, by law, a dispensary in charge of a qualified medical man who should always be on the spot ?—Yes.

A-2488. A number of the mills here do make some provision of this kind, but not all. I take it that you would wish that they should all be brought up to the standard of the best ?—Yes.

A-2489. You suggest that, with regard to welfare work generally in connection with the workers in the mills, that legislation is desirable in order to bring about a uniform standard ?—Yes.

A-2490. We have observed that some of the mills are doing admirable work in this direction. Do you think it is advisable to use the compulsion of the law in this matter rather than the persuasion which evidently is in operation at present ?—Compulsion is necessary.

A-2491. What would you wish to see provided by compulsory law in this respect ?—Crèches for children, maternity homes for women and schools for children.

A-2492. Do you regard it as the duty of the millowners to provide schools rather than the Municipality ?—The Government, the Municipality, and other associations should help to provide them.

A-2493. It has been suggested to us that it is not the duty of the millowners to do educational work, but that it is the duty of the Municipality. I take it your view is that the millowners have a special responsibility in the matter ?—Yes.

A-2494. With regard to hours of work, you suggest that the hours should be reduced from 10 hours a day to 9 hours a day ?—Our opinion is based on the welfare of the workers.

A-2495. You think a reduction of one hour would bring about a substantial improvement in the conditions of the worker ?—Yes.

A-2496. *Miss Power* : What do you consider is the minimum housing accommodation for a mill operative family ?—Two rooms, and one kitchen.

A-2497. Do you include bathing accommodation in one of those rooms ?—That should be provided in another room.

A-2498. It has been suggested to us that there is a great need for fore-women in factories. Are there fore-women employed in the mills in Ahmedabad, or only foremen?—I do not know.

A-2499. Have you any knowledge of the conditions of the workers in places that do not come under the Factories Act?—No.

A-2500. Have you considered as to whether they are such that they ought to be regulated by law?—No.

A-2501. With regard to the Maternity Act, is it operative in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-2502. Do you consider the Act suitable, or has your organization any suggestions to make?—It is suitable.

A-2503. *Dr. (Miss) Cama* : Would you like welfare work to be made compulsory?—Yes.

A-2504. *Mr. Asavle* : You stated that the minimum accommodation for a worker should be two rooms and a kitchen. What should be the rent for that accommodation?—Rs. 5 or 6.

A-2505. Do you think that, with the wages they are earning to-day, the workers can afford that rent?—Yes.

A-2506. What is the wage of the worker?—Between Rs. 25 and 30.

A-2507. You think that out of that she can afford to pay Rs. 5 or 6 for rent?—Yes.

A-2508. *Mr. Cliff* : With regard to housing accommodation, we have had a memorandum put in which says that the minimum housing requirements per family are a kitchen, a living room, an open space in front of the house and a verandah, with adequate water facilities and proper sanitary arrangements. When you mentioned two rooms, was that the kind of house you were thinking of for a family?—Yes.

A-2509. May we take it that that constitutes the minimum housing requirements for a family?—Yes.

A-2510. The memorandum further says "At the present scale of wages, a workman cannot be expected to pay rent exceeding from Rs. 3 to 5 per month". Is that your opinion?—Rs. 5.

A-2511. Have you had any experience of the working class population of this city?—Yes.

A-2512. Can you tell me anything about the consumption of liquor by the working classes of this city? Is it very prevalent?—It is.

A-2513. What is your meaning of the word "prevalent"? Can you tell the Commission how common drinking is?—I am told by the women workers that nearly all the pay of their husbands is spent on liquor.

A-2514. You are told that in going round visiting?—Yes.

A-2515. Have you yourself seen any ill-effects upon workers here on account of drink?—I have seen very little myself.

A-2516. *Col. Russell* : You say that the housing of labour by industrial concerns has its disadvantages. I take it, therefore, that you are not altogether in favour of housing schemes being carried out by the millowners. What is your suggestion?—The municipality should undertake it.

A-2517. You say that no special provision for women doctors is made. Are women doctors available?—Yes.

A-2518. You disagree, then, with one of the witnesses, who said that he could not get a woman doctor, although he had advertised for months?—That is because they do not allow private practice. That is why the millowners do not get lady doctors.

A-2519. If you allowed a doctor attending mill labour also to practise privately, do you not think the tendency would be for the doctor to attend more to his private practice and to neglect the mill labour? How do you propose to get over that difficulty?—Government allows the doctors in the civil hospitals to practise privately.

A-2520. Are there a sufficient number of trained midwives available in Ahmedabad supposing large maternity schemes were introduced?—Yes.

A-2521. You could get enough midwives to attend to the wives of the workers for the whole of the mills in Ahmedabad?—There are plenty.

A-2522. Would you have full-time workers, or would you allow them also private practice?—They should be full-time workers, and not allowed private practice.

A-2523. You would allow the doctors to have private practice, but not the midwives ? Would the midwives, supposing you were able to get them, be able to compete with the indigenous *dais* ?—Yes.

A-2524. You think the women workers would make use of these trained midwives in preference to the *dais* ?—Yes.

A-2525. I suppose you know that in most parts of India the *dais* are preferred ? In connection with welfare you say "If any public agency were prepared to carry on the work." What public agency do you suggest should carry out welfare work ?—The municipality.

A-2526. You would have no Association, such as your Association, associated with it ?—Yes, the Sanitary Association.

A-2527. Do you think that would be satisfactory ?—Yes.

A-2528. In about half the mills in Ahmedabad we are told that medical aid is provided. It is suggested that medical aid should be provided for all the mills. What arrangements would you suggest for the provision of medical aid for all the workers in Ahmedabad ?—There should be legislation to enforce it.

A-2529. Supposing that legislation were brought into effect, what arrangement would you suggest would be the best ? Would you have one medical officer for each mill, or one medical officer for a group of mills ?—One medical officer for each mill.

A-2530. Do you think, apart from the difficulty of retaining a sufficient number of medical officers (I understand there are 83 mills in Ahmedabad), that each mill would be able to afford the salary of a properly trained medical officer for itself ?—Yes.

A-2531. I understand that the civil hospital and other dispensaries are closed on Sundays, and that they are closed at about 6 o'clock on week nights, so that they are not available for the workers, generally speaking. Have you any suggestions to make as to how that difficulty might be got over ?—They should be open in the evenings.

A-2532. Then would you suggest that they should be closed during the day for a certain number of hours ?—They are closed for certain hours during the day.

A-2533. Which hours ?—I do not know.

A-2534. Is it not a fact that a patient can be admitted to the civil hospital at any hour during the 24 hours ?—Indoor patients can be taken in at any time.

A-2535. It has been stated that the system of employing *dais* in Municipal employment is not effective. Can you tell us why that is so ?—It is due to the ignorance of the people.

A-2536. You think the Municipality ought to employ trained midwives instead of *dais* ?—The people are ignorant. The midwives are trained.

A-2537. So they do not use the trained midwives ?—No.

A-2538. But you have said that they would use these trained midwives ?—If the mill-owners provided them.

A-2539. Can you tell us what articles of diet the average worker uses for his morning and evening meals ?—I do not know.

A-2540. You have not made any investigation into the matter ?—No.

A-2541. Do you think that provision ought to be made for the worker during periods of sickness ?—Yes.

A-2542. Do you know anything of the methods used by the Certifying Surgeon in connection with young labour ?—No.

A-2543. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say that the women workers drink ?—No. I said the husbands of the women drink.

A-2544. Has your organization undertaken any propaganda in the matter ?—No.

A-2545. Do you not think it advisable that your organization should do so ?—Yes.

A-2546. There has been some agitation in other countries that women should not work in mines or do labour of that sort.—What is your opinion ?—We are against it also.

A-2547. Has your organization taken any steps towards that end ?—No.

A-2548. Has your organization taken any steps, such as passing resolutions and forwarding them to Government, with regard to compulsory education ?—No.

A-2549. Perhaps your organization is a very young one ?—It has been in existence on years.

A-2550. Do you think that housing accommodation should be provided for workers by the millowners?—That is our opinion.

A-2551. Have you taken any action in the matter, by correspondence or discussions with the millowners?—No, we have not.

A-2552. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You say that living expenses are not prohibitive in Ahmedabad. What do you mean by that?—They are less than in Bombay.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. N. D. MEHTA, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Ahmedabad Municipality.

A-2553. *The Chairman*: Mr. Mehta, I understand that you were for some years the Chief Officer of the Municipality?—Yes. During my 33 years' service I have served the municipality for 18 years—10 years in Ahmedabad, 8 years in Bandra and 5 years in Bombay.

A-2554. And what are you now?—I am a retired officer both from Government and also from the Bombay Corporation.

A-2555. You are an elected member of the council?—No, I am a nominated member on the municipality, and from the 9th of this month I have taken up the office of Chairman of the Standing Committee.

A-2556. We have a letter from the President of your Council kindly saying that you are well equipped to answer any questions which we may desire to put you?—It is very kind of him to say so. My evidence will be confined to those issues with which the local authority is connected with the labour, like housing, maternity benefits and such other things. The statistical portion so far as the Municipality is concerned may be of some use to your Commission; that is to say, what the Municipality has done up to now and what it intends to do in its programme, if you choose to have this information. It has been argued that the Municipality is not doing its proper duty in the matter of housing.

A-2557. That is the reason why we have asked you to come before us to-day. I am accustomed to think always that there are two sides to a question, and therefore since we have heard a certain amount of criticism of the Municipality we thought it desirable to have some one who could speak with some authority for the other side?—I thank you for giving me this opportunity of trying to explain the position of the Municipality.

A-2558. Would you wish to make a statement?—Yes. I will deal with the question of housing first. The Municipality is after all a created body of the statute. Up to 1925 when the City Municipalities Act, 1925, came into operation here, we had no power under the old District Municipal Act, III of 1921, to undertake any housing scheme, or to spend money on the construction of buildings for the poorer classes. The new Act came into operation in June 1926, and only three years have run since then. What we have done is practically under the old Town Planning Act of 1915 as it was not possible to take such action under the Bombay District Municipal Act. Under the Bombay Town Planning Act, we have launched about four town planning schemes. The first is now final and that is the Jamalpur town planning scheme. Therein we have provided 16 acres of land for housing working-classes people; by 'working-classes' we mean not only mill labourers but mechanics, artisans and persons not working for wages but engaged in trade, handicraft, agriculture and not employing other than members of their own family, and persons whose income does not exceed on an average Rs. 75. With this view, the original idea was that we should acquire 16 acres of land in the Jamalpur town planning scheme so that the Municipality might house either their own employees or mill labourers, if possible. Later on the owners of the land said that they would themselves construct new buildings in that area and requested us to reserve it for this specific purpose. We agreed, and the arbitrator Mr. Mirams also agreed that as long as private owners were prepared to develop their lands, the local authority should not come into the field as a rival body. This scheme was sanctioned finally by Government in 1925 or thereabout. Since then no development has been made by private owners. We, therefore, desire to take away this land from the owners under the Land Acquisition Act, paying them such compensation as is due to them, and we intend to construct model sanitary houses or *chauls* in that area which would be our own property.

In the second scheme also, the Ellisbridge town planning scheme, which is a very wide scheme, we have made provision for housing the municipal inferior servants—23·37 acres. We have also made provision for the public works department staff of Government—3·12 acres—in that scheme, and we have assigned 25·16 acres of land for co-operative housing societies. This scheme is now nearly ready, but we are awaiting the sanction of Government as to the contribution which they would make towards the construction of a bridge from outside the city walls connecting that part of the city with this old city. When we hear from Government that they are prepared to spend so much we would practically make the whole scheme final.

Then, in the Kankaria town planning scheme also we have made provision for sufficient site for housing the mill labour, which would be near the mills which are in that locality. This is what we have done up to now within these two or three years.

As regards the existing law, my own individual opinion is that the Municipality by itself cannot launch a big housing scheme for employees of mill industry because my own experience of Bombay is that local authority's housing does not attract ultimately as many tenants as a private employer's tenements do. The city of Bombay is metamorphosed not by the activities of the Corporation in this matter but by the joint work of the City Improvement Trust, Port Trust and Government development departments. There are many *chawls* which are still vacant there; Government intended to construct about 30,000 tenements but only about 15,000 were constructed, if I am right, and still they are going abegging; there is a vacant show and a serious loss to the Government. What a big Provincial Government cannot achieve, how can a poor local authority achieve that object by launching a big housing scheme with a heavy loss ultimately falling on the ratepayers of Ahmedabad? We do not say that it is not our duty to construct houses but we say that it is equally the duty of Government and it is equally the duty of the millowners. There should be a general business proposition for housing the labour, and for that purpose my own individual opinion is—I do not know whether my Municipality has got that view or not—that there should be a compact body under a special statute. We have got city improvements in big cities like Calcutta or Bombay. In the United Provinces there is a special Act which is known as the United Provinces Development Act which is extended to important towns which are growing in industry, like Cawnpore, Allahabad, Agra and Oudh. It has got its own revenue side. If we have a special Act like that which may be extended to Ahmedabad or other growing towns like Sholapur where there is mill industry, it would be a nice thing. The body should consist of about 9-11 members—not 60 or 110 members that we have in big Municipalities like Ahmedabad or Bombay where it is very difficult to execute certain schemes promptly. The Chairman may be either elected by the interests concerned or may be nominated by Government; the President of the Municipality should be there; four representatives of the Municipality should be there; one railway administration representative, two from the labour union and two from mill employers. Such a compact body of about 11 persons should administer not only mere housing schemes for the labour but many other important schemes affecting the whole of the municipal district. Recently we launched a road relief scheme, and I shall put before the Commission the difficulties that we experienced. We intended to acquire a little wider area in order that we could condemn the extra area and recoup the cost. There is a section in Ahmedabad city which opposes this by saying: "You can widen the road if you like and take as much area as you want, but you cannot acquire more land and make profit out of it." That means that the whole of the municipal district should bear the whole burden and give facilities to a particular locality. That is a bad principle, according to my view. Therefore if all schemes of improvement are to be launched, including the housing of the mill labour, it should be under a special enactment in which the revenue should be, firstly, a contribution from the municipal fund, and secondly, a slight increased taxation in terminal taxes on those goods which are used by the mills. It is very difficult to get a direct contribution from the millowners themselves. I would therefore suggest that there should be an increased taxation on those articles of consumption in the mills, for example, coal, cotton, yarn, etc.—a slight increase which might yield us a revenue of about a lakh of rupees. As I was saying, one source of revenue to the trust fund should be a contribution from the municipal fund, secondly, the additional tax on goods used for mill industry, and thirdly there should be a terminal tax on passengers. In the city of Calcutta they levy a terminal tax or a surcharge of six pies on all people coming to the city from over a distance of 40 or 50 miles both by rail as well as by sea. Half an anna more in the Railway ticket will not be felt, and the revenue which I expect would be about a lakh in the city of Ahmedabad. I have collected statistics which show that the floating population every day in Ahmedabad, that is coming and going, is about 11,000 people per day, or about 40 lakhs a year, and if 6 pies are collected from each one of them it will yield a revenue of about 1 lakh. This is a source of revenue which is very easy to recover and which will not be felt by the people. The Railway

Board might object, I know. The Taxation Enquiry Committee have also laid down that in big centres this kind of tax is equitable. I would therefore suggest that if such a body is created, Government can fairly depend upon that body for utilizing that source of revenue for floating a loan of about 15 to 20 lakhs, irrespective of what its future rental revenue would be. If this body executes all the various kinds of schemes such as, housing the poor, housing the mill labour, improving the existing bad areas, removing the bad *chawls* as they are now existent, then within a decade or so the whole responsibility may be transferred to the original corporation from which this daughter body may be created. I know that the City Improvement Trust of Bombay is now working at a serious loss and has a great debt to pay, but practically all the improvements of Bombay are mainly due to that body's activities. There is a feeling that it should be taken away by the Corporation—I myself advocated that it should be amalgamated—but if freedom of execution in a democratic body is not possible by a large body but by a small compact body, that itself is a good excuse for the continuance of the small body. This is the aspect which I put before you for such consideration as it deserves.

As regards health activities and the money spent, we have got 10 midwives, employed from the municipal fund, who attended free of charge about 11,000 delivery cases and paid 7,244 visits to the mill labourers of the area during the last year. We are going to have one maternity hospital out of the donation of Seth Chimanlal Nagindas Chinoy, and a hospital of Seth Wadilal Sarabhai. We aid 12 medical institutions of which one is an *Ayurvedic* dispensary. This is the position so far as medical relief is concerned. I do admit that Ahmedabad does not spend as it ought to spend on medical relief. The statistics which I have collected of big towns of the Presidency and also of other towns show that where there is a big capital programme as in Bombay, the running expenditure is comparatively less. The city of Bombay spends 35·8 per cent. of its total expenditure on debt charges—paying interest and sinking fund instalments. The result is that its revenue expenditure for various services is less compared with Ahmedabad and Karachi. Our debt charges are 9·3, and Karachi 9 while 65 is the figure for Bombay. The result is that the cost of general administration in Bombay is 6·1 whereas ours is 10·6 and Karachi 10·7.

A-2559. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What do you mean by general administration?—Those officers who are employed for the general administration of municipal affairs, like municipal commissioners, officers in the collection department and so forth.

A-2560. You mean the management charges?—Yes, roughly.

A-2561. *Mr. Clow* : Do your figures relate to productive debt as well as to unproductive debt?—Yes, both. On public safety, Bombay spends 4·4, we spend 9 and Karachi 2·8. That means that we spend more on lighting, because that goes under the Government of India's classification under public safety, and fire-brigade. In the matter of water-works Bombay spends 2·5 irrespective of debt charges; we spend 6·1 and Karachi 6·9.

A-2562. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Can you give us these percentages in rupees, annas and pias?—I can give that information shortly from my file. On drainage we spend 6·1, Karachi 6·9 and Bombay 4. On conservancy we spend 17 per cent. and Bombay 12, because their roads are asphalted. We are very bad, I do admit, in the matter of medical relief.

A-2563. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What are the comparative figures for Bombay and Ahmedabad in the matter of medical relief?—Under public health we spend 3·2 and Bombay 2·2. On hospitals and dispensaries Bombay spends 4·4 out of the total municipal expenditure, while we spend 1·8 and Karachi 6·0; Karachi is well-equipped. Of course, in Bombay they have got many other institutions outside the municipal sphere.

A-2564. *Colonel Russell* : Do you maintain a civil hospital here?—We offered to undertake the responsibility of managing the civil hospital here but Government imposed certain conditions which the municipality did not accept.

A-2565. It is a Government hospital?—Yes.

A-2566. *Mr. Ahmed* : You spend very little money on medical relief?—Yes; I do admit that medical relief requires extension. In the matter of education, we have got 92 schools, of which 14 are for specific classes—two for the children of factory workers, three for depressed classes, one mixed school for depressed classes, two girls schools for depressed classes, four Gujarati night schools and two Urdu schools. We are trying to have compulsory education; we have made it free although not compulsory. We requested the Government to give us half the expenditure, but they have their own financial difficulties and so they are not in a position to sanction the compulsory scheme. We again approached the Government saying "if you cannot spend money, we are prepared to spend; allow us to have this compulsory scheme". Government's reply

is to this effect that under the existing law this cannot be done. So we are thus handicapped. We have requested the Government to amend the law so that if they are not able to finance, we can at least do our duty.

A-2567. How is it that in other municipalities they have introduced compulsory education in certain wards?—That might be, but now of course schemes of other towns are also rejected. It is only about two years back, when the finances of the province were sound, that Government undertook the responsibility of bearing 50 per cent. of the total cost. As long as their revenue does not develop so long the request of all the municipalities cannot be granted. Unless they increase their own taxes and give contribution to the municipalities we cannot make much headway in this direction. At least some of the larger municipalities may spend money from their own funds in expectation that when the provincial finance improves they might get some share. But that is a distant hope for the present.

A-2568. *The Chairman* : May I just ask you to let us know exactly what is the alteration of the law that you wish to suggest?—We have got a separate Primary Education Act at present. Under that Act it has been laid down that when a compulsory scheme is introduced with the sanction of Government, Government is bound to bear 50 per cent. of the approved total expenditure.

A-2569. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : 50 per cent. of the additional cost required in making it compulsory?—Yes. So this extra 50 per cent. of the growing expenditure is a big burden to the provincial Government, because they have no other source of revenue except entertainment tax in big towns and cities; and other kinds of taxation it is very difficult for them to carry through in the Council.

A-2570. *The Chairman* : Is the alteration in the law, which you would wish to see, to enable a municipal authority to put into operation free compulsory and elementary education when they are prepared to do without the 50 per cent. grant from Government?—Yes. Whatever grant they are able to pay, even below 50 per cent., we would welcome; but anyhow we should have freedom, if necessary. I know many municipalities would not come forward, but this is our own offer; we intend bringing this matter to His Excellency's notice when we present him with an address. We have made this offer on the understanding that when the finances of the province improve the provincial Government would bear the burden from the date on which we incur the additional expenditure. We do not want to commit ourselves to a position whereby Government may deprive us of our legitimate share while other bodies will be getting it.

There is one lady supervisor over 10 midwives recently appointed. The municipality have also acquired a very large strip of land outside the Ellisbridge and a big general hospital is to be built out of the donation given by Seth Wadilall, as I already mentioned. The total cost of the hospital including the equipment would be about 7 lakhs. These are the actions which we have taken and propose to take.

A-2571. Have you not within the last two years adopted an improved standard of by-laws for housing?—Yes. Our by-laws were last amended in 1925. In those by-laws we have now determined the zones, following the American model; that is to say, certain areas should be set apart for specific purposes. We have zoned out our municipal area into three zones, of which one is for the purpose of constructing *chawls* by the new mills; these zones are divided into plots and are shown in green colour in the map drawn by Mr. Mirams in connection with his city improvement scheme. They are intended for the construction of buildings, for the mill operatives and poor classes. Either the owners themselves may construct the buildings or the mill managers may do so if they choose. The local authorities also may acquire the lands and put up buildings. The millowners are at liberty to construct *chawls* within easy reach of their mills in order that their men may not be put to the inconvenience of walking long distances to and from the mills. We have allowed them to put up their own *chawls* within 30 or 40 yards of the perimeter if any additional land is available.

A-2572. In what respects are your new regulations an improvement upon the old ones?—At present back to back *chawls* are being disallowed. That is a great improvement.

A-2573. Any improvements in size?—The minimum area of a plot for the construction of a *chawl* should be half an acre.

A-2574. What about the size of rooms?—A dwelling room should have a floor-space of at least 144 sq. ft.

A-2575. Do you mean 12 by 12?—Yes. There should be a verandah and an open space all round 15 feet wide. Between two rows of *chawls* there should be at least 12 or 15 feet at any rate not less than 12 feet.

A-2576. Is there any regulation with regard to height?—The height must be 7 or 7½ feet for the small *chawls*; for other buildings it must be 9 feet.

A-2577. In applying these new regulations have you had some difficulty with regard to *inam* lands in the city?—*Inam* lands are practically within the control of the Municipality. Government have no control over them.

A-2578. And you have applied these new regulations also to *inam* lands?—Yes, from the date when the by-laws came into force.

A-2579. Do you see any objection to *inam* lands outside your boundaries also being brought under the building regulations?—That will not be possible under the existing Land Revenue Code. They are under the jurisdiction of the local authority and Government have no control over them.

A-2580. I quite agree that that is the present law. But have you any objection to the law being altered?—If the Government chose they could do that under the general administrative law applicable outside the municipal area.

A-2581. Will that be to the good of the people concerned?—Yes, it will be. Even outside the municipal limits there are notified areas. There are *inam* lands in those areas and are a cause of trouble.

A-2582. Because at present they are exempt from certain restrictions which Government can impose under the rules of the Revenue Code with regard to the unalienated Government land. You yourself as a practical man would wish to see that exemption removed?—That exemption ought to be removed so that there should be uniform building regulations irrespective of the nature of the tenure under which the land is held.

A-2583. That is the point I wanted to clear up. You told us that under the new regulations there was a limit of half an acre for the building of *chawls*. You have not told us the number of tenements that could be built per acre?—If you leave an open space of 15 feet all round, and another ten feet between two rows of *chawls* the net area to be built upon will not be more than a quarter of the plot, or 5 *gunthas*.

A-2584. The effect of the new regulations is that in any new *chawl* plot, only one-fourth of the plot is actually occupied by the building and the remaining is open space?—Yes, that is the maximum permissible. Formerly it was one-third and two-thirds, respectively, and that has been altered now.

A-2585. Are any new *chawls* being put up under these new regulations?—These particular regulations came into operation only last year.

A-2586. We saw some new *chawls* last week, not very far from here and I take it that these were being put up by private owners under these new regulations?—I have not seen that myself and I cannot say definitely. Perhaps they are in the Dudeshwar road. I do not know whether they are *inam* lands or not.

A-2587. I take it that these are being erected under the new regulations, because they seem to be complying with the provisions with regard to space?—I am informed that they have committed a breach of certain by-laws and that action is being taken against them. Under the existing law which has been amended recently, we cannot demolish a building until the man responsible has been convicted by a magistrate. Under the old law the executive had the discretion to demolish a building which had not been built according to the regulations, although the man had not been convicted by a magistrate.

A-2588. Do you think that your law is now adequate?—For all practical purposes these by-laws are sufficient. But the success of their application depends to a large extent on the energy of the executive and the co-operation they receive from the Municipality without undue interference with their discretion even in minor matters.

A-2589. *Colonel Russell*: But is that a fact?—That is our experience everywhere and Ahmedabad is no exception.

A-2590. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In view of the fact that a general condemnation has been passed by several witnesses against the Municipality I should like to ask you some questions as regards general administration in this Presidency by authorities created by Acts of the Legislature. First of all we have the Provincial Government of Bombay which carries out its duties and obligations by means of provincial taxation. Then we have the local bodies such as municipalities, district local boards and *taluk* local boards which are entrusted with certain duties and obligations. They are given certain powers of taxation to raise money to meet their expenditure. Now take the question of compulsory primary education. The Local Government have taken upon themselves the obligation of paying 50 per cent. of the additional cost in cases where they sanction a scheme for compulsory primary education. But because they have no funds they refuse to discharge their obligation in this matter. Therefore you as a Municipality are offering certain terms to other bodies so that you can discharge your responsibility. As between the millowners and the Municipality certain specific obligations are imposed upon the municipality and certain resources are placed at their disposal to fulfil those obligations

But in the same way as Government refuse to pay you their 50 per cent., you refuse to carry out your obligations towards the people of Ahmedabad and want the millowners to take them over upon their shoulders. Is that not so?—I doubt whether that is a correct statement of the position.

A-2591. Now take medical relief and maternity benefits?—But what is the contribution that the mills themselves as a whole make to the Municipality?

A-2592. They are rate-payers, the same as other citizens and you are entitled to take rates from them for the discharge of your obligations?—Yes.

A-2593. Because you are unable to discharge your duties and you will not increase your taxes on the people, why do you want somebody else to shoulder your responsibilities?—As a matter of fact that is not one of our obligatory duties. That is purely optional.

A-2594. Public health is an obligatory duty on all municipalities?—I referred to the construction of *chawls*.

A-2595. No, at present I am not referring to that. I am only speaking of those obligatory duties which every Municipal Act lays down. Do you think that it is the right policy for the municipality not to discharge its statutory duties by raising the necessary taxes but to transfer its responsibility in part to certain sections of the public?—In what way are we transferring our responsibility?

A-2596. You want the millowners to provide primary schools?—I never wanted them to do that.

A-2597. I know you never wanted them, but you have not provided enough schools?—We have provided 92 schools.

A-2598. If the municipality had provided enough schools to meet the demands of the whole population there would have been no question of any section of the community being asked to provide schools?—The Municipality can provide as many schools as are necessary from their own funds irrespective of Government grant if the scheme is made compulsory. Otherwise many children will not come forward.

A-2599. Under the Municipal Act one of the duties imposed on the Municipality is to make adequate provision for primary education of children.—That is admitted.

A-2600. If that duty was discharged, no responsibility would fall on a section of the population such as the millowners?—How many children are there which do not get seats in primary schools? If in any particular locality there are 20 or 30 children willing to attend school we are ready to open a school for them. In what way has the Municipality not discharged its duties?

A-2601. If they had discharged their duty the question of millowners providing schools would not have arisen?—I would not say that the millowners should provide schools. If the millowners themselves say that in a particular mill there are 30 or 40 children of school-going age and that they are willing to go to school, we would open a school at once. I would advocate that policy so far as I am concerned.

A-2602. You would advocate that policy, but the Municipality has not done so yet. Let us take medical relief and maternity benefits. You desire that a section of the population, i.e., the employers, should provide medical relief, whereas it is the obligatory duty of the Municipality to provide medical relief for its citizens?—I have already said that it is the statutory duty of the Municipality to provide medical relief and that it should do much more in that direction. I do not say that it is the duty of the millowners to open schools or have separate dispensaries. If they do so, it is charity. It is not their duty.

A-2603. Exactly. You suggested that there should be a special Act passed called the Improvement Trust Act. You have referred to Bombay as having one such Act. Do you know that the Municipality has all along taken the view that the constitution of this Improvement Trust is a form of supersession of the Municipality?—That was what I myself contended. I drafted the representation for amalgamation.

A-2604. In spite of that you have advocated that for Ahmedabad?—The reason is this: in Bombay the Trust has done its duty for 30 years and the works have been executed. There is a defect in the law itself, under which the Municipality is made responsible for the deficits of this separate body. That is the reason why the Corporation wants to stop double expenditure.

A-2605. I am not touching upon that aspect of the question. I know all about that. What I am directing the attention of the Commission to is this: the duties that are entrusted to the Corporation are regarded ordinarily as duties pertaining to local self-government. Is that not so?—Yes, they are regarded as such.

A-2606. If they are regarded as such do you know why it was possible to pass that legislation in Bombay on that occasion ?—Because plague was raging in the city at that time.

A-2607. Was it not because of that special condition ?—Yes.

A-2608. Now under normal conditions you want to create a separate body in super-session of the Municipality in order to discharge the duties which are imposed upon the Municipality ?—As an alternative I would welcome an amendment of the Municipal Act in such a way as to facilitate the execution of all necessary schemes.

A-2609. Then you do not want a separate body to be created ?—Not, if the Act is suitably amended. The executive must be given sufficient freedom to carry out the policy of the Board and the Board should not unduly interfere in matters of detail. There should be continuity of policy and tradition so that schemes launched to-day may not be withdrawn to-morrow. A small compact committee of the municipality, for instance, is far more suited than an unwieldy body.

A-2610. We need not go into the details of the working of the scheme. You have been for five years a Deputy Municipal Commissioner in Bombay. There has been a proposal before Government for several years to pass a special Act for each of the municipalities of Ahmedabad, Karachi and Poona ?—Yes.

A-2611. And that would give you the powers that you ask for ?—I have seen the Bill applicable to Karachi but it is not yet before the Council.

A-2612. Was not that Bill under consideration for several years ?—Yes, that was.

A-2613. Why did not your Municipality write to the Government to give you these special powers to enable you to discharge your duties connected with the growing industrial city of Ahmedabad ?—I myself suggested that the Municipal Act should be so amended as to widen its powers, but the majority were not in favour of that. That is the whole position.

A-2614. You have not now got additional powers. Is not that due to the fact that you were not prepared to ask for them ?—That is a matter to be considered by the Board.

A-2615. *The Chairman* : Is it a case of division between people who wish to talk and people who wish to act ?—It may be, because our forward proposals were not accepted.

A-2616. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You stated that the Bombay Municipality was spending less on some of its municipal duties than the Ahmedabad Municipality. What is your annual revenue and how much do you spend ?—We spend Rs. 36 lakhs out of a revenue of Rs. 39 lakhs leaving a surplus of 3 lakhs.

A-2617. You stated that Bombay spent 85 per cent. of its revenues on debt charges. The Bombay Corporation gets a revenue of Rs. 8,40,00,000. It spends 85 per cent. or Rs. 1,25,00,000 on debt charges, leaving a balance of Rs. 2,25,00,000 for expenditure on its municipal duties for a population of 12 lakhs. That comes to Rs. 18 or 19 per head of the population. Whereas in Ahmedabad you spend Rs. 30 lakhs on a population of 8 lakhs. That comes to Rs. 10 per head of the population. How then can you say that the Bombay Corporation is spending less than the Ahmedabad Municipality in discharging its duties to the people ?—I have been misunderstood. My point is this. If a growing municipality undertakes a big capital programme of roads, hospitals and so on, its running expenditure will be less than if it merely goes on incurring revenue expenditure only. We have not undertaken any large capital programme and so our debt charges are only 9 per cent. of our revenue as against 35 per cent. of revenue for Bombay. On the other hand our running expenses take away a greater percentage of our income. But that is not the case in Bombay. I never meant to say that the Bombay Corporation was not discharging their duties. What they have done by incurring capital expenditure we are doing by spending from our annual revenue. I would personally advocate a large capital programme whereby the running expenditure would be reduced.

A-2618. But you are clearly spending less per head of the population ?—Property in Ahmedabad has not so high a value as in Bombay. Our income therefore is much less here and we have to spend accordingly.

A-2619. *Mr. Ahmed* : Why not value the mills at a higher figure and tax them accordingly ?—They are now paying less in taxes after the revision.

A-2620. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You referred to certain building by-laws for the construction of *chawls*. The plot was to be not less than half an acre or 2,400 square yards. After leaving three-fourths of this space open, you said that the *chawl* should be built only on one-fourth of the area. If these *chawls* were to be built by the Municipality or the Millowners for housing their own workers, that would be a different matter. But if they were to be built by private enterprise have you considered what rents

should be charged for each *chawl* in order to give a reasonable return on the capital invested?—The private owner may put up an upper storey on the same floor space thus doubling the accommodation.

A-2621. Would not that mean additional capital cost? My point is to find out whether the Municipality has considered the effect of these regulations on the rents that would be chargeable in order to bring a reasonable return on the capital invested and make the scheme a practical proposition. If the rents are not adequate to give a reasonable return on the capital invested, private enterprise will not be attracted to this field. Have you worked out what the economic rent of these *chawls* would be?—I have not made the calculations and, therefore, I am not in a position to answer that question.

A-2622. What do you think would be an adequate return on the capital invested in constructing buildings according to your new regulations?—4 to 6 per cent.

A-2623. Have you considered whether under your new regulations you will realize your object of providing sanitary housing accommodation for the people of Ahmedabad?—Yes, it will be realized if the old insanitary *chawls* are demolished and new *chawls* allowed to be put up in the very area.

A-2624. Under the Municipal Act you have the power to call upon the owner of an unsafe building to pull it down. In how many cases have you exercised that power?—I do not know the exact position with regard to unsafe buildings.

A-2625. You have the power to call upon the owners of insanitary buildings to make them sanitary?—Yes.

A-2626. In how many cases have you exercised that power?—I think the Chief Executive Officer will be able to give that information.

A-2627. The Legislature has given you these two powers and you could have exercised them at no cost to yourself. It would be very interesting to know in how many cases you have exercised those powers and attempted to improve the sanitary condition of Ahmedabad?—I would supply the Commission with information regarding the number of notices issued and so on.

A-2628. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You are now the Chairman of the Standing Committee?—Yes.

A-2629. Which is the chief executive committee?—There are two other committees. The Standing Committee has nothing to do with sanitation. There is a Sanitary Committee which is also executive. The condition of buildings, issuing of notices, demolition and all those things, are under the control, so far as the regulations are concerned, of the Sanitary Committee.

A-2630. So far as the constitution of the proposed new improvement trust is concerned, do you expect that you will get better service from that trust?—If we could constitute an executive committee of improvements under the Municipal Act, it would be a better method for putting into effect the scheme which I adumbrated here.

A-2631. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Am I to understand that your object in asking for a separate body is to get additional sources of revenue?—That is one of the reasons.

A-2632. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have referred to the improvement trusts in Calcutta, the United Provinces and other places. They are not in any way departments of the municipalities; they are independent of the municipalities?—Yes.

A-2633. You are not contemplating having a separate body?—If we could constitute an improvements committee under the Municipal Act, I would prefer it, but if that is not possible, a separate Act is indispensable.

A-2634. In the meantime what do you propose to do in order to improve the housing and other conditions?—So far as my own individual opinion is concerned, I have advocated the construction of sanitary *chawls* in one area.

A-2635. On page 70 of the report of the Ahmedabad Municipality for the year 1928-29 it is said that the Municipality have committed themselves to certain schemes; amongst those schemes is a scheme for the asphaltting of roads at a cost of 15 lakhs of rupees and another scheme for constructing a relief road at an expenditure of another 15 lakhs. Do you consider this scheme to asphalt the roads is of more importance than the provision of housing for the workers?—Keeping the roads in proper order is one of the obligatory duties of the Municipality which everyone would wish to fulfil, whereas the provision of housing is an optional duty and it is very difficult to persuade the Councillors to undertake it. If it were in my power, I would give priority to housing.

A-2636. You speak of taking money from the General Fund in the meantime to enable you to go on with the asphaltting of the roads?—Yes, we have applied for a loan of 23 lakhs.

A-2637. But until you get that loan, you are going to take the money from the General Fund?—Yes, by way of advance.

A-2638. Instead of doing that for the roads, would you recommend doing it for housing?—Our revenue from the general balance to that extent is already pledged and earmarked, so that we cannot go behind that; we have a balance of about 15 lakhs.

A-2639. That is your opening and closing balance, but in the General Fund you have about 24 lakhs on deposit?—That is other funds. The balance of the General Fund is 15 lakhs. I am not speaking of Special Fund, Sinking Fund and other funds which are separate; the revenue which is now available out of surplus balance is 15 lakhs.

A-2640. That is your free balance?—Yes.

A-2641. Are you prepared to recommend that some of that money should be spent immediately instead of waiting till you get the improvement trust?—That depends upon the vote of the Council; I cannot say.

A-2642. According to the accounts you collect for water rate about 14 lakhs of rupees?—Yes.

A-2643. How much of that do you spend?—We call it water rate, but 5 per cent. is really house and property tax in the true sense. We have no house and property tax; that is the peculiar position of Ahmedabad. The reason is that under the name of water rate we can tax all buildings, whereas under house and property tax we cannot tax Government land.

A-2644. You have a revenue of about 14 lakhs from the water rate and yet you are only spending under that head, including depreciation and other things, 4 lakhs?—That is true, but we have also a capital scheme for extending our waterworks.

A-2645. In recent years part of your capital expenditure has been paid out of revenue?—The extra water revenue is spent on drainage and waterworks. We borrowed 45 lakhs for the extension of waterworks and drainage. There was a great cry here last summer that the Municipality was not performing its duty properly. Until the water supply is improved we cannot launch other schemes on which water revenue would be expended.

A-2646. I notice from your report that if there is no connection you do not charge anything to shops and buildings?—All properties within the municipal area are subject to a 5 per cent. compulsory tax which is called compulsory general water rate, and when any premises are actually connected with the waterworks by private distribution pipe, we charge 5 per cent. more, making it 10 per cent. of which 5 per cent. is compulsory and 5 per cent. optional.

A-2647. If a man cuts off the connection to his premises, he has only to pay 5 per cent.?—Yes.

A-2648. The result therefore is that many proprietors cut off the water supply in order to pay 5 per cent. instead of 10 per cent.?—But such a position is not created here.

A-2649. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: How can they get the water if they are cut off?—From the public standpipes, but that is very inconvenient, and the mills practically cannot afford to cut off the water connection.

A-2650. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In many cases you will not allow people to build workmen's houses unless they provide latrine accommodation?—Yes.

A-2651. After the houses have been built is it not a common practice to lock up the latrine buildings in order to save paying the extra tax, with the result that the workers living in these lines have to go to the public municipal latrines instead of going to their own coolie line latrines?—In the municipal district there are two areas, the drained area and the undrained area. The drained area comprises nearly three-quarters of the city within the walls and it may be that within 6 months the whole of the city will be called a drained area, in which every tenement is technically connected with the underground drainage system. We receive only sullage and the water-closet effluent if there is a water closet. Where there are privies, removal by hand labour is in vogue.

A-2652. I understand it is quite a common practice to close up the privies and force the workers to go to public privies, in order to save having to pay the sanitary cess?—But that is evading the law, if that is so. It is possible in this way, that the owner may prefer to pay Rs. 1-8-0 for the public privy tax rather than Rs. 4 for a private arrangement.

A-2653. Why should that be permissible?—It is not permissible in the true sense of the term.

A-2654. *Lady Nilkanth* : The Bombay Municipality provides *chawls* for the mill labour, does it not ?—The Bombay Municipality house their own labour, and we have that arrangement in vogue here.

A-2655. You have stated that the Ahmedabad Municipality is not spending enough money in medical relief. If they spend more money will it be necessary to tax the people more ?—Increased taxation will be necessary.

A-2656. Do you think the rate-payers would like that ?—No, no one would like that.

A-2657. What is the attitude of the representatives of the rate-payers ?—Opposition to any increase of taxation.

A-2658. The millowners tell us they are paying one-third of the taxes of the Municipality ?—I do not think that is correct. Here we have direct and indirect taxes. According to my information, they are only paying 23 or 24 per cent. to the Municipal Fund. I will give you the exact figures. Our total revenue from water rate by valuation is Rs. 11,55,000, of which they contribute Rs. 1,11,955. The revenue from water charged by metre is Rs. 2,15,800, out of which they contribute about 2 lakhs. With regard to the drainage tax, virtually no mills outside the city walls are connected with the drainage system, so that virtually they are exempt. Virtually their contribution in all taxes amounts to about Rs. 5,75,000 as against a total of 25 lakhs. Rs. 7,91,000 is our total revenue from terminal tax. Only four items appertain to the mills: coal, cotton, tallow, yarn; those are the principal items on which terminal tax is recovered so far as the millowners are concerned. This burden in indirect tax is about Rs. 2,57,000, or at the most 3 lakhs. In fact they are contributing 6 lakhs as against 25 lakhs, which is about a fourth.

A-2659. Is it a fact that the Municipality is in favour of compulsory education for the mill children ?—The Municipality desires to give facilities for all children.

A-2660. Is it not a fact that almost all the mill children go to primary schools in the city ?—Yes, everywhere where there is any demand we have opened a school. No children remain without education if there is a willingness on the part of the parents.

A-2661. *Mr. Ahmed* : You are familiar with the findings of the Geneva International Conference on Labour ?—Yes.

A-2662. You would agree that employers of labour, whether Government or millowners owe a certain duty towards that labour, but I understand that your Municipality is unable to carry out many improvements owing to lack of funds; is that correct ?—Yes.

A-2663. It is also correct to say that your Municipality has not much independence but is under the influence of the millowners and rich people. Two or three witnesses have said that. The majority of the elected members of the Municipality are elected by the rich proprietors, the millowners having the majority of votes ?—The opposite is the case. The people of whom you speak have not many representatives on the Council; they have only the nominated members. The millowners do not desire to fight elections. The franchise is very wide; the franchise is open to anyone with an occupation rental of Rs. 1 per month.

A-2664. Labour has no representatives directly returned by them ?—There are three.

A-2665. Only the depressed classes ?—The depressed classes.

A-2666. That is out of 48 ?—Yes.

A-2667. So that the labour classes and their representatives have not got a direct voice in or control over your Municipality. Is that a fact ?—I will not accept that view.

A-2668. I know something of your Municipality because I have been here four days. You have only 3 representatives of the depressed classes and what you call labour out of 48; that is correct ?—Yes, only three are returned by the depressed classes, but that does not mean that those people have no voice.

A-2669. There is practically no provision made by the millowners for primary education among the labouring classes, their women and children ?—They contribute to the taxes; what other contribution do you desire ?

A-2670. What do you mean by that: the municipal taxes ?—Yes, that is the only source.

A-2671. They do not directly maintain any school, whether night or day school, for the women and children of the labourers ?—We have 92 schools.

A-2672. There is still something lacking on your part in giving full and entire support to the maintenance of compulsory education within the municipal area; therefore it is absolutely necessary that the millowners should come in with a liberal hand?—If they make a contribution we shall welcome it.

A-2673. With regard to maternity, hospitals and housing accommodation your answer is the same?—My answer is that there should be increased terminal tax.

A-2674. Further, you value the mills for taxation at a much lower rate than they do at Bombay. They make the same profits here but it is a little cheaper place, and that is why they come here?—The taxation is based on the annual letting value; it is not on profits.

A-2675. The valuation is based on the income?—No. Our taxation is based on valuation; about 4 or 6 per cent. of the capital cost would be the ratable value; it is not on the profits a particular mill might make.

A-2676. If you assessed according to the profits and the income, the valuation would be much more?—But that is not permissible under the law.

A-2677. And the prosperity of your municipal area would have been ensured?—I should welcome it; I should be very glad if this Commission could persuade the Government to let us have this additional taxation on profits.

A-2678. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What would you do then if the mills were making losses? you would get no taxes then?—That would be the necessary consequence.

A-2679. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Then why do you say you would welcome such a scheme?—If taxation were possible on profits, the Municipality would be glad to have it, but no local authority charges on profits as far as I know.

A-2680. *Mr. Ahmed*: The insanitary conditions of this town are owing to the mills and the dirt that is falling on the roads every day which has to be swept up; therefore the mills should pay a little higher taxes, should they not? Do you say Yes?—No, I do not say Yes; it is a joint responsibility.

A-2681. *Mr. Cliff*: As I understand it, you are not here officially representing the municipality to-day?—So far as I know, as Chairman of the Standing Committee I can say that I am representative in that respect of the Standing Committee. Your Commission's reference is now before the Board still pending as to what they should do; but I have authority from the President of the Municipality to present the municipal standpoint, though I cannot commit the municipality in any way. You may take me as an individual member or as a man of experience of the municipality; that is all.

A-2682. You were good enough to enumerate at the commencement of your evidence the number of acres that have been obtained for housing schemes. How many houses have the Municipality in fact built?—As I told you, this law came into operation in 1926. Since then we have reserved these sites in the various town planning schemes; when the sanction of Government has been obtained the Municipality will have sites upon which to build.

A-2683. But in point of fact have houses been built anywhere?—No, because we have not secured the sites at present.

A-2684. Have your Municipality any plans of houses which they would propose to build?—Yes, we have plans prepared by Mr. Mirams. Those plans were explained by him about 8 or 9 years ago to the Millowners' Association. On that basis I have prepared a scheme for working out the cost of constructing sanitary *chawls* in the area which may be reserved for the Municipality.

A-2685. Has that scheme been adopted by the Municipality?—No, it is pending before the committee.

A-2686. At the moment is it a fact that no scheme has actually been adopted by the Municipality?—Yes.

A-2687. What kind of houses are contained in that report which you propose to recommend to the Municipality?—I agree with Mr. Mirams that a large number of smaller buildings containing three or four tenements is much more convenient in Gujerat than big *chawls*. The reason is that in Gujerat the people live in groups and castes. If the Municipality puts up a big *chawl* of 100 or 200 tenements, and if an untouchable or member of the depressed class wants a tenement, the Municipality cannot refuse him though a private owner can. The result of such a man coming in would be that the whole *chawl* would be abandoned and the Municipality would be the loser.

A-2688. In the *chawls* which you think suitable will there be more than one room?—As far as I recollect, there will be two rooms, a verandah and other arrangements; there will also be a privy outside the compound.

A-2689. What size will the rooms be ?—Under our by-laws at present the minimum size of a dwelling room is 144 square feet.

A-2690. What rents do you think the Municipality might be recommended to charge for a house of that character ?—That will depend upon the capital cost actually worked out ; I cannot say at present. The return would be about 3 to 4 per cent. The cost has actually been worked out by Mr. Mirams. If Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 is spent on each tenement on the 6 per cent. basis the rent will be about Rs. 2 per month. In Government buildings the earning capacity of the tenant is also taken into consideration ; a Government servant living in a bungalow is not charged more than one-tenth of his salary.

A-2691. Do you propose to let them at less than the economic rent ?—Yes, in order to encourage people to occupy such tenements. The difference would then have to be paid out of the rates.

A-2692. In the report we have before us the view is expressed that the burden of direct taxation on the poor is already sufficiently high. You have said the water rate is 5 per cent. ? In Ahmedabad 95 per cent. of the premises are connected with the water and pay 10 per cent. Another 5 per cent. is charged if there is a drainage connection, which makes 15 per cent. altogether. That is irrespective of sanitary cess, which is Rs. 4 a family, so that virtually it comes to 16 per cent.

A-2693. Does the occupier of a tenement of one or two rooms actually pay taxation to the extent of 10 per cent. ?—No, our taxation is on the landlord and not on the tenant at all ; we recover from the landlord.

A-2694. Then the landlord pays on a house of that character a tax of 10 per cent. ?—Yes, and 15 per cent. if it is connected with the drainage.

A-2695. Are there any other taxes which the people pay to the Municipality ?—Yes, there is the sanitary cess of Rs. 4 per privy per annum, the wheel tax on those who use vehicles, and the indirect terminal tax on which we realize 7 lakhs.

A-2696. Is that the extent of the taxes for municipal purposes ?—Yes, the taxes and rates fall under those categories, but the Municipality has other sources of revenue ; there are fees from slaughter houses and markets and grants from Government.

A-2697. In this Report of the Municipality for the year 1928-29 it is stated that the incidence of direct taxes per head of population is 5·98 rupees, of indirect taxation in addition 2·38 rupees ; so that the overhead taxation, excluding special charges, is Rs. 8 per head of population ?—Yes, Rs. 8 or 9.

Mr. Cliff : For Karachi it is Rs. 15, Poona 14·3.

The Chairman : I do not think we need pursue this much further ; we arrive at the fact that Ahmedabad is a lightly rated city ; that is the point.

A-2698. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Were any representatives of the workers included in the members nominated by Government ?—Among the 12 nominated members there is no representative of labour.

A-2699. How many representatives of the working classes were elected ?—There is the Secretary of the Labour Union.

A-2700. At the elections what percentage of the electors go to the polls ?—I have not the exact figure, but I am told it is 45 per cent. at the most.

A-2701. Could you tell me the number of mill-hands who go to the polls ?—I could not tell you.

Sir Alexander Murray : At the General Triennial Election in 1927 there were 68,459 voters of whom 39,400 actually voted. I suppose the great majority of those who voted were workers.

A-2702. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you agree with the statement which Sir Alexander Murray has just made that the great majority of those who voted were workers ?

The Chairman : That must, of course, be a matter of opinion.—I was not here during the last elections so I cannot hazard any opinion on the point.

A-2703. What interest do you pay on your debt and what interest does Bombay pay on its debt ?—Our credit in the market is very good in that respect ; we have had loans at 4, 5 and 6 per cent. The last was 5 per cent. in the public market, with a premium.

A-2704. The interest paid by Bombay, according to this statement, comes to about 3½ per cent. ?—That might be sinking fund.

A-2705. Are you satisfied with the work of the Municipality ?—I cannot say anything on that.

A-2706. The writers of the Report apparently are not satisfied ?—I was not here when this Report was drafted ; I joined here only last month.

A-2707. The average daily attendance at the school was 77 last year as against 88·3 previously, a decrease of 11 per cent. What is the cause of that decrease ?—It may be due to anything.

A-2708. I understood you to say that you depended upon the millowners to come and tell you whether it was necessary to open new schools ; have you or the Municipality made any attempt to find out what the needs of the labouring population are in regard to schools ?—We have got an administrative officer under the schools board whose duty it is to enquire through the teachers and in the locality whether there is any need for an additional school. Wherever there are 20 or 30 children forthcoming a new school is opened.

A-2709. What is the attendance when you open a new school ?—In the beginning the teacher usually brings children, and if there is a sustained interest and the millowners do not take those children back into the factory to work, naturally they stick to the schools.

A-2710. I am suggesting you might extend schools without waiting for the compulsory scheme ?—We are prepared to extend on a voluntary basis.

A-2711. Having regard to the figures of infant and adult mortality, it is the duty of the Municipality to take some immediate steps to clean the city and provide better housing ?—That is one way the mortality can be reduced. It is not the only way.

A-2712. The figures of cost of housing were worked out by Mr. Mirams 9 or 10 years ago. They will now have to be revised ?—Yes, according to the present market rates.

A-2713. Do you intend to consult the workers' organization before you put forward your scheme for building tenements and *chawls* ?—I have a personal friend in Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda and he has prepared a very good statement in regard to the conditions of the labourers. Unfortunately the Labour Union is not co-operating. We should be very glad to have their co-operation.

A-2714. Colonel Russell : What actual control is effected by the Municipality over the construction of these new *chawls* that you are putting up ?—The Municipality have a Building Establishment Superintendent with 6 or 7 inspectors under him ; the Municipality grants permission to build and has authority to inspect these buildings. If building is carried out without giving notice or obtaining permission a prosecution is launched with the sanction of the Chief Officer and it comes before the Court. Our difficulty is that while the case is pending the man finishes the work. It may take 3 or 4 months to obtain a conviction ; the man may then be fined Rs. 5 or 10. The Chief Officer then issues a notice for demolition, but, the building having been completed, sympathy is felt for the man who has finished the building.

A-2715. You have a Medical Officer of Health ?—Yes.

A-2716. He would naturally effect some control over the sanitary arrangements in connection with these *chawls* ?—His opinion is always called for in matters of privies and sanitary conditions of buildings.

A-2717. When his opinion is expressed, does the Municipality always accept it ?—As far as structural alterations are to be made, the Chief Officer, who is the head of the executive, naturally accepts it.

A-2718. When he meets with very bad sanitary conditions in certain areas is his report accepted and acted upon ?—If he makes a concise report and asks for definite orders, of course the Committee would not go against his wishes, but if it is a vague and academic report they may not accept it.

A-2719. Take a concrete case : supposing he makes definite recommendations with regard to the demolition of various structures or a definite improvement of various insanitary conditions, privies and so on, are his reports merely shelved, or are they acted upon ?—His reports usually go to the Chief Officer. Then if he agrees with the Health Officer, he issues notices according to the power vested in him ; otherwise he obtains the orders of the Sanitary Committee.

A-2720. And then there is delay ?—That is the delay of the law which we cannot help.

A-2721. You mentioned that smaller tenements were preferable to large tenements. Apart from all questions of cost, would it not be better in all cases to build small tenements ?—I should prefer small tenements.

A-2722. *Mr. Asavle* : How many houses at present has the Municipality provided for its labourers ?—We have got workers on water works and drainage who are housed.

A-2723. Are they free or does the Municipality charge anything ?—We have got about 1,400 people under us as labour in the true sense of the term, of whom about 900 are *bhangis*. We provide facilities for those who have not got houses. Much of it is local labour and they have got their own houses and tenements ; they would not go to houses assigned to them by the Municipality. It is only the outsiders who need to be housed and that number is very limited. The operatives in the workshops, waterworks and drainage have provision on the spot.

A-2724. Is it free ?—Free. So far as the waterworks and drainage are concerned, the tenements are nearly free.

A-2725. Would the two-roomed *chavls* which you propose to build be convenient for the mill-hands and factory workers ?—Our site is near the mill centres.

A-2726. You have said there are reasons other than insanitary housing for the mortality among children ; what are the other reasons ?—Women go back to their villages to be delivered of their children and then return to the city. The births do not increase the birth rate of the city because they take place in the villages, but the deaths increase the death rate of the city. Opium is another cause of the high infantile death rate. It is common sense that the women who work in rural areas should be more healthy than those in the industrial areas.

A-2727. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Have you any statistics to prove that the women go to their villages to be delivered of their children ?—I have not but it is common knowledge.

(The witness withdrew.)

MUNSHI MANZAR ALI and SHEIKH ABDUL WAHID, Weavers in Ahmedabad.

A-2728. *The Chairman* : You have come before the Commission to tell us something about your work ?—(Munshi Manzar Ali) : Yes.

A-2729. You are weavers in the textile mills in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2730. You are speaking on behalf of yourselves and some others who are weavers ?—Yes.

A-2731. And you are not members of the Labour Union ?—No.

A-2732. Have you any union amongst the weavers ?—No.

A-2733. Do I understand that this is the paper which you have given to us which is headed "Written statement of some Muhammadan weavers in Ahmedabad" ?—Yes.

A-2734. We have also a statement in front of us which is signed by Maniar Gulabchand Damodardas, Parmar Agarsang Madhavrang and Brahmhatta Shamalji Odhavji. You are not concerned with that statement ?—No. Those three people are jobbers in the mills and they are naturally in favour of the employers.

A-2735. You say "Government should establish employment exchanges. It will help the unemployed workers to secure work wherever it can be had." Are there many weavers unemployed in Ahmedabad ?—There are many that are unemployed in the weaving department.

A-2736. In spite of the new mills which are now being started ?—Yes. The new mills are not working properly and so many of us are not able to get employment in them ; and in the old mills many of us are discharged by the heads of departments because we are at their mercy.

A-2737. You make a complaint here about the system of the jobbers on whom you depend for your work. Will you tell us what your complaint is about jobbers ?—In the mills in which we earn about Rs. 15 or 16 for a *kapta* of 12 days there is not so much bribery but in the mills in which we get higher wages, say Rs. 25 or 26 there is a lot of bribery. At the time of our engagement we have to pay bribes to the head jobbers and the line jobbers. We have also to pay Rs. 4 or 5 to them on every pay day, and in some cases we provide them with liquor.

A-2738. Do you suggest that the work could be done without jobbers altogether?—Without the head jobbers the work can be done, but without line jobbers it cannot be done because all the workers are not very efficient.

A-2739. What you then wish is that the power of the jobbers to exact payments from you should be done away with?—Yes, that is what we want.

A-2740. Do you know of the mills where an employment officer is responsible for the engagement of the workers?—No, we do not know.

A-2741. We have been told that in one mill at any rate, or perhaps in more, there is a recruiting officer?—We are not aware of it.

A-2742. You tell us that in the mills where fans have been provided to make the atmosphere cooler, lower wages are being paid. Do you mean that wages have been reduced or that a reduction of wages has been made in order to pay for the fans?—The question of wages depends upon the sweet will and pleasure of the owners and it is not that mills do not earn profits; in some cases the owners want to give as little pay as possible to the workers.

A-2743. Then the statement is that where they make the rooms more comfortable by means of fans they pay lower wages to the workers?—Yes.

A-2744. Will you tell us in which mills lower wages are paid because of the fans?—Motilal Hirabai Mill, Silver Cotton Mill, Ahmedabad-Saharanpur Cotton Mill No. II, and others.

A-2745. Are you quite clear when you tell us that wages were reduced in the weaving department after fans were introduced?—In the new mills, along with the introduction of fans rates were also fixed low. As an instance, I can cite the Saharanpur Cotton Mill No. II.

A-2746. You put before us a complaint that dispensaries should be provided in all the mills, and they should be kept open all the day and not only for a short time as is done in some of the mills. Do I understand that in some mills the dispensaries are kept open all the day while in others they are only opened for a short time?—In two or three mills the dispensaries are kept open the whole day while in some they are opened only for one or two hours either in the evening or in the morning; in most of the mills there are no dispensaries.

A-2747. With regard to schools you say that there is a want of two or three more schools in the mill area. We were told this morning that the Municipality would open schools wherever there were 30 or more children wanting education. Are you aware of that?—We are aware of the resolution of the Municipality to that effect, but our complaint is that if one school is existent and we put in a petition for another school being opened that petition is not attended to by the Municipality. In most of these schools we have classes up to the third standard only, and in very few up to the fourth standard. English is not taught in these schools and if we want our children to read English we have to send them to the schools in the city where owing to the heavy traffic our young children run the risk of being trampled under cars.

A-2748. You make a reference to a deduction from your wages of one anna per day. What is that for?—In some mills there is a practice of deducting one anna per head per day in the weaving department for damage to cloth irrespective of the fact whether there is damage to the cloth or not; if there is more damage then more deductions are made, and if there is too much damage the cloth is handed over to the weavers who take them to the bazaar for sale. If, say, Rs. 2 is deducted from their wages for this purpose they are able to sell the cloth for Rs. 1-8-0 or 1-4-0.

A-2749. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is that because the cloth is so much damaged?—The damage may be slight or more but the outside people always offer a less price.

A-2750. *The Chairman*: Do we clearly understand that one anna per day is deducted from every weaver in the mill?—Yes, that is true.

A-2751. In all the mills?—Yes.

A-2752. You say it is deducted from every weaver whether he damages the cloth or not?—Yes.

A-2753. We were told last week that there was a reduction—I think it was one anna per day—made partly towards the cost of the welfare work. Are you quite sure that this one anna which you tell us is deducted is not devoted to some other purpose?—It is not devoted for welfare work. Half the money goes to the mill and the other half is paid to the folders who detect the mistakes.

A-2754. You tell us that if your services are not required you are discharged without notice whereas you are required to give six days' notice if you wish to leave the employment. Is that correct?—Yes, that is so.

A-2755. *Mr. Clow* : Why are you not members of the Labour Union ?—At first we were members of the Union but afterwards we left it because we did not like its activities. At present it is only a nominal Labour Union and is greatly under the influence of the millowners.

A-2756. Why did you not make a union of your own ?—If Government were to help us we will have our union.

A-2757. Why do you not help yourself ?—We have no power. How can we do it ourselves ?—

A-2758. *Mr. Joshi* : You say that weavers are not generally promoted to the higher grades of weaving masters. Do you really mean that the weavers should be promoted as weaving masters immediately or they should be first promoted to jobbers' places and then if they are found fit to be promoted as weaving masters ?—We say that we should be promoted only gradually ; we certainly do not advocate that we should be made weaving masters immediately. In this connection I might be permitted to say that in the police department the policemen are given facilities for learning reading and writing an hour a day. We would suggest that we should also be given similar facilities within the mills because it will be an initiative to those of us who are illiterate and uneducated to try to learn reading and writing.

A-2759. As regards the houses for which you pay Rs. 5 rent, are the rooms satisfactory to you or not ?—We do not like those tenements but as other tenements are not available we have no option in the matter.

A-2760. You say " Dispensaries should be provided in all the mills, and they should be kept open all the day and not only for a short time as is done in some of the mills." Is it that in all the mills the dispensaries are not kept open all the day or only in some mills ?—In some mills there are no dispensaries at all and so the question of not keeping them open for the whole day does not arise.

A-2761. What do you do when you remain at home on account of sickness ?—I am living rather far from the municipal dispensary, and when I fall ill I have to go to the municipal dispensary with difficulty, if I want medicine.

A-2762. Can you not go to the mill dispensary ?—Only those workers who live near the mills which have dispensaries can make use of them, others cannot.

A-2763. You say that you do not get any remuneration during the time you are sick. I want to know whether you would be prepared to contribute some share if the employers and the Government also contribute a similar share ?—Certainly ; why not ?

A-2764. You say " We have been working ten hours a day." It is said that if the working hours are reduced the production may be reduced. As weavers, what is your experience ? Will the production be reduced if the hours are reduced ?—Our experience is that after the reduction in hours from 12 to 10 the same amount of cloth is being produced ; similarly, if hours are reduced from 10 to 9, it will not affect the production. But if the mill agents interfere with the yarn then perhaps there may be less production.

A-2765. *Miss Power* : One of the memoranda refers to the fact that beam and cloth carriers are paid from the wages of the weavers. What does that amount to in deductions from the weavers' wages in a month ?—We have already stated in our statement that we are illiterate people ; we do not know how much is taken from our wages, how much is paid to the beam carriers, how much is paid to the folders or how much is taken by the millowners. We have no knowledge.

A-2766. We have had a certain amount of evidence given to us that the workers would prefer a break twice in the day of half an hour each rather than one break in the middle of the day of one hour. Which of the two would you prefer ?—We like only one interval of one hour and not two intervals of half an hour each.

A-2767. You like the existing arrangement ?—Yes.

A-2768. In your statement you refer to bribes taken by jobbers and head jobbers. I want to know whether this bribe is taken at intervals or in one lump sum at the time of first obtaining employment ?—Every pay day we have to pay something.

A-2769. What do you have to pay ?—In the case of weavers, they have not got to pay anything on pay day ; weavers have to pay only Rs. 5 at the time of first employment ; but in the case of line jobbers, the head jobbers have got an arrangement with line jobbers that the latter should pay them half their pay, which amounts to Rs. 50, every year for five or six years.

A-2770. Did you say half his pay ?—The line jobber's pay is about Rs. 100 ; and he has to pay Rs. 50 to the head jobber every year.

A-2771. *The Chairman* : Do you know of any mill where this practice does not exist ?—Yes. Calico, Marsden, Rama Krishna and the Patel Mills.

A-2772. Those are the only four mills where this system of bribery does not exist ?—I know of only these four : there may be others where bribery does not exist ; but I know of only these four.

A-2773. We are told that all the employers wish to get rid of this bribery : they are aware of the existence of this evil ?—It is true that mill agents do not like this practice ; but the mill agents do not themselves know that such a practice exists.

A-2774. If the mill agents are against this bribery and the weavers are against this bribery and there are four mills in which this bribery has been abolished, why do you not help the employers to abolish it in the remaining mills ?—If we complain to the mill agents, the mill agents do not listen to these complaints. Some other workers also complain to the head jobber that so and so has gone and reported, and that head jobber sees to it that the man concerned goes out of the mill gate.

A-2775. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Supposing you formed a union, would your union be in a better position to report these cases of bribery ?—It is true that we will get more help if we have a union.

A-2776. Are you quite sure that the beam carriers are paid by the weavers ? You said you do not know how much. Are you absolutely certain that the beam carriers are not paid by the mills ?—I do not know how much is deducted on that account from our wages ; but I am quite sure that it is by deductions from our wages that the beam carriers are paid.

A-2777. How do you know you have to pay the beam carriers, if you do not know how much you pay ?—The mill agents have asked the clerks to deduct 0-1-6 per loom per week. There is an understanding between the clerks and the mill agents that if the rates are fixed at 0-1-6 for a particular loom then the mill agent asks the clerks to inform the workmen that the rate is only 0-1-5 or 0-1-4.

A-2778. *Mr. Joshi* : Is not the rate put up on the notice board ?—In some mills it is ; in others it is not.

A-2779. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Does this take place in the mills where the rates are not put up on the board ?—It only takes place in those mills.

A-2780. Would the weavers like the mills to institute night schools ?—We are in favour of night schools, if these are opened by the mill agents ; not in the mill premises but somewhere near the mills.

A-2781. Would the workmen attend these schools ?—Yes, certainly.

A-2782. Do you know that in one of the mills in Bombay where there are 20,000 work-people, only 50 attend the night school ?—I do not know.

A-2783. You say that in the new mills where ventilation is provided weavers' rates are lower than in the old mills without ventilation ?—It is not very much below the rate in the old mills where the wages are higher. It is more or less the same.

A-2784. You say that in the new mills where they have fans you have to start on a lower rate than in the old mills without fans. Do you still adhere to that statement ?—I stick to the statement that wages are lower in the new mills with fans than in the old mills without fans ; but we prefer to go to the new mills. In the old mills the machinery is defective, so the net outturn is less.

A-2785. Although in the new mills the rates are lower, still you can get as much money as you can in the old mills with high rates because you get a bigger production ?—We do not get more wages in the new mills. We get the same, although the rate is low.

A-2786. You would like to have higher wages and shorter hours ; is that right ?—Since 1918 the rates have been reduced gradually and the rates are low at present. We first want the rates to be increased and brought up to their original level, and then a reduction to be made in the working hours. In that case the production will remain the same, but our wages will become high and we will also gain the benefit of the shorter hours.

A-2787. Will the cloth cost more to make ?—The cost will increase.

A-2788. Will it compete with other countries who are shipping cheap cloth here ?—The Indian cloth will be able to compete with foreign cloth if the Indian mill agents are less avaricious.

A-2789. Do you think that the profits of the agents are so high that they can afford to pay the same wages for shorter hours and still compete with the foreign market ?—We do not know their accounts ; but we think they make large profits. Take

an example. A pound of cotton will cost about four or five or at the most 8 annas. Add to that all super-head charges, labour charges, etc. From that pound of cotton you can make 10 yards of cloth, and the cost price of that at the most will be Rs. 1-8-0.

A-2790. Supposing it could be proved that these large profits are non-existent, and that shorter hours and higher wages would mean that the mill would have to close down. What would you propose to do then?—The Almighty is always kind and gracious to His people. In the villages or towns where there are no mills the people have not died.

A-2791. But the point is this. Do you mean if the mill industry is killed you would go back to your village?—We shall take to some other work.

A-2792. You do not mind the mill stopping and closing down?—I do not mind.

A-2793. *Mr. Cliff*: I would be interested to know how you prepared the memorandum which you have put in to-day?—I wrote it in Urdu myself, and then I went to a typist in Ritchie Road and got it translated and typed.

A-2794. You wrote it yourself. Did you consult your fellow weavers before writing it?—I consulted my fellow workers before writing it.

A-2795. Did you get any help in writing it?—No outsider helped me.

A-2796. How do you settle your rates of wages with the employers?—We do not know how the rates are fixed. The Agents may be knowing that; the clerks may be knowing that or some head jobbers may be knowing that. If we find that it will suit us to work on those wages we work in those mills; otherwise we go to other mills. We ourselves do not know how the rates are fixed by the Agent.

A-2797. Suppose any difficulty arises in the mill, or if you have a grievance, are you able to represent that grievance to the Agent?—In regard to certain grievances we can make a complaint, but in regard to others we cannot.

A-2798. In regard to what kind of grievances can you make complaints?—If we go to the agent and complain about rates or damage to cloth, then nobody listens to us; but if we go and complain about beating and abusing or about not getting beam carriers, etc., then our complaints are listened to.

A-2799. You say that "It is impossible to describe the hardship involved in working in some mills where no fans have been provided. It is impossible to work continuously there, as the air gets stuffy." Now the employers say that the workmen waste two hours or more a day talking and smoking in the compound. I want to know whether you agree with the employers that you waste two hours or more per day?—We go to the compound for taking our meals or for smoking or drinking water; but still within the hours that we work in the mills we give 12 hours' production instead of 10 hours' production.

A-2800. You give the same production as you give in 12 hours. Do you leave the weaving room and go out into the compound as much in a well ventilated mill as in mills which are not ventilated?—In mills which have got fans we go out to the compound to smoke for some time and return soon; but in mills which have got no fans we have to go out for a longer time. Inside the mills where there are no fans the atmosphere is so very hot that people often faint and have to be carried to the hospital to be restored to consciousness. The conditions are unspeakable during the summer months.

A-2801. During the summer months?—In summer it happens like that, but in winter also we perspire very freely.

A-2802. That means that you do more work in well ventilated mills?—In both kinds of mills our production is the same, because we have to fill our bellies and we try as hard as possible to give the same production in both kinds of mills even though we may die within the mill premises.

A-2803. Do you get any advances from the employers before the pay day?—In some mills they do give advances on pay, but we have to pay interest on those advances.

A-2804. How much advance can a man get?—The maximum advance that we can get is Rs. 5 or Rs. 6; not more than that. But even for this amount interest is deducted. Some mills deduct interest at the rate of Re. 0-1-0 per rupee, others at 6 pies per rupee.

A-2805. *The Chairman*: Although the money has been earned by the men?—Yes.

A-2806. *Mr. Cliff*: Is that from the mill, or is that from the jobber?—In the mills they get advances only from the manager, and not from the jobber; but sometimes the jobber also arranges to get them advances from outside, from money-lenders. On

this also they have to pay the same interest, namely, Re. 0-1-0 per rupee or Re. 0-0-6 per rupee, per month.

A-2807. Why do the people ask for these advances?—We have ourselves and our children to support. Whenever we run short of money for our food we have to ask for an advance.

A-2808. Cannot you get credit at the grain shop?—Sometimes we buy on credit and sometimes we pay cash also.

A-2809. Would you like your wages to be paid to you monthly?—No, that will not suit us.

A-2810. Instead of getting advances, would you like to be paid weekly?—There was a time when our pay was paid to us every week, but that has been put a stop to. At that time our condition was better than it is now. Even now if they change to a weekly payment system, it will be good for us.

A-2811. You do ask that you should receive some pay during sickness as you say you have to spend on medical aid. I suppose you have got to save money in order to spend it on the doctor? Do you save money for sickness?—Some people are able to save, others are not able to save. Sometimes we only take one meal instead of two meals, and thus economize in order to pay the doctor.

A-2812. There is a statement in this memorandum to the effect that if you come late to the mill even by five minutes you lose your employment for the day—you cannot work that day. How is a substitute engaged when you are late?—If we go to the mills late even by five minutes those people who have gone to the mill previously just at the whistle, are taken in as *badlis*, and we lose employment for the whole day. But if we go in time and the machine on which we are working is out of order, or the material which we require to work the machine is not available and a few hours or days' delay takes place, we get nothing.

A-2813. I was at a mill yesterday where the men took *badlis* with them. Do you know of any mills where the men take the *badlis* with them?—I suppose you are referring to the Shapoor Mill. That mill is at a distance from our place, so I do not know anything about it.

A-2814. Do the jobbers find *badlis*?—The jobbers and head jobbers engage the *badlis*; and where we do not get employment in one mill we go to another mill; and that is how we have to wander about.

A-2815. In answer to a question you said that jobbers take bribes, and that they also take drinks from you? Do I understand that the weavers go into the same drink shop as a jobber?—In many cases both jobbers and weavers go to the same drink shop.

A-2816. Does the weaver ever become a jobber?—Yes, he can become a jobber.

A-2817. You say that there is a lot of bribes paid to the jobbers. What would you say a jobber makes by bribes?—It all depends upon circumstances. Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 are taken at the time of the first appointment, and subsequent bribery is in the shape of drinks.

A-2818. Is that the line jobber or the head jobber?—Usually to the line jobbers, but head jobbers are also given drink so that weavers may be promoted to the post of line jobber.

A-2819. In your memorandum you say: "Jobbers generally take a binding from the men when they are employed, that they would be content to serve on the same pay for a certain period of years; and only after they have received some money from the men, that they would give them promotion." I want to deal with the first portion of that statement. Some men told me yesterday in the mills that for a period they receive less than the rate, and obviously some one else gets the difference between 'less than the rate' and the rates. Where does the difference between what a workman accepts and the proper rate go to?—This statement does not refer to weavers. It refers only to the relation between line jobbers and head jobbers. The pay of a line jobber is about Rs. 100, or whatever it may be. Out of that one-half is paid to the head jobber every year for about five or six years.

A-2820. According to your statement, the jobbers must have a lot of money. What do they do with that money?—He opens a bank account, or he eats and drinks and makes merry.

A-2821. We have been told that the men working in the mills drink a great deal. Do you as a matter of fact spend a goodly portion of your wages on drink?—It is not all people who drink. We have our families and children to support, and how can we do that if we spend all our money or even a goodly portion of it on drink. It is only those

people who have some expectation from the jobbers and head jobbers who spend largely on drink. We do not drink because we have to maintain our families.

A-2822. *Mr. Ahmed*: You state that it costs from 4 annas to 8 annas to purchase a seer of cotton, out of which you can make 10 yards of cloth; and that taking the cost of its make and other expenses it comes to about 1-8-0 at the utmost?—That is true.

A-2823. At what price do the millowners sell that cloth—how much profit do they make?—We are not sufficiently educated and intelligent enough to know how much profit can be made out of these things, but with our ordinary intelligence we can say that it all depends upon the kind of yarn and the kind of cotton used. If good cotton and good yarn are used they get a good price for it; if bad cotton and bad yarn is used they get less price for it.

A-2824. I take it you say that even if the millowners are less avaricious, they can certainly compete with the Japanese cotton cloth sold in the market?—Yes, that is what I say.

A-2825. I take it that you want a higher wage because the workmen in Japan and other countries get higher wages, and that you are entitled to get a higher wage than you are getting now as a matter of fact. You want an equitable distribution of the whole profit and to give to the millowners some fixed proportion of profit as is the case in other countries?—We do not know what happens in Japan and other places. We only know the conditions here and we want that we should get enough ourselves as a living wage.

A-2826. Your case is that you are entitled as a matter of right to leave, pension and gratuity?—Yes.

A-2827. You want night schools and day schools for your children and that provision should be made for maternity benefits?—Yes, we think we are entitled to these as a matter of right.

A-2828. While you are ill you generally go to your private lodging and the millowners do not know whether you are ill or not, and because you are absent from the mill wards you do not get your wages?—Yes.

A-2829. Your demand is that you should get wages when you are sick?—Yes; we should get some sickness benefit.

A-2830. Can you tell us what is the difference between you and those people of the union who say that they are boycotting the Commission?—The present union was formed in 1918. Since that time it has gradually come under the influence of the millowners, and it is only nominally a labour union.

A-2831. You think that is not a genuine union?—No.

A-2832. What is it? Do you mean it is a political union?—It has been existing for the last ten years, but as we are not members of that body we do not know whether it is existent for political reasons or for other reasons. As far as we know, they have no rules and regulations, they do not maintain their registers properly and do not give information to the labourers. We have no connection with them.

A-2833. You say that you pay a rent of Rs. 5 for your lodging accommodation. Can you tell us what it would cost for constructing such a *chaul*?—We cannot say, as we have never constructed a *chaul*.

A-2834. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Will you please tell us whether you are piece-workers?—Yes.

A-2835. In answer to one of the questions you said that though the rate may be Rs. 1-6-0 for a certain unit, the clerk and the millowners combine and give you only Rs. 1-4-0 or Rs. 1-5-0. What do you mean by that? When the rates are put up on the board can you not calculate what amount is due to you according to your outturn?—In some mills the rates are put up on the notice board while in others they are not.

A-2836. In those mills where boards are kept with rates, you are paid in full, is that so?—It is not for all varieties of cloth that rates are put up; for some varieties they put up and for some they do not; so in many cases it is not possible to find out what wages are due.

A-2837. In some mills no boards are kept while in others boards are kept but they do not contain full information about the different qualities of the cloth; is that the position?—Yes.

A-2838. Do you know of any mill in Ahmedabad in which a list of rates is kept on the board for all the qualities of cloth that are manufactured in that mill?—I do not know.

A-2839. In answer to another question you said that the millowners were very avaricious and if that avariciousness was reduced it would be possible to give the workers higher wages and better housing and that other welfare duties could be discharged. When you used the word "avaricious" did you have in mind the amount of commission that the managing agents drew or something over and above that commission; or is it that you made a general remark?—I made only a general statement and had nothing particular in view. When the millowners do not supply us with suitable machinery and other things what can it be due to except for their avariciousness.

A-2840. When they do not supply you with the required materials the production is reduced, is it not?—Yes, that is true.

A-2841. You lose your wages but the millowner loses his profits also. How is he avaricious?—Yes, he will lose his profits.

A-2842. In regard to the hours of working you said you were able to produce the same amount of work in 10 hours as you used to produce in 12 hours; is that so?—Yes.

A-2843. Your remuneration has in no way suffered in consequence of the reduction of hours from 12 to 10? Are you now getting the same rates for piece-work as you were getting when you were working for 12 hours?—The rates are lower at present.

A-2844. That means that though you are producing the same quantity in 10 hours as you were producing in 12 hours you are getting less pay?—That is so.

A-2845. *The Chairman*: How many rupees a month do you receive now?—From Rs. 88 to 40.

A-2846. How much were you receiving before the hours were reduced from 12 to 10?—On an average Rs. 55 or 60.

A-2847. Are you aware that that is totally contrary to the figures that have been supplied by the official investigators?—We do not know that the figures given by the official investigators go to show that our statements are wrong.

A-2848. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In answering one of the questions put by the Chairman you made a mention about *rathaliya*, and said that you were getting about Rs. 18 as wages when you were working for 12 hours. What did you mean by *rathaliya*?—During War time we were making a special kind of cloth and we were being paid according to the weight of the cloth.

A-2849. In answer to Sir Victor Sassoon you said that you did not care whether the mills work or stop working. Is it your position that the mills may stop as a result of the various demands you have made but that you would insist upon all your demands being complied with whether the industry will stand it or not? The question that you have to consider is this: assuming that your demands cannot be complied with without stopping the mills, would you still insist upon all your demands being met and go to the length of saying "it does not matter what happens to the mills; our demands must be complied with in full"?—We do not go to that length. Our demands are so reasonable that we think that by complying with them the millowners will not find themselves in the position of closing down their mills.

A-2850. Then your position is that the labour and capital should work together, make the industry prosperous and share in the prosperity?—That is what we want.

A-2851. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How old are you?—49.

A-2852. How long have you been a weaver?—For nearly 80 years.

A-2853. In how many mills have you worked?—I have worked in several mills.

A-2854. In how many places have you worked?—First in Cawnpore, then in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Lahore again Ahmedabad, Bombay and again Ahmedabad.

A-2855. How long have you been in Ahmedabad?—The last arrival was some three months ago when I came from Bombay, but I have experience of Ahmedabad since the last 25 years.

A-2856. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In what mill were you working in Bombay?—In Sakti Talav.

A-2857. What is the name of the mill?—I do not know; I stayed there only for 4 or 5 months.

A-2858. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why did you come back from Bombay?—Because of the strikes and riots there.

A-2859. What is the longest period you have served in one mill?—Five years in the Saharanpur mill in Ahmedabad.

A-2860. Why did they not make you a jobber?—I can get a jobber's post only if I offer some bribe or give a drink or shampoo the feet of the superiors.

A-2861. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Why did you not do that?—I am not a man of that type; I will not stoop to such things.

A-2862. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In how many mills have you worked in Ahmedabad?—In about 10 mills.

A-2863. Why do you change from mill to mill?—In Ahmedabad the practice is to find fault with a good man; if there is any trouble between a superior and a weaver and if a third man says something in the middle he is at once discharged.

A-2864. Have you been discharged from the different mills because you were making trouble between your superior and some other weavers?—During the course of the weaving supposing there is damage the owner or the manager gives back the damaged cloth to the weaver and imposes a fine. If he protests against this and makes a complaint he gets a beating. I cannot stand such a treatment and that is the reason why I had to change certain mills.

A-2865. When you go to a new mill do you always have to pay the jobbers something to get you a job?—I do not give anything.

A-2866. How is it that you were able to secure jobs in more than ten mills without paying anything to the jobbers when all the other weavers have to pay something?—I do not go to such mills where there is the practice of taking bribes.

A-2867. Then there are a number of mills—ten mills at least here and elsewhere—that do not take bribes?—In those ten mills there was no corruption previously, but at present there are only two or three mills in which there is no corruption; in the other mills corruption has crept in.

A-2868. Are you a permanent weaver or a *badli* weaver?—If I get permanent work I accept it, otherwise I work as a *badli*. For the last eight days I have no work.

A-2869. When do you get up in the morning to go to the mill?—At 5 or 5-30.

A-2870. When do you take your first meal?—At 6 o'clock.

A-2871. When do you get your next meal?—At 12 noon. Once or twice I take some tea at about 4 in the evening and again at about 6 after I leave the mill.

A-2872. Where do you go after 6 o'clock?—I go home.

A-2873. What do you do when you get home?—As I am a Muhammadan I say prayers; I will also be talking to friends.

A-2874. When do you go to sleep?—At about 9-30 or 10.

A-2875. When do you take your last meal?—At about 9 after saying prayers.

A-2876. How many meals do you take in a day?—Three meals including the breakfast.

A-2877. *Diwan Chaman Lal*: Are you in debt?—Yes.

A-2878. Are you aware that many of the weavers also are in debt?—Yes.

A-2879. How many looms do you work?—Two looms.

A-2880. If you are asked to work more than two looms are you prepared to do so?—Yes, provided the yarn supplied is good.

A-2881. Are you prepared to work more than two looms if you are given the same wages that you are getting now?—No.

A-2882. Suppose you were asked to work on four looms and you were given 75 per cent. more than you are getting at present, would you be prepared to work four looms?—It is not possible for one man to work four looms.

A-2883. Suppose you are given new machinery, better yarn, better conditions of work and better pay, would you be prepared to work more looms?—A man who could live for 15 years would die within 10 years if he were to work on four looms.

A-2884. You are not prepared to work on four looms even if the hours of work are reduced to eight and better machinery is provided?—No.

A-2885. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Suppose you get the assistance of a boy?—If a boy is given to help me, I am willing to work on four looms.

A-2886. *Diwan Chaman Lal*: Is it not a fact that many of the faults which result in the cloth being damaged are not due to the weavers but are due to the defective machinery or due to defective mixing or other causes which are beyond the control of the weavers?—That is so.

A-2887. You have told us a good deal about your grievances. Suppose you choose your own representatives and the millowners choose their own representatives and a joint machinery is set up in order that your day to day grievances can be discussed and settled, would you not prefer that?—If there is an understanding between the millowners and our union representatives for settling the day to day disputes, then it will be very good. But at present the question does not arise because we have no union.

A-2888. With regard to workmen's compensation, do you get your compensation without difficulty now-a-days?—The law is in force for the last two or three years, and as far as I understand some people get it without difficulty and some had difficulties.

A-2889. Are you satisfied with the amount of compensation that is now paid, or would you like the amount to be increased?—I have had no accidents myself. I do not know what is the present method of calculating the compensation, and so I regret I cannot answer.

A-2890. With regard to the question about the avariciousness of the millowners, would you prefer a system like this that you should be made sharers in the profits that are earned by the companies?—That will be good.

A-2891. You have mentioned numerous grievances about mixing, bad conditions in the workshops, etc. Would you prefer to have some sort of voice in the management of the mills?—If I get a share in the management, so far as my ability goes, I will try to improve matters and help the management.

A-2892. You can be dismissed and discharged at a moment's notice while you have to give six days notice if you want to leave your employment. Would you like to have a law whereby the millowners will be required to give you six days' notice?—Yes; that will be good.

A-2893. If new machines are given to you and if the hours of work are reduced to 8, do you not think that you will be able to produce as much as you produce under the present system of 10 hours' work?—If the machines are good, if yarn is good, if cotton is good and if the conditions of work are improved, then we can give the same production.

A-2894. Would you like some pension to be paid for the widows of the weavers who die and to orphans of workers?—That will be very good.

(The witnesses withdrew, and the Commission adjourned to Bombay.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-FIRST MEETING
BOMBAY

Thursday, 21st November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
 Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
 C.I.E.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
 Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
 Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,
 I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOOSKINBOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } (*Assistant Commissioners*).
 Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } *Lady Assessors*.
 Mrs. K. WAGH.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries*.
 Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. R. B. EWBank, C.I.E., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government
 of Bombay, General Department, and Mr. J. F. GENNINGS,
 Director of the Labour Office, Bombay.**

A-2895. *The Chairman* : May I first of all thank both of you for this very excellent memorandum that you have sent to us in reply to our questionnaire. It is in itself so complete that it will be a matter for us to study over and over again rather than to ask questions about. I shall confine my questions to one or two points which I do not see discussed in the many pages of your memorandum. I do not know whether it will be possible for you, but it occurs to me that it might be valuable for my colleagues and myself if we could have an informal consultation with you at the end of our visit to Bombay, when no doubt we will have questions to put to you that may have arisen from things that we have seen or heard during our visit?—(Mr. Ewbank) We will come with great pleasure; and if it is possible before that Conference for us to know the particular questions on which the views of Government are required, I will take the orders of Government on them, and will then be in a position to give definite answers to any questions that you might ask us.

A-2896. You tell us in this memorandum that there have been many investigations carried out by your Labour Office. I want to ask you, has any attempt been made to form an estimate of the incidence of sickness amongst the workers in Bombay on which any possible sickness insurance scheme could be based?—(Mr. Gennings) No.

A-2897. You have not any information that you could give us for our guidance in the matter?—No, none at all.

A-2898. Is it the case here, as elsewhere, that sickness and leave merge themselves into and are at present indistinguishable from each other. I mean to say an industrial worker goes off on what is called leave to his home in the village. It may be sickness or it may be something else?—That is so.

A-2899. Do you think it would be practicable to require employers of labour to keep a better registration of all the workers that they employ, and as far as possible the facts about their sickness. It is clear from your statement to us that if after our investigation we find that a system of sickness insurance is reasonable and practicable, then we shall

have the support of the Government of Bombay. What we want from you is some information as to the collection of facts on which a system could be based?—It would be possible, but if you are going to use such statistics as the basis for a health insurance scheme, those statistics would have to be gathered over a very long period, and it would mean roughly this: in every case of absence the employer would have to send a medical man to see the employee who is absent and to ascertain whether or not he is sick, and the nature of the sickness. An employee may say after he has been away for three days that he has had fever: that is the common excuse given by all classes of labour in Bombay. He may not have been sick; he may have been taking a rest; he may have been taking a holiday; he may not have had fever; he may have had something quite different. If you want the statistics to be the basis of a health insurance scheme which an actuary could take in hand and formulate the various proportions of the cost that would have to be borne by employers of labour and the State, the statistics would have to be something very accurate. Merely the keeping of a register and the entering into that register what a man says he is absent for, would not I think be regarded by any actuary or any person preparing the financial aspect of the scheme as sufficient. The difficulty here is the relatively small extent to which workers go to doctors. The sickness insurance scheme in England was based entirely upon the records of the various Friendly Societies which had been doing sickness insurance for very many years.

A-2900. That of course is true. What I am trying to get at is whether any beginning, or the foundations of such a scheme, is possible in a place like Bombay?—Yes, it is possible by the expenditure of a good deal of money and very careful organization. All the insurance schemes in Great Britain were based upon the experience of voluntary organizations.

A-2901. *Mr. Cliff*: That is not true, Mr. Gennings, of the Widows and Orphans Pensions Act?—That would be based upon mortality statistics, I suppose.

A-2902. It has led at the present moment to a surplus of about 30 millions?—I do not, know. I am merely instancing one country where I know the statistics were available to the State when they were considering their scheme. My view is that before you could take up a scheme of that sort, which I take it would have the backing of the State, you would have to make quite sure that the figures were reasonably accurate and sufficiently detailed to base a scheme on them.

A-2903. *The Chairman*: Do you suggest anything in the way of registration by employers of the labour they employ, which would in future be useful as the basis of a sickness insurance scheme. Do you think, for instance, that the individual worker should be the holder of a card or certificate showing how long he has worked in a place, and then, when he has resumed, whether it is at the same place or at some other place, so as to establish in course of time a record of a worker's regularity?—I do not think there is any objection in principle to a matter of that kind, but of course it would have to be worked out in consultation with the workers to see if they have any objection to any such scheme of registration, and then again whether from the point of view of sickness that would be sufficient, as it would only record absences.

A-2904. It would record absences, and in some cases it would record absence due to sickness?—If the absence is certified, by somebody responsible, as being due to sickness.

A-2905. We are told that there comes, in some cases, an objection from the workers themselves to anything in the nature of a certificate, which is made sure by a finger print. Is that your view that there would be objection on the part of the workmen?—I should not like to say. I believe they have objected in some of the mills to being furnished with cards and having to produce those cards. But I should think they could be won over to agree to such a scheme.

A-2906. If their leaders persuaded them that it was to their eventual advantage?—Yes, they have to be assured that they are going to get something out of it eventually, or that there is a good reason underlying the proposal.

A-2907. My second question arises out of what you tell us here about the system of jobbers. What we are often told is that the jobbers in some cases exact unreasonable sums—to put it mildly—from those for whom they find employment. Has there not been any improvement in Bombay in that respect in recent years? We know that some of the employers have made efforts to get rid of the evils of that system, but I think you tell us that there is not much sign of improvement?—As I understand it there is not very much sign of improvement.

A-2908. Do you know of any cases in Bombay where there is a welfare officer or a labour officer, or whatever term may be used, to deal with the recruitment of labour?—I do not know of any.

A-2909. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You have got on the Statute Book, Mr. Ewbank, what is called the Free and Compulsory Primary Education Act ?—(Mr. Ewbank) Yes.

A-2910. In accordance with the terms of that Act the Bombay Government have undertaken the liability of granting 50 per cent. of the additional cost to any local municipality that proposes to introduce free and compulsory primary education within its jurisdiction ?—Yes, and two-thirds in the case of the local boards.

A-2911. Is there any provision in that Act which gives the Government the discretion of withholding that grant directly or indirectly from any municipality willing to introduce free and compulsory primary education ?—No.

A-2912. Is it a fact that more than one municipality has submitted schemes in accordance with the provisions of that Act and asked for the sanction of Government for the introduction of free and compulsory education under the Act, and the Government have been sitting over them for years ?—I have the statistics here. Out of 18 schemes for the introduction of compulsory education seven have been sanctioned, five within the Municipal areas, and two submitted by local boards.

A-2913. And in regard to the remainder ?—We have got two more pending. In addition we have 61 schemes for expansion on a voluntary basis, of which 39 have been sanctioned. These are the figures since the Act was introduced in 1923.

A-2914. My point is this. We were told in Ahmedabad, and we have heard it elsewhere, that the Ahmedabad Municipality has submitted a scheme for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education under that Act, and that the Government are withholding their sanction, or delaying it, on the ground that they have no funds to discharge their obligatory duty ?—The Ahmedabad Municipality have assumed control of primary education under the Primary Education Act. But if they have put up such a scheme, I have not seen it.

A-2915. Is it a fact that in the case of some of these schemes, according to a statement made before us, sanction has been withheld for a period extending over one or two years, if not more, on the ground that the Government finances do not permit of sanction being given to the scheme ?—Certainly.

A-2916. Then under what authority are you acting when the Compulsory Primary Education Act does not give you that discretion ?—Under the Primary Education Act, if Government once approves a scheme of compulsory education then it has no discretion to withhold the grant. The Act does not compel Government to approve a scheme. Therefore if we have not the money we do not approve the scheme.

A-2917. Do you think that was the intention when the Act was passed ?—We are administering the Act as it stands to-day. I was not in the Government at the time the Act was passed, and I am afraid I cannot say what the intention was.

A-2918. In asking for sanction a local body is required to submit certain detailed particulars as regards the number of schools, the number of teachers required, the housing accommodation and so on ?—Certainly.

A-2919. Is it not the obvious interpretation that so long as the details of the scheme are satisfactory the Government must approve and pay the statutory contribution. Surely approval cannot depend on whether there is money available or not ?—I am not prepared to interpret the Act.

A-2920. Do you think that the Act gives Government authority to consider whether they will discharge an obligatory duty imposed by the Act, which they have themselves passed ?—Would you allow me not to answer that question quite directly ? The policy of the Government is at the earliest possible date to introduce universal free compulsory education, in accordance with this Act. Nobody is more keen than Government to press on with it ; but owing to our financial situation, which is not satisfactory at present, we are not able to accept liabilities which we cannot meet.

A-2921. The point I wish to make is this. Under the Primary Education Act the financial liability is divided between a local body and Government. When a local body is prepared to shoulder its financial obligations, Government are according to the terms of the Act bound to contribute their share of the expenditure ?—That is an interpretation that we do not admit.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : You have already said so, and I want it to be put on record that you are not prepared to tell us what the Government's intentions at the time were. My impression is clear that the intention was that if all the details submitted were satisfactory, and if the local body was prepared to shoulder its own share of responsibility, Government were bound to contribute their share.

A-2922. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What are the terms of the Act?—The terms of the Act, roughly, are that the local body shall submit a scheme giving details. The details are specified. Then it says that Government may or may not approve these schemes.

A-2923. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: It has been represented to us that most of the difficulties in regard to labour are caused owing to the fact that labour is illiterate?—I agree.

A-2924. Therefore any delay on the part of Government in contributing their share to local bodies to establish free and compulsory primary education is detrimental both to industry and labour?—Certainly, and it is most regrettable.

A-2925. *Mr. Cliff*: Can you make it clear to us what you mean by saying that Ahmedabad has not assumed control of primary education?—It is rather complicated. It is a legal point. The compulsory Education Act of 1923 did two things. It first of all transferred control of education, that is primary education, which was previously administered directly by Government, to the local bodies; that is, to the municipalities and local boards. Secondly it gave the local bodies powers to make schemes of compulsory education; that is to say, it was not for Government to introduce the policy, but for the local bodies; they were given local option by this Act of 1923. But if any local body, like the Ahmedabad District Local Board or the Ahmedabad City Municipality, refused to take over the control which was vested in it by the Act, Government continued to administer, and wait for the local bodies to take over in due course.

A-2926. Is the preferment of a scheme the assumption of control?—No, it is under a different section. They first of all take over control; then we transfer the masters and the schools; then they submit a scheme.

A-2927. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: When did the Trades Disputes Act come into operation?—April 1st, 1929.

A-2928. When was the Court of Inquiry appointed?—About the middle of July.

A-2929. During all this period the whole of the textile labour was on strike?—From April 26th.

A-2930. Will you tell me why the provisions of the Act were not availed of during May and June?—The first difficulty was that the Act had to be brought into force; it had only been recently passed by the Legislature, and we had to get the Government of India to agree to bring it into force. We had then to make rules under the Act, which took some time.

A-2931. I know it was done expeditiously; I have no complaint to make about it?—Then the Government had to wait to see how the situation developed, and to get into touch with the associations of masters and the workmen, and to find out how public opinion was moving, and, since the Act provided two alternative lines, to see what line was more likely to be successful. At first we hoped it might be possible to appoint a Board of Conciliation. When that hope failed we had no alternative but to appoint a Court of Inquiry. A meeting was held, at which representatives of all interests concerned in Bombay, were invited to meet with His Excellency. At that meeting the feeling was practically unanimous in favour of the appointment of a Court of Inquiry, and Government at once took action in accordance with that feeling.

A-2932. What was the interval between the strike and the meeting which His Excellency called?—About six weeks.

A-2933. Are you quite sure?—The meeting was on the 18th June. The strike began on the 26th April. The court of Inquiry was appointed by a Notification dated the 3rd July. It finished its proceedings by the end of August, and the Report was published in September.

A-2934. The Report drew the attention of Government to various causes which had brought about the strike. Has the Government of Bombay taken any action on that Report?—The idea of a Court of Inquiry, as I understand it, is to state the facts for the benefit of the two parties concerned, of the public, and of Government. The Government have considered, and have been considering, since the Report was submitted to them, what action it could take on this Report.

A-2935. That is to say, they have taken three months and still they have not come to any conclusion as to what action should be taken?—On the one hand, we have a Union which has gone into a state of suspended animation. There is no organization among the mill hands, commanding very wide support, with which the millowners or Government can deal. The main problem before Government is to find out some way of creating an organization among the mill hands with which the millowners and Government can deal. If the Commission could give any assistance to Government by pointing out how

we could give the initiative to the mill hands to organize themselves, it would be a great help to Government.

A-2936. The question for consideration is this. In consequence of this strike the financial position of Bombay City and Presidency has been vitally affected, and there is nothing to prevent a recurrence of such strikes with all the resulting disastrous effects on the financial position of the people of the Presidency outside those engaged in the industry. Do you not think it is essential for Government to take precautionary measures now in order to prevent such events recurring with their attendant riots and loss of life?—It is very desirable, but what sort of precautionary measures have you in your mind?

A-2937. Surely the Government is not in such dire necessity of outside suggestions? They have the Riots Inquiry Committee Report, and they have the Trades Disputes Inquiry Report?—(Mr. Gennings) I think the Reports of those two Inquiries suggested that the trouble which had occurred was due to the action taken by the leaders of a certain Union. It would therefore appear that any action that Government could take would have to be for things that had happened previously in connection with this particular Union; that is to say, action would have to be taken either against individuals or against the body which was known as a trade union. So far as the Riots Inquiry Committee Report is concerned, the people to whom reference was made there are in fact under trial. The people in the Meerut case are the people who are referred to in the Report. So far as the Report of the Court of Inquiry is concerned, their Report was to the effect that the strike had been premature and that it had been carried on not on real trade union principles. Government has found itself in some difficulty in taking action against a trade union which is acting within the terms of the Indian Trade Unions Act and which may or may not in the opinion of Government's legal advisers have done something which brings them under the ordinary Indian Penal Code. I think the examination has shown that so far as they are a trade union covered by and regulated by the Indian Trade Unions Act there is no action that can be taken against them.

A-2938. Is it a fact that at the conference to which Mr. Ewbank has referred, His Excellency announced certain measures which were to be applied to the situation?—(Mr. Ewbank) He announced certain measures the application of which should be considered.

A-2939. He announced certain measures which the Government had decided to apply?—(Mr. Gennings) I was present at the Conference. I think what was said at the Conference, and what was said in the memorandum which was circulated afterwards, was that certain measures were set out, and the Conference was told that if the Court of Inquiry did so-and-so, or if certain facts were found, Government could take such-and-such action.

A-2940. Will you please supply the Commission with a copy of His Excellency's speech because my impression of what occurred is quite different. At that time no Court of Inquiry had been appointed, and it was said that certain measures, which were stated to be absolutely necessary, were to be taken?—You are perfectly correct.

A-2941. If that is so, were any of these measures actually taken?—(Mr. Ewbank) Certain measures have been taken.

A-2942. And certain were not taken?—Yes.

A-2943. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What were those measures?—One measure was passed at the last session of the local Legislative Council, giving Government power to declare, in time of emergency in the Presidency, that intimidation was a cognizable offence.

A-2944. Was that the Public Security Act?—It was the Bombay Prevention of Intimidation Act.

A-2945. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: The best way would be for you to send us a copy of His Excellency's speech. It is a fact that out of the 83 Bombay cotton mills which existed, seven are not working?—(Mr. Gennings) Seventy-seven are working, and six are not working.

A-2946. You say under "Application of International Conventions relative to unemployment."—"With this view we suggest the formation of what may be called an Out-of-work Donation Fund on a voluntary basis to be created by a system of setting aside a contribution by the millowners of one anna per operative per month, which means virtually a contribution from the shareholders, to which fund the operative should be invited to contribute one anna"—That is a quotation from the Fawcett Committee's Report.

A-2947. This is a suggestion under the consideration of Government?—Yes.

A-2948. It is also pointed out that the Bombay Millowners' Association consider that the reduction of the hours of labour in 1920 from 12 to 10 has resulted in a fall in production of 16 per cent. in the spinning department and about 11 to 12 per cent. in the weaving department. Then there are various measures advocated. Has the Government of Bombay considered the cumulative effect of all these measures on the existing industry, and on the prospects of the expansion of the textile industry? What I mean is that if all these measures are adopted, which would necessarily raise the cost of production, how will the industry stand them, both in regard to existing industries and the prospects of expansion?—(Mr. Ewbank) As you know, the Government of Bombay have taken no action yet with regard to these recommendations and they are considering the effect upon the industry concerned. But the first point to which you drew attention is a fund which is dependent on a system of rationalization. If rationalization is introduced and if efficiency is increased it is then that the millowners would be asked to make some contribution to an unemployment fund in order to relieve the difficulties of the men who are thrown out of employment owing to the rationalization scheme.

A-2949. You admit them that if the shareholders do not get a reasonable return on the capital invested, fresh capital for expanding the industry would not be available?—About that I could express no opinion.

A-2950. Do you think that any of the legislative measures which have been passed during recent years and the several strikes that we have had in Bombay constitute one of the causes why seven mills are not working?—(Mr. Gennings) I do not think that we have enough information on which to express an opinion.

A-2951. If any measures have the effect of adversely affecting the expansion of industry, the extent of unemployment would increase?—(Mr. Ewbank) Presumably yes.

A-2952. *Mr. Clow*: In connection with the last question, you are doubtless aware that there has been considerable expansion in this industry in other centres than Bombay?—Yes.

A-2953. Particularly in Ahmedabad?—When I said that unemployment would increase, of course I meant in the places where the expansion of the industry is restricted.

A-2954. You say "the labour conditions in Ahmedabad are better than in Baroda because of shorter hours of work and legislation regarding Workmen's Compensation," and further on you say that these have had the effect of attracting labour from other areas. Is that a fair conclusion?—(Mr. Gennings) We have figures somewhere in this report showing the number of millhands employed in Ahmedabad, and it is a question of fact.

A-2955. Is it a fair conclusion that the reduction of hours and the introduction of other beneficial measures like workmen's compensation have had the effect of increasing the supply of labour. For example, labour conditions in Ahmedabad are better than in Baroda because of shorter hours of work and legislation regarding workmen's compensation?—If you turn to the Government memorandum you will see that the actual increase in Ahmedabad between 1921-26 is 5,000.

A-2956. That increase implies that the supply of labour has become easier?—That is the information we have.

A-2957. These figures relate only to the textile industry and not to industries generally?—No.

A-2958. You have given an analysis of workers according to the length of service. On what principle was the selection of workers made? You have given some 1,400 workers?—What we did was to take predominantly working classes localities, and we took a sample of one in ten in order to make the inquiry. It was a small inquiry which we thought would be of some interest.

A-2959. You are satisfied that the returns do relate to service over a large number of mills and that they do relate to total continuous service. You give the number of mills in each case?—Yes, we set it out according to the number of mills in which a man has served, and the period for which he has served in them.

A-2960. The general result seems to be that about half the workers have seven years service or less?—Less than ten years' service.

A-2961. That covers about two-thirds?—Yes. We only took the group between 5 and 10.

A-2962. What would you say was the percentage of persons in the textile industry in Bombay who have no connection whatever with any village outside Bombay City and island?—I should not like to make a definite statement on that point.

A-2963. Is it a big proportion or is it still a very small proportion?—I think it is still a small proportion; that is to say, I think a great majority of workers in Bombay have a vital living connection with their village.

A-2964. *The Chairman*: Is it not 80 per cent.?—That figure which we have given in our memorandum is based on people born in the city. I have been doing work with regard to workmen's compensation for about a year and a half and during that period I have not come across a case yet where the workman or his dependents either were not living in a village or did not go back to the village when they received their money.

A-2965. *Mr. Clow*: You give figures of mortality in your memorandum. They show a striking decrease in Bombay City in the last seven years; the figure for 1927 is practically half that for 1920. What is that due to?

A-2966. *Colonel Russell*: Is it not due to the reduction in plague incidence?—I should not like to say what the causes are for the improvement. I think infantile mortality is less now than it was in the earlier years. Possibly in 1920-21 the effects of the influenza epidemic might still have been felt. That is pure conjecture, which the Director of Public Health would probably be able to clear up, and also the municipality, because their statistics for Bombay city are very much better than for any other place.

A-2967. *Mr. Clow*: With regard to workmen's compensation, you have given us the view of the Bombay Government on a reference made by the Government of India. You say that in the case of death and permanent disablement the minimum should be raised to Rs. 400 and 500, respectively. Do you realize that the minimum depends at present, as the Act stands, on the lowest item in the scale of assumed wages?—It does.

A-2968. And that by adopting the scale that you have suggested you would be giving a considerably smaller minimum; you would be giving Rs. 300 and 420, respectively?—Yes, that is so. There would be two ways of considering the minimum; one would be to lay down that the actual lump sum payment should be a fixed sum, or you could arrive at the same amount by making your assumed wages higher.

A-2969. My point is that if your suggestion regarding Rs. 400 and 500 was accepted, there would be no point in putting Rs. 10 as the lowest basis of assumed wages?—Except, of course, it might be reasonable to take Rs. 10 as the basis of your assumed wages when you are dealing with temporary total or partial disablement.

A-2970. Was that the intention?—No, I think the intention was that the minimum amount that would be payable in respect of death or permanent total disablement should be the higher amount.

A-2971. As regards the question of lump sum payments as against recurring payments, the Local Government appear to be in favour of the maintenance of the existing system mainly on the ground, I gather, of administrative difficulties?—That is one ground, but I think the actual desire of the workers is a very great factor.

A-2972. In your experience, are the lump sums profitably expended, or are they apt to be squandered?—I think in every case quite a good proportion of the lump sum goes towards the payment of debts which have been accumulated by the deceased workman.

A-2973. Suppose you as workmen's compensation commissioner had the power to give either a recurring payment or a lump sum, would you exercise your discretion in many cases in favour of recurring payments or would you not?—Not very often. I can do that, and sometimes do it now, in the case of women and minors, but the trouble is that, unless you have so large a lump sum that the interest on it, or the purchase of an annuity, will furnish a reasonable living wage or a pension, at sometime or another the money comes to an end and then the people have got nothing left whatever. Take a case of Rs. 600 deposit. That would be for a fatal accident to a man earning Rs. 20 a month. The dependants might be a widow and a child. Assuming that Rs. 10 a month would be sufficient for them in the moffusil, that would mean in about five years that sum is exhausted, and these people who have been used to depend on a regular monthly income are left with nothing.

A-2974. I was contemplating a case in which you had power to pay pension until either the child reached maturity or till the widow died?—That would mean a very large increase in the benefits.

A-2975. Not necessarily; it could be actuarially calculated?—That is where the difficulty would arise. The question of ages is very difficult. I have considered the question of buying annuities for women.

A-2976. Suppose the local board has had to declare that in particular areas or industries fixed recurring payments should be the rule as specified by the Act, say for a widow until

she died or for her children up to 15 or some selected age, would you be prepared to recommend applying that to any particular class of workers? Take Ahmedabad where the workers appear to be much more permanent and resident in the neighbourhood than here?—Theoretically it is all right for a child. That is what I often do in fact with a child about 10 to 15; I put the money in the savings bank allowing the father or any other guardian so much a month; then when the child comes of age he gets the lump sum. But with regard to the widow, I think it would be rather difficult. I think we would have to differentiate between castes where re-marriage is customary and castes where it is not. In the case of a widow, say of 20, who happens to belong to a caste where re-marriage is not permitted the possibility is that you might have to pay a pension to her for 30 or 40 years.

A-2977. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You would have to face the danger of substitution in the case of death?—I think that is quite possible, because they would inevitably go back to their villages.

A-2978. *Mr. Clow*: The case of permanent total disability is simpler than that of death?—Of course. There are relatively few cases of permanent total disablement.

A-2979. In Appendix VII to your memorandum you have given an interesting statement showing the wages of workers who received compensation. This would seem to indicate that the average wage of the persons injured lay somewhere between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25?—Yes; That will be the medium; it will be about that.

A-2980. Would you say that is true of people employed in organized industries generally throughout the Presidency?—No. I think it would be a little higher than that because a lot of these figures are mofussil figures, because they deal with railways in the mofussil and apply to gangmen and workers of that type whose wages in the mofussil are not so high as in the city. So that, these wages are not really city wages.

A-2981. It is more a wage figure for the whole Presidency?—Yes.

A-2982. We found in a mill which we visited this morning that a deduction was being made from every operative to pay the doctor. Is that a common practice?—No. It is not a common practice, so far as I can say offhand. We have dealt with that question in the Report on Deductions from Wages.

A-2983. It seems to be rather like compulsory sickness insurance in operation?—My recollection is that it is an unusual practice.

A-2984. Dealing with fines, you say that information was collected only as regards 24 mills, and the others did not give information. Would it be fair to assume that conditions as regards fining are more severe in the mills that did not give information than in those that did?—We have only recorded facts. You may draw any conclusions from them. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the actual facts. There are nine mills in which wage deductions were made for medical attendance. That is page 26 of our Report on Deductions from Wages.

A-2985. Would that deduction be willingly accepted by the work-people?—That I could not say.

A-2986. *Mr. N. M. Joshi*: Did the Court of Inquiry presided over by Mr. Justice Pearson make any confidential report, as was stated in the newspapers?—(Mr. Ewbank) Yes.

A-2987. Was it competent for a Court of Inquiry appointed under the Trade Disputes Act to make a confidential report? Was it in accordance either with the spirit or the letter of that Act?—(Mr. Ewbank) I think so. Section 12 says that the report of the Court of Inquiry shall be published. Here is the report which has been published.

Sir Victor Sassoon: It says "The...report...shall...be published by that authority in such manner as it thinks fit".

A-2988. *Mr. Joshi*: It does not say that there can be a report which need not be published?—(Mr. Ewbank) It does not say so.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Sub-section (2) says "The said authority may publish or cause to be published from time to time, in such manner as such authority thinks fit, any information obtained, or conclusions arrived at, by the Court or Board as the result or in the course of its inquiry or investigation." That is an *ad interim* report made to Government.

A-2989. *Mr. Joshi*: That has nothing to do with the non-publication of the report. Could the Royal Commission have a copy of that confidential report?—I should have to take the orders of Government on that point before replying. I will make a note of it.

A-2990. Arising out of your reply to the Chairman on the question of sickness insurance figures, is it possible for the Labour Office in co-operation with one or two millowners to collect figures, say for six months, about absenteeism on account of sickness? My suggestion is that you should take one or two mills, keep your investigators there, say for six months. It will be the business of the investigators to go into the names of absentees and find out why the men were absent and make a sort of report at the end of those six months?—(Mr. Gennings). That would give you some rough information of course. We should have to have an insurance expert to say whether that would be of any value in preparing a scheme, or whether the data we have got that way would enable us to collect really reliable statistics.

A-2991. We can get some figures of some reliability. Will it be possible for the Labour Office to do that?—Yes; if we were given the staff, it would be possible—within those limitations of course.

A-2992. It would be possible for you to collect the figures if your Government sanctioned the expenditure?—Yes; but the Labour Office would not guarantee the accuracy of the figures except in a very general way, because the investigators could not tell whether a man was really sick. They can draw certain conclusions; they can give their views whether he was or was not sick.

A-2993. With regard to your reply to the Chairman on the question of registration cards, you said that the workers might have an objection. Would you tell me why they should have any objection if the employer maintained a register?—The workman would have to have this card.

A-2994. The cards will remain with the employer. If the workman wants it, he will take it; otherwise, it can remain with the employer?—I did not understand that the Chairman meant that. I understood what the Chairman meant was a permanent record which each man would carry with him from mill to mill, showing over a period of years, the mills that he had been in, the times he had been absent, and the times his absence was due to sickness, and that every mill worker would have to keep the card and take it from mill to mill.

A-2995. I may explain my idea. The registration card will be in the first instance with the employer under whom the man is working. If after some experience the workmen found that it was easy for them to get employment by carrying the card, they would themselves ask the employer to give them the card. Gradually the workers would begin to ask for the registration card if they found it easy to get employment with a card. From that point of view, there should be no difficulty. I want to know why the workers should object to registration cards being maintained. They can take them if they want.—(Mr. Ewbank). What we suggest is that they should not be introduced without consultation with the workers, because we feel doubtful how the workers will regard it. I have seen the system of registration in East Africa among black labour, and I am inclined to think that there might be objection.

A-2996. We are not thinking of compulsory registration by law; we are thinking of voluntary registration. If it is compulsory, then certainly people will object. If the card is useful in securing employment, the workers may have it. Take the case of seamen. They have to produce a certificate before getting employment, and the men value the certificate as it enables them to get employment. If it is made voluntary and not compulsory, there may be no difficulty?—(Mr. Gennings). It is probable that he would not object, but I do not see what you would obtain from that of any value.

A-2997. The value will be that if he can show that he has worked in a particular mill, it will be easy for him to get employment in another mill. He will not be regarded as a new hand?—In fact it would become a sort of certificate as in the case of domestic servants.

A-2998. Yes; it would become a certificate?—I was not looking at it from that point of view. The Chairman suggested that it could be used as a basis for sickness insurance.

The Chairman: Well; I had both things in mind. I had the advantage to the workman of a record of his accumulated skill in obtaining work. I had also in my mind the beginning of a satisfactory system of registration on which future social benefits might be based.

A-2999. *Mr. Joshi:* I want to know from you whether the only objection from the point of view of the workers is to the registration cards mentioning the quality of the work or the character of the workman?—Yes. Of course, a sailor always has that on his discharge certificate.

Mr. Joshi : The sailors are objecting to that, and the International Labour Conference passed a convention stating that the quality of work or the character of the man should not be mentioned in the certificate.

The Chairman : My suggestion was merely to record facts and not opinions.

A-3000. *Mr. Joshi* : That is exactly what I am suggesting. There may be objection if opinions are recorded ; there may not be objection if only facts are mentioned.—Yes.

A-3001. You have given some figures of population born in Bombay ; the percentage is going down and down. Would it be a fair conclusion to draw from that that Bombay is gradually becoming unfit for permanent residence for working classes ?

Sir Victor Sassoon : Do those figures refer to workmens' *chawls* ?

Mr. Joshi : No ; they are general figures for the city of Bombay.—(Mr. Ewbank). You will notice the explanation just below the figures. The means of transport constantly being improved, the tendency is for the labouring classes to send their wives home at the time.

A-3002. Do you think that my conclusion is a fair one ?—No ; certainly not. The conditions in Bombay are clearly improved. They have improved in my life-time enormously.

Mr. Joshi : I do not know whether they are improved or not, but the figures really show that people do not permanently reside.

The Chairman : It shows that child birth—takes place in villages more now than it did in the past.

A-3003. *Mr. Joshi* : There is mention in your memorandum of a practice in Ahmedabad of children being hired by jobbers and *mukadams*. Can this practice be regulated or prohibited by law ?—(Mr. Gennings). If it were considered necessary, I suppose special legislation would have to be passed. Of course such legislation would have to be very carefully drawn up in order not to prevent or interfere with genuine apprenticeship and things of that kind.

A-3004. Have you considered whether such a practice deserves to be either regulated or prohibited by law ?—I have not considered it generally. It seems on the face of it to be a bad practice, but if you examine it very closely you might find that these boys received training in the beginning and eventually got jobs.

A-3005. You also mention a similar practice about *mukadams* getting paid by the contractors for the workers employed by the *mukadams*, and you say that sometimes it gives rise to evil practice. Can that be regulated by law or not ?—Yes, but it would be very difficult. The best way of regulating it is for the employer to take it over and get his labour in a different way.

A-3006. About public employment agencies, you say "This involves a willingness on the part of labour to go anywhere when a job is vacant." This refers to the workers going out of the city. But will not a public employment agency be useful in a city like Bombay where there are 80 or 75 mills and the workers have to go from mill to mill seeking a job ? If there is a public employment agency, it will regulate the employment somewhat better than under the present circumstances, and we need not think of sending the workers outside the city. Will not a public employment agency be useful for workers within the city itself ?—If you are only going to use it for that purpose, then I think such an employment agency could best be set up by the industry itself.

A-3007. You think that it should be set up by the industry itself ?—Yes, by the industry itself.

A-3008. Why do you object to Government doing it ?—If there is to be a Government agency of that kind, it should be able to cover the whole Presidency or the whole of India, as is done everywhere else. I do not think that Government should take up a limited employment agency of that sort when the employers of labour themselves have not tried any scheme, except the existing one, of recruiting labour.

A-3009. If the employers do not have it, cannot Government do it ? Do you think that Government should not try any scheme of a limited nature ?—(Mr. Ewbank). As far as Government are concerned, they express no opinion on this subject ; they are waiting for guidance from your Commission.

A-3010. The Commission wants guidance from Government. If Government are not willing to express an opinion on that question, I would like to ask another question. That is about contractors. I want to know whether the Bombay Government has tried a system of entering a fair wages clause in the public contracts given by them ?—This is a matter on which I am afraid I am not in a position to give you an answer. Most of

these contracts are given by the Public Works Department, and I should have to make an enquiry from them as to what their views were. I will make a note of that for our last meeting in case you address on that point.

A-3011. In your memorandum you have quoted the opinion of a lady doctor—“Notwithstanding the fibre-laden atmosphere in work-rooms, these women had better ventilated spaces to work in, than in their own *chawls* where every ventilation space was packed to avoid the ingress of fresh air.” Here, the lady doctor seems to think that the windows are closed to avoid fresh air, that is to say that the work-people are afraid of sleeping in an airy room. Might it be that the lady doctor misunderstood the work-people's intention? The work-people sometimes close the windows from a sense of decency; they have only one room to sleep in, and they put some cloth on the window for screening the window, and during the rainy season they do it to prevent the rain water getting in. Are you quite sure that the workmen close the windows in order to avoid fresh air?—(Mr. Gennings). I made no enquiries as to why they do it.

A-3012. Mr. Ewbank has got some knowledge of the people in the villages; are they very much afraid of fresh air?—(Mr. Ewbank) I think people are afraid of night air, but it is quite likely that the motive you mention might have entered into their minds.

A-3013. It has been stated that “In Bombay City no provision has been made by the employers for the education of their adult workers.” Have Government done anything in that direction?—The local authorities have started in a few places a certain number of classes for adult workers at night. I am afraid I cannot offhand give you what the number is; I have seen references to them frequently in the Educational Department.

A-3014. Can you give some information as to what effort Government is making towards adult education?—The main effort of Government is directed to primary, secondary and collegiate education, including technical. We consider that the education of the children has the first claim on Government. Where in particular areas some charitable agency starts an adult class, we are sympathetic and help them as far as our funds allow. But it is not one of the primary objects to which Government is directing its efforts.

A-3015. May I take it that the Government are not doing much?—Yes.

A-3016. Do Government help co-operative societies of the industrial classes by advancing them any money?—That is a matter that is dealt with in the Revenue Department. I should hesitate to answer.

A-3017. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: They do not give loans to industrial societies?—No; they do not give any loans to any kind of co-operative society, except housing societies.

A-3018. *Mr. Joshi*: Would it not be an encouragement to co-operative societies of workers, if they were given some advances? I realize the difficulties; I do not say that there are no difficulties. But if taking some risk Government give some advances, will they not thus encourage a very useful movement?—My personal opinion is that it is always risky to start a society with the aid of a Government loan, and it is only in very exceptional circumstances after detailed enquiry into the condition of the members that such a loan would be justifiable.

A-3019. Then, as regards workmen's compensation your Government is against compulsory insurance but prefer making workmen preferential creditors. It may happen that compulsory insurance is really useful; in the case of the employee of a small employer, who may not have large capital, a workman cannot get much unless there is compulsory insurance?—(Mr. Gennings). Yes, but with the Act framed as it is now I do not think there is a great deal of danger of that because it is only to very large and organized industries, that is to say factories with 20 or more people, that the Act applies.

A-3020. Yes, but we are now thinking of extending the Act and your Government is willing to extend it to others.—Well, I can only say that I have not come across a case where the workman has not got compensation owing to the failure of the employer to pay.

A-3021. *The Chairman*: Do you know of any country where there is compulsory insurance?—I would not say there are not, but I cannot recollect any.

A-3022. It is not the case in England at present?—No.

A-3023. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you know that the Royal Commission on Transport in England has recommended that with regard to accidents happening on roads?—Yes, a third-party insurance for motor cars: I know that.

A-3024. *Mr. Joshi*: It is stated that Government are supported in this view by the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association. I was wondering how the Ahmedabad Association expressed that view to Government. Did you receive their views from them?—

I think that the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association sometimes expresses its views in its publications. In this case we received it from the Labour Association.

A-3025. They do not mind co-operating with you. There is no mention in your memorandum as to whether it is desirable to have an Employers' Liability Act or not. I want to know whether your Government have considered the question, because it is one of the subjects in our questionnaire.—(Mr. Ewbank) No. The Bombay Government have not considered that question.

A-3026. It is a subject on our list. I would like the Bombay Government to consider and let us have their views.—(Mr. Gennings). Liability of employers for negligence on their part in case of accidents where a worker gets killed or injured ?

A-3027. Modify the civil law incorporating the doctrine of employers' liability. When the Government of India introduced the Workmen's Compensation Bill, the draft bill provided for employers' liability also, but the select committee dropped that portion. I want to know whether we cannot revive that legislation now. Turning to the question of the reduction of maximum hours cannot the Labour Office collect some figures, some data, about the state of production now when a change has been made from 12 hours to 10 hours ? If any experiments have been made with shorter hours than ten, we want some figures of production with such shorter hours. Can you help us in that matter ?—(Mr. Gennings) I think there would be enormous difficulty at this length of time to collect anything like accurate or approximate figures.

Sir Victor Sassoon : That is not Mr. Joshi's point. His question is whether experiments with shorter hours than ten hours have been tried in Bombay.

A-3028. *Mr. Joshi* : Yes, and whether you can get comparative figures of production when the hours were twelve and after they were reduced to ten, and also figures of production with shorter hours than ten if such shorter hours were introduced.—You might ask Mr. Johnstone about that. I think he has done some work along those lines.

A-3029. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Where did the Tariff Board get their figures from ?—They did not get them from us.

A-3030. *Mr. Joshi* : You mention that " In the case of Bombay, 19 mills employing a little over fifty thousand workers out of a total number of 75 working mills employing 148,000 workers were selected in consultation with the Bombay Millowners' Association and the Bombay Textile Labour Union." Have you got any written statement from the Bombay Textile Labour Union on that point ?—We have got no written statement.

A-3031. Then, it is your mere impression ?—Yes. I think we got a list prepared in our office in consultation with the Millowners' Association and submitted it to you, and you were not prepared to say whether it was a good one, a bad one or an indifferent one.

A-3032. You made a list in consultation with the Millowners' Association, and after preparing it you had a casual conversation with me and you asked my opinion. I would certainly have given my opinion if you had consulted me at the same time and in the same way as you consulted the Millowners' Association, but I was not prepared to help you as you consulted me in the way you did.—In connection with Ahmedabad we adopted the same procedure.

A-3033. Is it not a fact that you consulted me during the course of a private conversation, when you had prepared the list in consultation with the Bombay Millowners' Association ?—No. I was not aware that that was the position. We prepared a list ourselves from our own knowledge and records. First of all we showed it to the Millowners' Association and accepted certain amendments that they made, and then I showed it to you.

Mr. Joshi : You showed it to me in a casual way at a meeting for which you were not responsible. I had gone to your office and you talked to me about it and you wanted my opinion about it.

The Chairman : I have noted that.

A-3034. Mr. Gennings, you are the Registrar of Trade Unions, and you combine that duty with your Directorship of Information, Directorship of the Labour Office and Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation. May I ask you whether you regard yourself as a judicial officer in your capacity as Registrar of Trade Unions ?—Certainly.

A-3035. Supposing that on some occasion you publish certain things in your *Labour Gazette* regarding certain unions, which may not be proved to be correct afterwards, do you not think your position will be compromised in that way ?—I do not think so at all, any more than it will compromise my position when I am sitting as Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation.

A-3036. I will put a concrete case. Supposing there is a dispute about a certain union being registered or not registered—you know that there was a case about the Sholapur Union being registered or not registered—being a judicial officer you may sometimes have to pronounce a judicial opinion upon that, but in your capacity as Director of the Labour Office you publish some information regarding that union, which from the labour point of view may be wrong, and further as Director of the Labour Office you may have called the Assistant Secretary of that union and had talks with him, not judicially but informally, as to how that particular branch could be called a registered union. In the circumstances, do you not think that your action as Director of the Labour Office would be inconsistent with the judicial position you hold as Registrar of Trade Unions?—No, because as Registrar of Trade Unions, before I register a union, if I am not satisfied that the application form contains all the information I wanted, I have power to ask the Secretaries to come to me and discuss whether or not the composition of the body that they propose to register is a trade union or not a trade union. It is a matter of constant occurrence.

A-3037. There was no application from that branch to you at all. There was no application from the Sholapur branch, and you called the Secretary of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. You may say that you did that as Director of the Labour Office as you wanted information. My point is that your action in that way was inconsistent with your duties as Registrar of Trade Unions?—No, because I had not begun to function as Registrar. My recollection is that there was nothing in that particular incident which would have affected me at all as Registrar.

A-3038. It may affect you in this way. In the first place you have made enquiries which as a judicial officer you are not entitled to make before the case comes before you. Secondly, you get yourself committed in your *Labour Gazette* to a certain statement of fact, and it is quite possible, taking human nature into consideration, that after once getting yourself committed to a certain statement, it will be difficult for you to give a fair decision as Registrar of Trade Unions?—It is not my statement of facts. So far as the *Labour Gazette* is concerned, I receive information from various quarters.* I do not guarantee the accuracy of any statement. So far as the Sholapur Union was concerned, the statement was that it was a branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union.

A-3039. When you publish information about trade unions you take such information from the secretaries of the unions?—Yes, if they send it to me.

A-3040. Otherwise, you make enquiries?—We send them a circular letter asking them to furnish information.

A-3041. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The question is, can you be a prosecutor and judge at the same time?—The District Magistrate under the executive orders of Government has to supply information as to whether there are any trade unions in his district or not, and so far as outside of Bombay and Ahmedabad is concerned, any information as to the formation of trade unions comes either from the district magistrate or from the union itself.

A-3042. *Mr. Joshi*: May I ask why you did not ask for information from the Secretary of the Union, but depended upon the information given by the District Magistrate?—We should make enquiries, the next time when we send out our schedule from the Secretary to fill in. We do not know whether a trade union has been formed or not if the Secretary does not notify it to us.

A-3043. *Miss Power*: In the Chief Inspector's report he shows us the enormous reduction in the number of children employed in the factories in Bombay. Practically speaking there are no children employed. The figure for 1928 is 122. Where are those children now? Are they in school, or are they working in unregistered factories, or are they on the streets?—(Mr. Ewbank) In certain parts of Bombay compulsory education has been introduced.

A-3044. Are those the F and G wards?—Yes. In these wards no doubt most of the children are going to school. In other wards there is a gradual increase in the number of children going to school. Some of these children are therefore probably attending school. Of the rest I know nothing.

A-3045. Are there any statistics to show whether there is any increase in the number of children employed in unregistered places of employment since their numbers in the mill have been reduced?—(Mr. Gennings) Mr. Johnstone will be able to say that. We have nothing on record with us.

A-3046. I have been told that in the F and G wards out of 14,000 children there are 3,000 children (or approximately 22 per cent.) who are not attending school. What sort of compulsion is meant by the phrase "compulsory education"?—(Mr. Ewbank) You mean: what are the sanctions.

A-3047. If there is compulsory education in F and G wards how are the children brought into school?—The administration of the Primary Education Act in Bombay is vested in the Bombay Corporation and it is for them to decide to what extent and by what method they should enforce compulsion.

A-3048. Is there any difference in the methods used by the Municipality for bringing children into school in places where there is compulsory education and where there is not?—I believe that in the case of compulsory education the magistrate has got the power to fine a parent or imprison him for 24 hours if he does not obey the law. As this is a matter entirely in the hands of the Corporation I am afraid I cannot say offhand what the arrangement is.

A-3049. Dealing with housing you give statistics regarding the number of houses put up by various organizations such as Government, Municipality and so forth. But there are no statistics to enable us to see what are considered to be the minimum requirements for housing the existing industrial population and what is the present deficiency. Do such figures exist?—(Mr. Gennings) In 1919, after the War, the Municipal Commission estimated that there would be a shortage of 50,000 tenements for housing 250,000 people in Bombay. Government therefore prepared an industrial housing scheme as part of the development scheme.

A-3050. *The Chairman* : Were they persons or families?—50,000 tenements for 50,000 families of five persons each on an average.

A-3051. *Miss Power* : Was that one room per tenement?—Yes. The industrial housing scheme of the Development Department provided originally for 50,000 tenements. Government have actually constructed 16,500 tenements and a large proportion of them, approximately 10,000 are at the present moment vacant.

A-3052. What are the reasons for their being vacant?—A large variety of reasons has been given. One is that Worli is too far off.

A-3053. Are all the 10,000 tenements at Worli?—They are mostly at Worli. Some of them are at DeLisle Road and some of them are at Naigaum. The proportion of empties in *chawls* which are right in the centre of the working class area is very much smaller. Naigaum has a certain number of empties. DeLisle Road is more or less full and Sewri also is fairly full.

A-3054. Dealing with housing it is stated that sub-letting is not prevalent to the same extent in Ahmedabad and Sholapur as it is in Bombay. What is the reason for that? It strikes a casual observer that over-crowding is very much the same here as in those two places. Then, why should there be a sub-letting problem in Bombay and not in Ahmedabad or Sholapur?—In Bombay there are a large number of single men—grass widowers—whose families are away. They always go in for boarding.

A-3055. Is there a higher percentage of such men here than in Ahmedabad? Do you think that that is the main reason for the sub-letting problem in Bombay?—I would not like to express an opinion. I have not considered the reasons. Possibly Mrs. Wagh will be able to help you there.

A-3056. With regard to unregulated places of employment, have Government got any figures to show the percentage of the employed population of Bombay that is working in unregulated places of employment?—I have no figures. Perhaps Mr. Johnstone will be able to give an estimate.

A-3057. Do they come under the Factory Inspection Department?—No.

A-3058. Why then should he be asked?—Because he is interested in factories generally. Some of these unregistered factories may have been on his register some time or other and afterwards have been struck off. Naturally he would try to keep in touch with them to see if they again employed the same number of people which originally had brought them under the Factories Act. Factories go on and off the register according to the number of people employed.

A-3059. One of the difficulties suggested by Government in including unregulated shops with power employing ten persons and upwards with or without power, is the cost of inspection. Can you give us an estimate of the cost of inspection, assuming that the volume of inspection in the unregulated places is the same as at present in the case of the regulated places? What would be the approximate additional cost?—I have not the figures with me. Mr. Johnstone might be able to supply them.

A-3060. But this does not come into his sphere of work. I cannot see that he has anything to do with such an estimate.—In a matter of this kind Mr. Johnstone will be in a better position to help you than we could possibly be, because he could give an approximate idea of how many unregulated factories there are, where they are and what staff will be required for their inspection.

A-3061. I will ask Mr. Johnstone. Could we have an estimate from the Labour Office of the cost of the domestic budget enquiries in Ahmedabad in 1924, and the one in Sholapur in 1925?—I shall let you have those figures.

A-3062. Yes, what I want is the cost to Government of a budget enquiry in one year which is considered sufficiently extensive to be acceptable?—Yes, I shall let you have those figures.

A-3063. *Mr. Asavle*: Your memorandum shows that the percentage of persons born in Bombay to the total population has been steadily decreasing and is less in 1921 than in 1911. Is that due to the fact that a large number of workmen live in small houses where there is no sufficient accommodation for confinement, and therefore send their women to the villages for confinement?—(Mr. Ewbank) It is difficult to generalize on a subject like this. You know the conditions in which most of the population live and if you say that confinement cannot suitably take place in such limited accommodation, you will only be drawing a natural inference.

A-3064. Is there not also an additional reason for these women going out of Bombay for confinement, that they have to spend more here for confinement than at their own places?—But we have erected these Development Department *chawls* with a little more accommodation and these *chawls* are empty.

A-3065. The *chawls* at DeLisle Road and Naigaum are all fairly full; only those at Worli are not occupied because they are far away from the industrial area. In your memorandum you say that owing to the system of early marriage the majority of women employed in factories in this Presidency are married, and that they find it difficult to take care of their children. Have you made any enquiries as to why many of these women workers have to work under these circumstances even though they have children?—(Mr. Gennings). We have not made any specific enquiry into the subject.

A-3066. Do you not think that an enquiry should be made?—Yes, it could be made.

A-3067. In your memorandum you say that "neither rationalization nor standardization has yet been introduced in the textile industry in Bombay city and the Government of Bombay has no information in its possession to suggest that unemployment exists amongst industrial workers to any serious extent." Are you aware that such a system has been introduced in some of the Mills in Bombay?—Yes.

A-3068. Do you not think that this was one of the causes of the general strike here?—(Mr. Ewbank). We have the report of the Court of Inquiry which shows what the causes were.

A-3069. The Labour Office suggested that the strike took place when this system was introduced. Was not this the chief cause of the general strike of 1928-29?—The Committee referred to before has found that this was one of the chief causes.

A-3070. Has the appointment of a special recruiting officer brought about any change in the recruitment of shipping hands?—Questions relating to seamen and shipping generally are matters for the Government of India and not for the Government of Bombay. Mr. Woodhead has already been before the Commission to answer questions connected with seamen.

A-3071. *The Chairman*: There is a reference to the special recruiting officer who has been recently appointed. Has he been appointed by the Government of Bombay or the Government of India?—He is appointed by the Government of India and paid for by the Government of India.

A-3072. *Mr. Lalji*: You have the Labour Office and also a Director of Industries. Have you found out the cause of depression in the cotton textile industry?—(Mr. Ewbank). I think the Tariff Board's enquiry has indicated a large number of reforms required in the mill industry and these have not been carried out.

A-3073. But has any department of your Government made any enquiries in that respect?—I do not think any specific enquiry in that respect was made by the Government of Bombay.

A-3074. Does not the Director of Industries take any interest in this cotton textile industry?—It is not within his sphere to do so.

A-3075. Within whose sphere then does that lie?—In the sphere of the mill-owners.

A-3076. Although this is one of the most important industries in this Presidency the Government of Bombay have not taken any initiative in the matter?—The millowners are sufficiently able and enlightened to take care of their interests, and if they required any assistance from Government in any matter they would have come forward. Therefore Government themselves have not taken the initiative in making any such enquiry.

A-3077. Have the Government made any enquiries as to how the strikers maintained themselves during the five months of strike?—(Mr. Gennings) We have made no statistical enquiry at all.

A-3078. *The Chairman* : How many of them went back to the villages?—We have not been able to ascertain the number accurately. But a rough estimate on the basis of the figures relating to fares paid on the railways and steamers would give us 20,000 to 30,000 people.

A-3079. *Mr. Lalji* : Were they all starving?—I should think it was possibly what some of them did.

A-3080. Is the representation of labour on bodies like the Legislative Council, the Corporation and the Port Trust adequate?—(Mr. Ewbank). That is not a question I can easily answer. Nomination of labour representatives to these bodies is quite a recent principle. A beginning has now been made.

A-3081. Have Government taken any action in the matter of closing the liquor shops on pay days as recommended by the Excise Committee?—I am afraid we do not know. We have to make enquiries.

A-3082. Will you be surprised if you are told that Government have not done anything since the Committee reported on the matter?—You evidently know the answer to the question.

A-3083. But will the Government take any action in the matter?—I will make enquiries of the Department concerned.

A-3084. What is the amount that Government have spent on the development *chawls*?—I am sorry we have not the information here.

A-3085. Could you give us a rough idea of the loss incurred on the investment or how much less than 5 per cent. you get?—I cannot give you those figures at present.

A-3086. *Col. Russell* : In your memorandum it is stated that the "main cause of their ill-health appears to be the prevalence of malaria in localities in which they live." What action has Government taken or is proposing to take to eradicate this evil?—(Mr. Ewbank). We have appointed Major Covell as special officer for this purpose. He investigated into the matter and since then the Municipality has taken action. Wells have been closed and so on. This is again a matter for the Municipality. We can obtain for your information a report from the Municipality of the action taken by them in this direction, and what they propose to do hereafter.

A-3087. Has the Director of Public Health any instructions from the Government of Bombay with regard to the question of malaria in Bombay?—I cannot remember that he has.

A-3088. As malaria is such an important disease all over India, as Major Covell has definitely said that the prevalence of malaria is the main cause of ill-health in Bombay and as Government have also admitted that the health conditions are unsatisfactory owing to this disease, do they propose to take any definite action to compel the millowners to do something in connection with this matter, seeing that "the correlation between the intensity of malaria and the proximity of mills is most striking", which suggests that malaria is caused by the mills?—We have no reason to suppose that the action which the Municipality is taking on this report is inadequate. I shall obtain a report from the Municipality on the action taken by them and pass it on to you. If you think that the action taken by the Municipality is inadequate, Government will certainly consider the matter further.

A-3089. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Are not the Municipality maintaining a special malaria department?—I believe they are.

A-3090. *Col. Russell* : In the Government memorandum it is stated that in the City of Bombay there are five large hospitals with 832 beds. Are these all the hospital beds for the whole city of Bombay?—Yes. But I have not personally verified the figures.

A-3091. But are there no municipal hospitals or other hospitals?—There is one Municipal hospital with 300 beds.

A-3092. Then there are only 1,132 beds for the whole city?—Yes.

A-3093. *Mr. Cliff* : Could you let us have a memorandum dealing with the control of the manufacture and sale of country liquor?—From what point of view would you like to have it. Would you like a mere descriptive account of how manufactured?

A-3094. We are told that labourers here generally drink heavily. I went to one shop this morning which has been licensed for the sale of country spirit. I was told that Government controlled the manufacture of this country spirit?—Yes.

A-3095. Would it possible for you to give us a memorandum dealing with the method of manufacture, the regulations regarding the hours of sale in shops and the revenue obtained from this source in the city and in the Presidency separately?—Yes.

A-3096. Do the budgets which have been prepared for Ahmedabad and Sholapur, accurately represent the standard of life of the working people referred to in the Bombay Government memorandum in those budgets in those two cities?—(Mr. Gennings) Yes, in the opinion of the Labour Office they do.

A-3097. It says that the Government of Bombay have already under contemplation the revision of the Bombay working class cost of living index number. Is there any possibility of that being done very soon?—So far as the Bombay working class cost of living index number is concerned, the revision is taking the form of a new index number on a new base, and that cannot be prepared until we have a family budget enquiry.

A-3098. Is it proposed to have a family budget enquiry very soon. I am anxious to know what "under contemplation" means?—Yes. In fact, the strike of 1928, which lasted six months, prevented us from undertaking one then. The strike of 1929 also prevented us from undertaking one, because we want to see about a year ahead before we can undertake a family budget enquiry; a general strike would simply kill the whole enquiry.

A-3099. Can it be taken that the conditions are sufficiently normal for an enquiry to be commenced now?—I should not think they were.

A-3100. How long do you think one would have to wait before conditions might be taken as being normal?—It would really depend on what is the outcome of the discussions which have to take place at some time on the report of the Fawcett Committee, whether that will have the effect of disturbing labour or not.

A-3101. But there are no strikes going on at the present time?—There are not.

A-3102. In fact 6 mills are closed, but labour has generally resumed?—Yes; and it is possible too that those mills will never open again.

A-3103. How long would it take to have a budget enquiry in Bombay?—The collection of the budgets will take about a year; then they have got to be tabulated.

A-3104. I am exercised in my mind as to whether it is possible in the city of Bombay to maintain a proper standard of health with an income of Rs. 27; do you care to express an opinion on that?—No, I am not prepared to express an opinion on that.

A-3105. Is there any one in your office who would be capable of expressing an opinion on that?—I do not think so, because it would have to be the combined opinion of various types of experts; for instance, a biochemist or food expert would have to express an opinion as to what should be bought and what are the food values. There are so many standards and so many different types of working classes; one would have to consider the various staples and which cost more or less than others. I expect you have in view a minimum wage based upon a standard of living.

A-3106. I find that with regard to Railway Companies, the Post Office, certain industries and the Municipality, a man has to pass a certain standard of health before he is admitted into that employment; I wonder whether it is possible for you to express an opinion with regard to the standard that is required for entering into such an occupation and maintaining that standard on an income of Rs. 27 a month?—I would not like to express an opinion.

A-3107. In the memorandum of the Government of Bombay the report of the Fawcett Committee is quoted dealing with the problem of the minimum wage. It is pointed out that they appreciate the contention that the standard of comfort of textile workers in Bombay is exceedingly low. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

A-3108. Following upon the enquiries which have been made from time to time with regard to rates of wages in certain industries, what are the earnings of the average adult male worker per month in this city?—We have worked it out, but I could not say off-hand; I can let you have that figure for the cotton mill industry.

A-3109. Can you carry it further than the cotton industry?—No.

A-3110. Can you furnish that figure with regard to Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur for adult men and women?—Yes, we can do that for all three centres as before 1928.

A-3111. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Could I have the figure for 1914 as well ?—There are no labour statistics collected by labour office methods which could enable me to give you the 1914 figure.

A-3112. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You are speaking of the average wage figure. What would be the maximum pay which you would include in that ?—It would include labour such as jobbers.

A-3113. Up to Rs. 150 a month ?—Yes, we could have wages up to that figure.

A-3114. Would you merely take the average of the different rates ?—We should get a weighted average.

Mr. Cliff : In the Government memorandum it is stated that the Port Trust have had an enquiry into the cost of living, and it is stated that the result of that has not yet been published ?—That was an enquiry that the Labour Office made, a sort of tentative family budget enquiry amongst Port Trust workers.

A-3115. Was that conducted by trained investigators ?—It was conducted by our lady investigators, yes.

A-3116. Could we have a copy of that report ?—It has not reached the stage of a report. We collected information to see whether we could get from it any data for an enquiry into the earnings of casual workers, and we came to the conclusion that we could not.

A-3117. It says that it is not yet published, which implies that it is to be published ?—I do not think we shall publish it. It is a matter for Government to consider, but I do not think they will publish it, because the budgets were collected with great difficulty and it did not quite touch the class of people that we wanted to get hold of. We wanted to get hold of casual workers and we were not able to do so.

A-3118. So that it is not sufficiently conclusive to be published ?—Yes, it is not sufficiently conclusive to be published as a Labour Office publication.

A-3119. In your enquiry into the rates of wages in the cotton industry, did you ever obtain the average earnings of *badlis* ?—No, we specifically excluded those from our enquiry.

A-3120. Why did you exclude them ?—Because they form such an uncertain factor. When you are dealing with actual earnings in a particular industry you must I think provide for the bulk of the workers, and those people who are regularly employed. I think that is done in all wage enquiries : it is only the regular employee in a factory that you consider.

A-3121. But I understand this industry is dependent upon that spare staff ?—Yes ; we can calculate the wages of *badlis*, but it would only be the *badli* in one particular mill. One day he may be in one mill and another day in another mill.

A-3122. I think the Fawcett Committee recommended that there should be a reserve staff which should be paid irrespective of whether it worked or not ?—Yes, but from the point of view of an official statistical collecting agency, we cannot trace these *badlis* from one mill to another.

A-3123. But you know from the pay books of the mill what they pay the *badlis* and the number of men employed ?—We could find out the actual number of *badlis* employed during the month and the actual amount of wages they earned ; but a *badli* will go to half a dozen mills in the course of a month.

A-3124. I agree. If you cannot give us the earnings, can you give us any indication of the amount of employment they obtain ?—No, I am afraid I could not do that.

A-3125. Is it possible to give us an estimate of the amount of unemployment there is in Bombay ?—No, I do not think you could get any reliable estimates.

The Chairman : Have you in mind men who have worked in Bombay and are now out of employment, or do you also include men who have come to Bombay from the villages in search of work but have never yet worked in Bombay ?

Mr. Cliff : I did not include that class. As I understand from the report, there is a fairly stable population in Ahmedabad ; there is a similar state of affairs in Sholapur ; but there is not the same state of affairs in Bombay. I am anxious to see whether we can ascertain on any fairly reliable estimate the amount of unemployment there is in this city.

The Chairman : If that is attempted, what I should like also would be the average number of men and women at any one time who come into Bombay in search of work, which add to the population of the city, but who do not become workers in the city.

A-3126. *Mr. Cliff*: Yes, they must be kept separate?—The latter figure of course would be quite impossible. It would be impossible to trace the number of men coming into Bombay looking for work; there is nothing on which we could base that.

A-3127. *The Chairman*: You could not even say 10 or 20 thousand?—I would not even like to make an approximation within such wide limits as that.

A-3128. I gather that except in certain seasons when the people are needed in their villages, it is a very large addition to the temporary population of the city; they come in the form of ledgers in search of work and lodge with people whom they know?—Yes, I think there is a fairly large proportion. (*Mr. Gennings*) The only basis that you could go on would be to communicate with all the factory employers and large employers of labour and ask them how many they are employing now as compared with any given period or any given date, adding to it the factories that are closed and subtracting the factories that are newly opened. In connection with the census for 1931 we have asked that the forms should provide for the collection of information of that kind. But where you have no organization, where your workers are not obtained through trade unions or anything of that kind, it is difficult, almost impossible, to say how many people are unemployed, except in a very rough way.

A-3129. *Mr. Cliff*: I appreciate the difficulties, but I am anxious to see whether it is possible to give us any estimate that can be regarded as fairly reliable?—May I put it this way? Shall we endeavour to obtain, by the way I have suggested, certain figures and submit them, not as carrying the approval of the Labour Office—the Labour Office will accept no responsibility for them—but explaining what we have done, how we obtained those figures, and leaving it for the Commission to say whether they regard them as of any value.

A-3130. If you can do anything which you think would be of service to the Commission I am sure the Commission would be obliged to you?—You appreciate that I do not want to put in any figures which I am not convinced in my own mind are accurate.

A-3131. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You can at the same time give an idea of the percentage of the error?—Yes, certainly. All that we could do would be to carry out what I suggested; that is to say, we could explain to the Commission exactly what we have got and how we have got it.

A-3132. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the proposal to try to find the amount of unemployment under the census, may we take it that it is the concern of the Government to find the amount of unemployment in the State?—Yes; Government would naturally like to know as part of its ordinary social statistics the extent of unemployment.

A-3133. Is there any attempt to measure under employment?—You mean short-time?

A-3134. Yes?—No; we have made no attempt.

Mr. Cliff: I went through a mill this morning where 48 *badlis* had actually been engaged this morning and approximately 50 had been turned away. That indicates that there is the unemployment problem here.

A-3135. Under the heading "Control exercised over working conditions" in your memorandum you say "In the case of large concentrated works, camps are laid out by Government Engineers and proper provision is made for water supply, sanitation, medical assistance, etc." Would you define what is a "large concentrated work"?—(*Mr. Ewbank*) It depends upon the circumstances of the case. In a town where dispensaries and other facilities exist, it would be less necessary to provide special facilities than it would be if you go out to a country-place or some exceptional place like the Sukkur Barrage. I do not think we could possibly define what we mean by "a large concentrated work".

A-3136. Take the Sukkur Barrage. How does it work in that case?—I think you yourself have seen it.

A-3137. Yes, but I am asking you to tell me how it really works out. What is the control exercised there?—We know that there is a dispensary there, a special doctor and a hospital. I understand that the Public Works Department have employed sanitary inspectors to look after the sanitary arrangements. As regards housing, I am not sure, but I understand they have put up temporary huts for their labour, or have provided the contractor, I think, with the material for putting up temporary huts.

A-3138. I notice the phrase in your memorandum "Occasionally materials are hired or loaned to contractors for housing their workmen", but having visited the barrage myself I know that provision for shelter is not made in the drag lines?—I think there are not very many people on the excavating machines; I imagine that about a dozen men are employed on a machine.

A-3139. Will you tell us what is the general policy of the Government in this matter?—The Government has no definite system of dealing with the question, but, broadly speaking, it may be said that the attitude of Government is that it should be a good employer according to the prevailing standards, and as local circumstances alter so the Government, without fixing any definite standard, modifies its actions according to the circumstances and tries to be a good employer. We have to consider also the economy of public money in the matter in creating dispensaries for only a handful of men.

A-3140. The barrage work is largely one which is let out on contract. Would it not be reasonable on the part of the Government to require that at least shelter should be provided for labour employed by contractors?—I think it is desirable.

A-3141. I want to know whether the Government consult the trade unions when labour legislation is being considered?—Yes, in all cases.

A-3142. Is it possible for you to tell us why the post of the Director of Labour was abolished?—(Mr. Gennings) I think it was for the administrative convenience of Government.

A-3143. That would be the sole reason?—(Mr. Ewbank) I think also as a matter of retrenchment.

A-3144. Under "Industrial Disputes" you say, "As experience and knowledge are gained and the activities of the Labour office (that is, the Bombay Labour Office) develop it will promote the settlement of industrial disputes when they arise." May I ask whether the Labour Office takes an opportunity of dealing with disputes before there is an actual stoppage of labour?—(Mr. Gennings) No; this particular object of the Labour Office was never put into force by Government. I think, on reconsideration, Government decided that it would perhaps be better if they did not take part in the settlement of industrial disputes. I think they probably had in their mind an organization with conciliation officers as at the Ministry of Labour.

A-3145. I was going to ask you whether there is any objection on the part of Government to have an Industrial Relationship Department similar to what there is in England?—(Mr. Ewbank) I will make enquiries on that point. You want the view of the Government?

A-3146. Yes. It is called the Industrial Relationship Department, and if a dispute is apprehended the officers of the ministry may get into touch with both parties before the actual dispute takes place?—(Mr. Gennings) You will appreciate the difficulty of the setting up by Government of an Industrial Relationship Department where conciliation machinery does not exist in industry, because, as shown by the strikes here, they take place without any previous negotiation between the parties; that makes it rather difficult.

A-3147. Is that an absolute statement?—It would not be absolute, but the proportion is so infinitely great that it is almost a statement of fact.

A-3148. *Diwan Chaman Lal*: Is not your experience that in many cases the unions make their representations to the employers and they are not listened to?—That does happen. But what I mean is that there is no conciliation machinery such as is laid down by the Fawcett Committee which says that it must be done; that such and such a procedure shall be followed, that discussions should go from one party to another party finally culminating in your national board. If there was such an organization we should know of a dispute at the earliest possible moment, because soon after the machinery is started we should know about it.

A-3149. *Mr. Cliff*: We have got presented in these documents the Fawcett mediation rules. Have the Government considered the application of such machinery to other undertakings, like docks, engineering establishments, tramways and other industries?—(Mr. Ewbank) No. The mediation rules are suggested for a particular industry where the need is particularly urgent, and Government have had to wait to see what progress is made, on account of the series of strikes.

A-3150. When you were answering Sir Ibrahim Rahimtools you said that the Government have to wait to see how the situation develops. You have got an illiterate population, you know the construction that can be put on a sentence like that. I put it to you that the work-people here in Bombay are entitled to say to themselves that the way to get conciliation machinery is to strike?—The conciliation machinery suggested by the Fawcett Committee was accepted on the side of the millowners and it only remains for the unions concerned to endorse it also before it can be brought into force.

A-3151. You say it is because of the urgency, and the urgency being strikes in this industry?—The urgency is to save the industry from this disastrous series of strikes.

A-3152. I agree. Is it not right that other industries where workmen have got to make representations of a similar character should not also have conciliation machinery?—I think it is desirable.

A-3153. Therefore is it not proper that the Government should consider the question of the application of similar mediation rules to other industries before disaster occurs in those industries?—There is no objection to Government considering the question, but you will remember that the mediation rules were only suggested for the first time in March last.

A-3154. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can the Government force the mediation rules?—No; it is purely a question of consent by both the parties.

A-3155. *Mr. Cliff*: But the Government may enact legislation, not forcing the machinery but making provision for the machinery. At the moment you have no status before a dispute occurs. Would it be opportune for you to consult the Government on that aspect? The Government might enact legislation providing for conciliation machinery and joint industrial council machinery?—(*Mr. Gennings*) Might I refer you to our memorandum in this connection?

A-3156. May I take it that this paragraph in your Memorandum expresses the opinion of the Bombay Government?—Yes.

Mr. Cliff: Can it be considered whether it is possible for a similar machinery as is provided in the Fawcett Report to be applied to any other industry in this city and presidency?—The opinion of Government may be taken on that point.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Am I right in saying that the machinery laid down by the Fawcett Committee is in the nature of an almost daily or weekly contact between the employers and labour in an industry irrespective of whether there was a dispute pending or not, whereas the Trade Disputes Act comes into force if there is any dispute or a likelihood of a dispute?

Mr. Cliff: Yes. The Fawcett Report provides for means for interpretation of the existing standing orders.

Sir Victor Sassoon: It is merely a machinery to prevent the possibility of the occurrence of a dispute.

Mr. Cliff: What I am saying is that other men are working under wage agreements and under settled conditions of labour. They want similarly to have an opportunity of making the same kind of representation that can be made in the cotton industry. We have got it in the cotton industry because of the urgency; let us have it in the other industries because of the rightness of it.

Sir Victor Sassoon: The Fawcett Report did not anticipate that there should be any legislation to this effect; they wanted that it should be a voluntary matter between the employer and the labour.

The witness: (*Mr. Gennings*) It is perfectly open in any industry for either side to adopt similar measures.

Sir Victor Sassoon: There is not the slightest suggestion that there should be legislation to this effect.

The witness: (*Mr. Ewbank*) In what way do you suggest that we should take the initiative?

Mr. Cliff: You have got a machinery for the cotton industry.....

The Chairman: It is not in operation; the Committee have only sketched out a machinery.

Mr. Cliff: Yes, it is not in operation, but the party which does not accept it will be at a decided disadvantage with public opinion. But that is done, as I understand, because of the urgency and the disease coming on the industry. I should like to say "apply that to other industries because of its rightness".

The Chairman: What you are suggesting is not an action on the part of Government.

Mr. Cliff: Take the Government of Bombay's memorandum to which my attention was drawn. Writing to the Government of India they suggested that "the gap should be filled". Having the Fawcett Report, which is a report of the Bombay Government, can lessons be learnt out of that and a similar machinery applied to other industries?

The Chairman: They do not say that the Government should fill up the gap. What they say is "the gap should be filled by the establishment of conciliation machinery

within an industry itself set up by the parties concerned". Would not an initiative on the part of Government be resented by both parties in the industry?

The witness : (Mr. Gennings) I think the intention of the Government of Bombay was that before you had your Trade Disputes Act you should have some law passed, as was done in England, providing for the setting up of conciliation machinery. There was an Act before you had your Trade Disputes Act providing for conciliation and arbitration.

A-3157. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You mean the Whitley Councils?—I cannot recollect the provisions of the Act now, but I think for every industry it was provided that conciliation machinery should be set up, and as a result of that machinery, I think, the conciliation officers of the Ministry of Labour were appointed.

A-3158. *Mr. Cliff* : 50 years ago you had boards for the miners definitely put up by legislation. Then you had a legislation following upon the Whitley Councils' Report. I understand it is the opinion of the Bombay Government that that is desirable?—(Mr. Ewbank) Yes.

A-3159. I am told that the Government of Bombay have not considered applying the spirit underlying the Fawcett Report and the kind of machinery to other industries. I want to ask if they will consider it and tell us?—The question I ask—if you will allow me to repeat it—is in what way do you suggest that we should take the initiative, because that would help us a great deal. We admit it is desirable.

A-3160. You mean with regard to approach?—Yes.

A-3161. I do not think the Government will be going out of their sphere if they suggest to other industries in the Bombay Presidency that they should similarly consider the question of setting up a regular machinery on the lines indicated by the Fawcett Report?—Yes. (Mr. Gennings) Where trade unions exist, I take it?

The Chairman : As you know, Mr. Cliff, in the Ministry of Labour there has been a special officer in charge whose duty is to collect and supply information and to assist in the formation of joint industrial councils. Do I take it that that is the direction in which your suggestion to the Labour Office and the Government of Bombay should take?

A-3162. *Mr. Cliff* : Yes. Might I ask how the labour representatives are appointed on the Bombay Council now?—They are nominated by Government.

A-3163. How do they decide that they are labour representatives?—(Mr. Ewbank) In the absence of an organization we look out to see who are the men who seem to be taking a lead in labour matters; men who are engaged in some sort of trade unionism and who are not extremists on either side are generally chosen.

A-3164. *Mr. Cliff* : I want to know whether you consult labour organizations?—Not formally. (Mr. Gennings) All the nominated members are actually officials or on the executives of trade unions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-SECOND MEETING
BOMBAY
Friday, 22nd November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY *(Chairman)*.

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, B.A.T.
 Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
 C.I.E.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
 Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
 Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.
 I.M.S. *(Medical Assessor)*.

Mr. HOOSAINBHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *(Assistant Commissioners)*
 Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.

Dr. *(Miss)* T. G. H. CAMA. } *(Lady Assessors)*
 Mrs. K. WAGE.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *(Joint Secretaries)*
 Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. R. B. EWBANK, C.I.E., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of
 Bombay, General Department, and Mr. J. F. GENNINGS,
 Director of the Labour Office, Bombay.**

Mr. Ewbank : I was asked yesterday by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola (A-2965) to bring here the record of His Excellency the Governor's speeches at the meetings of June the 18th and 21st. I herewith produce them.

The Chairman : Thank you.

A-3165. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do I take it that in the Municipal Corporation, under legislation passed last year, four seats have been allotted to registered trade unions ?—*(Mr. Ewbank)* Yes.

A-3166. From that does it follow that the policy of the Bombay Government is to help labour to express itself both in the Municipal Corporation and in the local Legislature ?—Certainly.

A-3167. Was there a Bill recently introduced by a private Member in the local Legislature reducing the franchise from Rs. 10 to Rs. 5 ?—Yes.

A-3168. Was that Bill opposed by the Government ?—No, the Government maintained a neutral attitude.

A-3169. If it is the policy of the Local Government to help labour to voice its feelings and to obtain proper representation, why did the Government maintain a neutral attitude ?—For various reasons. One was that the municipal franchise had not very long before been reduced to Rs. 10, and Government thought it might be unwise to reduce it again so soon. Another reason was the practical difficulties which would arise by a very large number of additional people coming on the register.

A-3170. Do I take it that the Bombay Government is not opposed in principle to the lowering of the franchise in order to enable the workers to exercise their rights ?—I do not think I am in a position to say that the Bombay Government would necessarily agree that the lowering of the franchise was the best way of securing representation for labour at the present stage. They would have to consider the circumstances of each case.

A-3171. If the franchise was lowered, thereby enabling a large number of workers who are not now able to exercise their franchise under the present constitution to do so, would it not necessarily give them a bigger voice both in matters relating to the Corporation and in matters relating to the Council?—Theoretically, yes.

A-3172. That theory, worked out in practice, in other countries, has proved that labour has actually achieved power?—Yes.

A-3173. Do I take it that the Bombay Government would not be opposed to it in principle?—The Bombay Government are, in principle, desirous of giving labour a voice in the administration.

A-3174. A question was put to you yesterday by Mr. Joshi about a confidential report which was made in regard to the Court of Inquiry which was held. You are familiar with the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act. As I read them, under section 12 there is a mandatory duty imposed upon the authorities to publish the reports?—The Report.

A-3175. No, reports?—If you will look at the section you will see it says "report."

A-3176. It says "report or reports"—the final and any *interim* report?—The confidential report is not an *interim* report.

A-3177. It says: "shall as soon as possible after receipt by the authority by which the court or board was appointed be published"?—All I can say is that the Chairman of the Court of Inquiry was a High Court judge; one of the members was the Additional Judicial Commissioner in Sind, and the other is a well known Advocate in Bombay and an ex-High Court judge. They submitted a confidential report. In reply to Mr. Joshi yesterday I said I would take the orders of Government as to whether the confidential report might be placed before this Royal Commission.

A-3178. What I am driving at is the principle involved. It is not what you might or might not do now. As I read the Act, there is a mandatory provision imposed. Did you take legal opinion before you accepted this verdict of the Committee not to publish the confidential report?

The Chairman: Surely the action was that of the Court and not that of the local Government.

Diwan Chaman Lall: But the Government, under Section 12, is under a mandatory duty to publish the report.

A-3179. *The Chairman*: I take it the position is that this document which has been referred to is not really a report of the Commission?—The report of the Commission has been published. The Commission, in addition, sent in a confidential report which, I do not think it is a breach of confidence if I say it, mainly deals with the defects of the Trade Disputes Act and makes suggestions as to how that Act should be revised.

A-3180. Then it was not a report on the dispute?—No. Although it was called a report, it was more in the nature of a note.

A-3181. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: It was on an entirely different point. It was on the weaknesses of the Trade Disputes Act—something quite outside the terms of reference?—Mainly.

A-3182. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Did it arise out of the dispute and the enquiry held by the Court?—I must appeal to you, Sir, to protect me from further questions on this report because it is confidential.

A-3183. I quite agree, and I will not press you further upon it. Have you taken any orders of Government in regard to placing that document before us?—I said yesterday that I would. The Honourable Member in charge of Labour is at present in Sind.

A-3184. Is it the decided practice of the Government of Bombay in regard to the Trade Disputes Act to receive confidential reports and not to publish them?—This is the first Court which has ever sat under the Trade Disputes Act. No practice has yet been established.

A-3185. This morning's newspapers announced a resolution which was passed by the Provincial Congress Committee to the effect that "This meeting is of the emphatic opinion that the police ban on meetings of mill workers is clearly an infringement of the rights and liberties of the people, and should be rescinded forthwith." Is there a ban on meetings of mill workers in the mill areas?—Yes.

A-3186. Under what particular Act?—I think it is under the Police Act.

A-3187. How long has this ban been in existence?—For some six months.

A-3188. When did the riots and the strike cease?—About the middle of September. They gradually died down. There was no definite date.

A-3189. Is this the position, that properly constituted meetings of properly constituted trade unions, if called in the mill areas, cannot be held under this ban?—The matter is one entirely for the Home Department.

The Chairman : How do you bring this within our terms of reference? It seems to me purely a question of the local law and order. How is it industrial?

Diwan Chaman Lall : It is a question in regard to the relations subsisting between the employers and workers. If action is taken by the Government against the workers and not against the employers, surely it is a matter for us to consider whether that is conducive to good feeling between the employers and the workers concerned.

The Chairman : Is it not the case that this is an order which arose out of the recent troubles in connection with meetings in the streets?

Diwan Chaman Lall : Meetings in the mill areas.

The Chairman : And was due to questions of law and order quite apart from any industrial questions?—(Mr. Ewbank). That is so. It is independent of industrial disputes.

Diwan Chaman Lall : That is why I wanted to know why the order also subsists against the holding of properly constituted meetings of properly constituted trade unions.

The Chairman : In the streets or in a building?

Diwan Chaman Lall : Anywhere.

The Chairman : Then so far it would be a legitimate question?—(Mr. Ewbank). The order arose out of the fear that if such meetings were held riots and disturbances were likely to take place. Under the order at present meetings may be held with the permission of the Police Commissioner.

The Chairman : Therefore you claim that it does not act as a ban on proper trade union meetings?

Mr. Cliff : If there is a prohibition of proper trade union meetings, would it not be well to get the person responsible for the order to appear before us?

Sir Victor Sassoon : This is exceptional action and not normal action. I understand that the order will have to come up again within a few days. Whether it will be continued or not, I cannot say, but surely this action was not taken against trade unionism in any way; it was taken against something much more serious, and I cannot see that whatever we might say could prevent any Government taking any action against the holding of any meetings if such action were found necessary in order to uphold law and order.

Mr. Joshi : To my knowledge the annual general meetings of trade unions cannot be held, and have had to be postponed.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Has permission been asked?—(Mr. Ewbank). The position is that the discretion rests with the Commissioner of Police.

The Chairman : I understand this order is one for the protection of life and limb. The only question which concerns us is whether or not it is in effect preventing legitimate meetings of trade unions.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : Perhaps Mr. Ewbank will give us the dates on which the orders were promulgated. They are orders under the Police Act, made by the Commissioner of Police, and they have a limited operation; they have to be re-promulgated from time to time. Perhaps Mr. Ewbank can give us the dates on which the orders were issued, a copy of the orders, the date at which the general strike took place, the date at which the riots began, and the date when the riots were brought under control.

The Chairman : Yes, and then I shall be in a position to judge whether or not we ought to have called before us the Commissioner of Police or the Minister in charge of that Department.

A-3190. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : When the Government of India approached you in regard to the question of the existence of unemployment, and the necessity of having unemployment labour exchanges, what was the opinion expressed by the Government of Bombay? Was the opinion expressed that there was no material change from 1921, and therefore there was no necessity to revise their verdict in regard to the necessity of any machinery for dealing with the subject of unemployment?—(Mr. Gennings). The

reply was to the effect that Government did not consider that unemployment here was a problem which necessitated employment exchanges.

A-3191. On what did the Government base its opinion?—On general knowledge. It could not base it on statistics because there were none. Government formed that opinion on the general results of the observations of its investigators.

A-3192. In your memorandum you say: "But apart from these circumstances there does exist a certain amount of unemployment amongst those desirous of working in the textile industry." Are you revising your verdict as to the existence of unemployment?—No. Government's view was that unemployment did not present a problem.

A-3193. And therefore there was no necessity to deal with it?—There was no necessity for State action.

A-3194. You state that when the standardized muster was brought into operation in October 1928 it displaced 6,000 to 8,000 workers, and you therefore state that standardization would displace some more. Does not that show some necessity for dealing with the unemployment problem?—That is a matter of opinion. Considering how labour is recruited in Bombay, it is quite possible that the majority of those 6,000 returned to their villages and to their land. It is possible that they may have left the mill industry and have gone into some other industry where labour was demanded.

A-3195. I take it that this is merely your opinion?—It must be an opinion.

A-3196. Because you say in your memorandum that you have no statistical basis to go upon?—No, it is purely an opinion.

A-3197. So that the only fact in this statement is that there were 6,000 to 8,000 people displaced?—Yes.

A-3198. And that as the standardization scheme persists there will be more people displaced?—Yes, for which provision will be made by the industry itself if the Fawcett Committee's recommendations are carried out.

A-3199. I take it that rationalization, as it is persisting and will persist, will displace many more workers?—Yes.

A-3200. In your memorandum under the head "unemployment" you give some figures and state "It will be clear from the above figures that in spite of the growth in population, the demand for labour has not kept pace with the supply," which means more unemployment?—Yes, provided people remain in Bombay city and do not seek employment elsewhere.

A-3201. So that if we take these statements, they do reveal the existence of unemployment?—Certainly.

A-3202. You say: "As regards the application of the International Conventions relating to unemployment, in the short time at their disposal the Government of Bombay are not in a position to formulate any conclusions." When was the matter of unemployment first brought to the notice of the Government of Bombay? Was it not in 1919?—I cannot say.

A-3203. The Washington Convention regarding the question of labour exchanges was in the year 1919. Was the Government of Bombay circularized, as other local Governments were, in regard to this matter?—No doubt it was.

A-3204. Then you have had 10 solid years from 1919 to 1929, and yet you complain about the shortness of time?—The Government would have naturally considered whether employment exchanges were necessary. Certainly during the periods of 1919, 1921, 1922 it was obvious that there was no necessity for employment exchanges.

A-3205. But after that you had seven solid years to consider this problem. Has any attempt been made by the Bombay Government to deal with the problem since the boom period came to an end?—Government has never been satisfied that there is a problem.

A-3206. Your position is that the Government is not satisfied that there is a problem because it never made an enquiry into the matter?—We have made no statistical enquiry.

A-3207. Therefore you are not in a position to say whether there is a problem or not?—I do not think that follows at all.

A-3208. What I am dealing with now are the facts which I have elicited from your own memorandum?—That a few thousand of the workers have been displaced?

A-3209. And the apprehension of more workers being displaced?—Are you not rather proceeding on the assumption that employment exchanges will create employment?

A-3210. No. I am dealing with the existence of an unemployment problem. I take it that not having gone into this matter the Government of Bombay are not in a position to say whether or not there is any necessity to deal with the question of whether unemployment does exist on such a scale that it should be dealt with by a national agency?—They are not able to say from checked figures that there is such and such a number unemployed in the city of Bombay, who cannot find employment either in the city or elsewhere in the Presidency.

A-3211. The fact as brought out in your memorandum, coupled with the statement appearing in the press this morning regarding the Presidency mill which has closed down and thrown out of employment several thousand workers, reveals the existence of unemployment in the city. Is it the intention of the Government of Bombay, in view of the existence of these facts, to deal with this problem?—These new facts which you have brought out will have to be considered. Obviously if there is a gradual closing down of mills which is shown to be permanent, then the problem will possibly have graver aspects.

A-3212. It is a fact that the system of employment through jobbers has been condemned by the Tariff Board and it is a fact that that same system has also been condemned by your office?—Yes.

A-3213. You say: "It is of interest to point out here that the mill jobbers recruit *Dhed* boys from neighbouring villages and enter into contracts with their parents to pay them about Rs. 30 per annum and feed, clothe and house the boys in return for their earnings."—That is Ahmedabad.

A-3214. Is there a similar system prevailing here in Bombay?—I have not heard of it.

A-3215. Realizing that the system of employment through jobbers is not satisfactory, and should be condemned, do you not think that that points to the desirability of having labour exchanges through which workers should be recruited for these mills?—I think the most satisfactory labour exchange that could be established would be one within the industry itself, and I should imagine that Government would consider that State interference was not necessary until it had been shown that the industry itself was unable to deal with this problem.

A-3216. You want to limit the sphere of labour exchanges to the industry itself, but do you not think it is a bigger problem than that. There are about 1,00,000 men coming in from outside every year seeking work. Surely the industry alone cannot deal with the problem. Will not the State have to give some assistance and guidance?—That 1,00,000 is not new labour. There is not an influx each year of 1,00,000 people seeking employment in occupations in which they have never been employed before. They may have been on a holiday. They may have a job waiting for them.

A-3217. Still you will agree with me that there is a large influx of new labour coming into Bombay?—I would rather put it that there is a big ebb and flow of labour in and out of Bombay.

A-3218. Would it not be desirable to co-ordinate your activities in regard to the finding of employment for these people, and that it being a problem bigger than can be considered by one industry alone, it is desirable to get the State to lend a helping hand?—It is the mill industry that should be considered. The other ones are relatively subsidiary, so far as this particular aspect of the problem is concerned.

A-3219. Suppose there is surplus labour here, could you not, if you had a scheme like the one I am suggesting to you, be able to place that surplus labour elsewhere outside Bombay?—There would be no guarantee of that.

A-3220. There is no guarantee in regard to any such matters. All I am suggesting is that your information would be valuable to you?—You mean that the State, by an employment agency, would be able to get these unemployed mill hand work elsewhere in the Presidency?

A-3221. *The Chairman*: Do I take it that your fear is that such an institution in Bombay would add to the flow, or the attraction, to Bombay from the country districts and therefore add to the pool of unemployment in Bombay?—That had not occurred to me, but I can quite see that that is a possibility.

A-3222. *Diwan Chaman Lal*: In regard to absenteeism you say: "The Tariff Board came to the conclusion, on the basis of the absenteeism statistics supplied by the Labour Office, that Ahmedabad had a great advantage over Bombay in the matter of absenteeism," and you give some figures. You say "The statistics obtained as a result of the wage census of 1926, however, are quite accurate and these show that in Bombay

city absenteeism for all work-people in the textile mills comes to 8·26 per cent. It is 4·35 per cent. in the case of weavers, 7·13 per cent. in the case of all male operatives (including weavers) and 11·86 per cent. in the case of women. In Ahmedabad the percentage of absenteeism amongst all work-people comes to 7·90"—that is as against 7·13 "being 10·76 per cent. for weavers"—as against 4·35—"8·04 per cent. for men (including weavers)"—as against 7·13—and "7·40 per cent. for women." These figures do not bear out the statement made by the Tariff Board. It is just the other way about?—That is so.

A-3223. How do you explain that?—I should explain it by saying that the method by which we obtained our absenteeism figures, as arising out of the wage census, is the most accurate method by which they could be obtained.

A-3224. So that your figures are more correct than the figures of the Tariff Board?—Having regard to the way in which they were obtained, I should accept them representing as accurate a method as could possibly be obtained.

A-3225. If you had some sort of provident fund system do you think that would help the worker to remain more permanently in his avocation than he does at present?—Yes I should say so, especially if it was combined with standardization.

A-3226. Your memorandum deals with contract labour, and you say: "The general effect of the employment of contractors as intermediaries in the manner described above is satisfactory." Have you been to Sukkur?—Not recently.

A-3227. Have you, Mr. Ewbank?—(Mr. Ewbank): Yes, I was Collector at Sukkur.

A-3228. Do you think that this statement is correct when you consider the housing and living conditions of the workers at Sukkur?—You have to compare it with their living conditions in the homes in which they would otherwise be living; but the housing accommodation at Sukkur is not good.

A-3229. I am asking you whether the housing and living and working conditions at Sukkur are satisfactory?—They are certainly of a low standard.

A-3230. Would you agree that some sort of statutory provision in the public contracts should be made for the welfare of these workers—their education, housing, sanitation, etc.?—Yesterday I was asked to ascertain whether there was any objection to the putting in of a fair wage clause in contracts and that I am doing. The other clause was not put to me.

A-3231. Would you have any objection in regard to that?—I have no objection to ascertaining whether Government would be prepared to put in such a clause.

A-3232. *The Chairman*: It is a question which has been before us on more than one occasion. In the case of public works which are distant from any place where there is available accommodation, would not Government be in favour of the insertion of a clause providing that the housing, medical and sanitary arrangements should be subject to the approval of a medical officer of health for the district? That is what is done in England.—This is a matter for the Public Works Department, and with your permission I will consult them and give an answer later.

A-3233. *Diwan Chaman Lal*: It is stated in the Government memorandum that 97 per cent. of the working classes live in one-room tenements. Is that a correct statement from the figures you have been able to obtain in your office, Mr. Gennings?—Yes.

A-3234. You give figures about infant mortality. I notice that in 1926 the infant mortality per one thousand births registered living in one room and under was 577 and in two rooms 254; and that in 1927 the figures were 419 and 203. Therefore it would appear that a great deal of this mortality is due to overcrowding?—I think that is the general opinion.

A-3235. *The Chairman*: It is suggested to us that these figures are vitiated by the fact that mothers return to their villages for confinement, and therefore the birth is credited to the Presidency; but if the child dies within its first year it probably dies after the mother and child have returned to Bombay, and its death is credited to Bombay?—That is a factor which has to be considered in examining the statistics.

A-3236. I take it that that fact will affect more the first line of these figures, namely, those who live in one-room tenements?—Yes, because they are the migratory people.

A-3237. Has any effort been made to estimate how far these infant mortality figures in Bombay City as compared with other countries have been vitiated by the fact that they return to the villages for confinement?—I think not; I do not think it has been statistically examined. I am not sure whether the Executive Health Officer of the Bombay City examined them.

A-323f. It would not be easy ; it would be a very difficult thing. Would it be possible to estimate how many return to the villages for confinement and see how these figures could be made correct and the necessary deduction made ?—I should think the Executive Health Officer's staff could do that quite well.

A-323g. We do not want Bombay to be painted more black than it is or may be, and it would seem desirable that there should be estimates made as to how far these figures are vitiated by that obvious fact. As I gather, something like one half of the women of this migratory class do in fact return to their villages for confinement.

Mr. Joshi : I cannot understand how these figures could be vitiated by the migratory character of women.

Sir Alexander Murray : It is mentioned in the Government memorandum that " nearly one-third of the infants dying in the city are born outside the city."

The Chairman : That is exactly my point. It lowers the percentage of births in the city and it increases the percentage of deaths.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I want to make one point quite clear. The births that they have registered are births in Bombay City, but the deaths that they have registered are not only of infants that were born in Bombay. How many of these deaths were of infants that were not born in Bombay ?—That has been estimated at one-third, and the figures we give there are the Executive Health Officer's estimate. The Labour Office has no staff to make an inquiry into them ; therefore, we take the figures given by the Executive Health Officer, who has put it as one-third.

The Chairman : It would be a simple thing to say that if that one-third of births had been in Bombay instead of in the village, the percentage instead of being 577 would have been so and so ?—Yes.

Mr. Joshi : Should we not take into consideration the fact that on account of the one-room tenement system, the people have to go back to their villages when they are ill ?

The Chairman : That of course is one of the reasons for the fact that I have tried to elicit.

Mr. Joshi : So, if they remained in Bombay, the number of deaths also would increase.

The Chairman : We all know, it is common knowledge, that the death rate is higher wherever the birth rate is higher. What I am trying to get at is how far the percentage is vitiated by the fact that the women go to the villages for confinement.

Mr. Joshi : That is counterbalanced by the fact that some of the people that leave for the villages die in the villages.

The Chairman : We are speaking of infant deaths.

Diwan Chaman Lall : There may be children born in Bombay, the mothers may take them to the villages and they (the children) may die in the villages. The one fact that does remain, however vitiated the figures may be, is that the deaths in one room tenements are more than the deaths in two-room tenements, if you subtract one-third from the deaths in one-room tenements and one-third from the deaths in two-room tenements.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Only the one-room people go back to their villages.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : It might interest Diwan Chaman Lall to know that having regard to the wages paid to these women they cannot live in more than one-room tenements. The two-room tenants are a different class.

Diwan Chaman Lall : That is exactly the point that I am driving at. When they do live in two-room tenements the mortality is less than when they live in one-room tenements.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Those living in two-room tenements do not go home.

Diwan Chaman Lall : That is a statement I am not prepared to accept.

Sir Victor Sassoon : They are not of the same class.

Diwan Chaman Lall : Even if they do not go home, it is an established fact that the mortality in two-room tenements is much less than in one-room tenements.

The Chairman : We may pass this point ; it is common knowledge the world over.

A-3240. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Dr. Sandilands is your Health Officer ?—He has just retired.

A-3241. I think he made a statement—I do not know where—that one in every two-children born in the city of Bombay died within a year of its birth. You will find that

in Mr. Burnett Hurst's book on housing ?—Mr. Burnett Hurst's book would probably be referring to conditions in 1920-21.

A-3242. The book was published in 1925 ; so the reference might be to conditions up to 1924. If you look at the table given in my memorandum you will find that the proportions for 1920-21 are the same as given in his book.

A-3243. *Col. Russell* : Mr. Burnett Hurst used official statistics ?—He. used the Executive Health Officer's statement.

A-3244. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : In your memorandum the number of deaths caused by diseases of the respiratory system is given as 559 and by pulmonary tuberculosis 66. out of a total of 1,314. That gives a total of 625. Practically half the number of deaths was caused either by pulmonary tuberculosis or diseases of the respiratory system. Would you put it down to the class of work in which they are employed and the conditions under which they are employed in the mills ?—That is a very wide class. I am not quite sure how it is made up. It is the Factory Inspector's figure.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I may tell you how it is made up. When you applied to the millowners they gave you about a thousand different occupations, and you lumped them all together under the head "Other textiles and millhands, weavers, etc., insufficiently described."

A-3245. Coming to the very important question of the cost of living index, could you tell me what you mean by a rise in the cost of living ? It can be looked at in two different ways. It may be looked at as the rise in the cost of maintaining the same standard of living that they had before, and it may also be looked at as the increase in actual expenditure over the basic period that you take ?—Your first is the one, so far as our index is concerned, and I think, most indices.

A-3246. I find in the Labour Gazette that in preparing your index for clothing you have taken the wholesale price and not the retail price.—Yes ; that is so.

A-3247. Would that not vitiate the final figures that you arrive at ?—No ; it does not ; in fact it makes very little difference.

A-3248. That very little may mean a couple of points.—Yes ; I would say two points.

A-3249. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do not these textile workers get clothing at wholesale prices ?—No ; not all of them.

A-3250. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : As regards prices of milk and firewood, you do not take local retail prices ; you get them from the Director of Agriculture at Poonja ?—Yes.

A-3251. Would that not also vitiate the index ?—A very trifling amount.

A-3252. Then, as regards rents, do you reckon your rents from the actuals ?—No. The weight of rent is complicated, it is arrived at from a study of all-India figures.

A-3253. I think you will admit yourself that that would certainly not give a correct estimate of the actuals ?—It is not really in accordance with since ascertained facts.

Diwan Chaman Lall : In regard to the consumption of other articles, you take the total production *minus* the exports *plus* the imports. That would not be in accordance with the actuals. You will have to get them done as is done in England in connection with the family budget system.

The Chairman : It is admitted and recognised everywhere that this all-India mass system is quite wrong.

A-3254. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Under the head "Physique" you put down the weight of the spinner at 99 lbs. Are you familiar with the figures given by the Factory Commission in 1907 ? I think they gave 101 lbs. Has there been any deterioration since in the physique of the spinner ?—That I am unable to say. We did not take them ourselves ; it is not our own inquiry ; we ourselves have not made any inquiries on these lines. It is taken from the Report on Humidification.

A-3255. Have you, Mr. Ewbank, any figures regarding the weight of an average prisoner in your jails ? The figure I have is 115.05 lbs. Would I be correct in saying that the average weight of the prisoner is much more than the average weight of the textile worker ?—(Mr. Ewbank) I am not prepared to answer question in the affirmative without verifying your figures.

A-3256. Mr. Cliff questioned you about the average wage. Would I be correct in saying that the average worker in Bombay spends *per capita* not more than three annas for his food, taking a family unit of five (two adults, one grown-up boy and two children) ?—I have not these figures of family budgets at hand.

A-3257. Can a man getting Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, with a family of five in which he is the only bread-winner, afford to spend more than three annas per head?—He in fact spends 75 per cent. of his income on food.

A-3258. Take a man with an income of Rs. 30 with a family of five in which he is the only bread-winner, if he spends three annas per head per day, it will amount to fifteen annas per day. That would probably consume all his income. He is obviously spending less than that on food?—If you put it that way of course, arithmetically it is obvious.

A-3259. Do you consider, from your vast experience in this matter, that fifteen annas per day is sufficient to keep a family of five in well being?—At fifteen annas a day for the family, I would not like to say.

A-3260. Therefore, so far as the minimum wage of Rs. 30 that was suggested before the Fawcett Committee is concerned, would you call it the minimum living wage or the minimum dying wage on this basis?—I do not express any opinion on that.

A-3261. As regards weekly payments, you state in your memorandum that an Act in reference to weekly payments is not demanded by anybody and therefore such an Act "would remain a dead letter in a great number of cases, and be used as an engine for blackmail and false accusations in the remainder". Subsequently you state "Government were unable to agree that penal legislation was necessary in such circumstances, for the practical benefit to the worker in industry generally would be negligible". And yet under the head "Indebtedness" you say: "As regards the causes of indebtedness, it is difficult to generalize. The almost universal system of paying wages monthly means that the workers live on credit all the year round. A man taking up a job for the first time, or after a spell of unemployment or on return from a holiday, if his place has not been kept open for him, may have to wait for as long as six weeks before he draws any pay, for pay-day is usually ten days after the expiry of the month in which the pay was earned. It is easy for such a man to get into debt and be forced to borrow money to cover it. Once he gets into debt high interest charges usually keep him in debt". In one place you say that there is no practical advantage to be derived by the worker, and in another place you say that there would be a practical advantage in that he would get out of the clutches of the money-lender?—We say that the practical benefit to the worker in industry generally would be negligible. The case that you quote is perfectly true. I think we set out the implications arising from a man having to wait six weeks. But that is an unusual case. If a man came to work in a mill at the last week of the month, then he would not have to wait six weeks; he would have to wait only two weeks until the 10th or 11th of the next month. Only if a man comes into a mill on the last of the month, then like everybody in Government service, he works for a month without pay and in the mills has to wait till the 10th or 11th of the next month for his pay. In the case of a man like that he has to wait six weeks. It does not apply to all industries, and it depends also on the actual time they take up work in the mill.

A-3262. I am not disputing the actual state of affairs. All that I am saying is, in view of what is admitted by your Government under "Indebtedness," weekly payments would help certain workers?—I quite agree. With regard to weekly payment of wages, it would mean a complete reversal of the whole manner in which a worker lives. Therefore, it has to be considered on that basis.

A-3263. *Mr. Ahmed*: Yesterday, in answering certain questions of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you (Mr. Ewbank) stated that owing to the financial difficulty you could not extend education and you also stated that Government have not encouraged industrial education. You have been connected with the Government of India and you are now connected with the Government of Bombay. I want you to tell me what is your solution of the financial difficulty?—(Mr. Ewbank) So far as we are concerned, we find that the cost per head of educating a boy in Bombay Presidency is higher than in any other presidency or province in India and we are going into that matter. We are not sure that the change to administration by local bodies has not during the transfer given rise to a certain amount of expenditure for which we are not getting full value, and we are going into that point. We hope to be able to reduce the cost of education by administrative measures, and at the same time year by year we hope to be able slowly to devote more and more money from the general revenues to education, and as that happens the number of primary schools will increase and the areas under compulsory education will necessarily be multiplied.

A-3264. That answer does not satisfy me. I want full scope of education to be given to the industrial worker?—As you know, the industrial population of India amounts to 1 per cent. of the population of all India, and I suppose on a rough estimate our industrial population amounts to 2½ per cent. of the population of the Presidency of Bombay. We have to consider these percentages when allocating the distribution of money for educational schemes.

A-3265. As regards industrial education, would you get the cost of that from the employers?—There is no proposal before Government for taxing the employers directly for providing education to the children of their employees. The employers contribute to the funds of the local authorities and both the local authority and Government share the expenditure on primary education.

A-3266. I am not speaking of primary education in all municipal and local board areas. I am confining my question to industrial areas. Should the cost of educating the children of industrial workers in industrial areas be contributed by the employers, or should it be borne by Government?—On that point, it depends on the report of your Commission. At present the employers contribute through the rates. Through the rates charged on their factories as on all other buildings, the employers contribute largely to the cost of education.

A-3267. There was also a suggestion for the enactment of an Employers' Liability Act. Would your Government be in favour of legislation of that type?—Yesterday, I promised to obtain the views of Government on the question of the adoption of an Employers' Liability Act, and I repeat that I will do so.

A-3268. Are you in favour of taxing the employers directly for the cost of education of the children of the labourers? I want the whole responsibility for that education to be borne by the employers?—I am certainly not in a position to say that Government are in favour of levying a differential rate on employers of labour for the education of their employees. At present, as I say, they are paying partly through the rates and partly through the local fund cess. We are awaiting the report of this Commission. There is no proposal before Government to alter the present system.

A-3269. Are you in favour of the employers paying that cost, if they undertake it?—If the employers were to volunteer to undertake the burden, it would certainly benefit education.

A-3270. I suppose your answer will be just the same as regards sanitation and health—that the employers should undertake to pay the cost of sanitation and health with regard to their workmen?—I just stated that Government are not prepared to take that view.

A-3271. In answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you stated that you promised to pay 50 per cent. of the cost of primary education to local bodies and you were bound to pay it. Why do you not pay that?—We do pay.

A-3272. But you said that you did not pay in some places?—The point is we do not sanction the new schemes because we have not got the money for it; where a scheme is sanctioned Government pay 50 per cent. or two-thirds as the case may be.

A-3273. As regards housing accommodation for workers, you say that there is not sufficient accommodation maintained by the employers in the mills. Do you think the employers should be compelled by law to supply housing for workers?—(Mr. Gennings). So far as Bombay is concerned, of course the employers contributed directly to the industrial housing scheme by paying a cess on cotton coming into Bombay. So, they actually did contribute directly to the industrial housing scheme.

A-3274. In spite of that there is insufficiency of accommodation?—No; I do not admit that. There is a very large number of rooms available in the Worli *chawls* which were built by Government partly out of the proceeds of the cotton cess.

A-3275. Are you aware that a number of workers for want of accommodation live outside?—I am not aware of that. There may be reasons for it, but that is not due to the fact that they cannot get a room to live in elsewhere.

A-3276. Are you quite sure that there is sufficient accommodation available?—Definitely there are 10,000 rooms empty awaiting tenants.

A-3277. In spite of that people are living outside those *chawls*?—Yes; that is so.

A-3278. Is it because they get accommodation cheaper outside?—Not always because they get it cheaper, because they live with their friends and live in their own locality.

A-3279. You were asked yesterday about the causes of the trade depression, and you said that it was owing to the strike?—(Mr. Ewbank) No. The answer was that no special enquiries had been made into the causes of the depression in the cotton trade. Government have not made any special enquiry since the Noyce Report.

A-3280. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum you deal with "deaths by causes and occupations in Bombay city in 1927". In the cotton textile industry there were 174,000 workers and dependents according to the census of 1921. Out of the total deaths in that population none of them is attributed to suicide and four are attributed

to pulmonary tuberculosis. That seems to be a small figure. Is it also the case that as far as the whole of Bombay is concerned, out of 27,000 deaths last year there were only 1,700 due to tuberculosis?—I have not the figures here and I am prepared to take it from you that that is so.

A-3281. With regard to the question of unemployment it was suggested by one of the witnesses that it would be advisable to set up an employment agency to deal with the question of unemployment in Bombay. But in chapter I of your memorandum you say that the percentage of persons born in Bombay to the total population in 1921 for instance was so low as 16 per cent., showing thereby that the remaining 84 per cent. of the people then in Bombay were born outside Bombay. Further every day there are thousands of persons migrating into Bombay in search of employment. Would not these circumstances make it very difficult to set up an agency for these thousands of migrants in Bombay?—I do not think the figures can be accepted without qualification. We have stated in the memorandum that workers normally resident in Bombay send their wives to their native places for confinement. Further those figures were given in connection with the question of infant mortality. But now we are dealing with the question of the population of Bombay.

A-3282. But the number of persons actually born in Bombay still remains the same?—It is stated quite clearly that the woman generally likes to get away to her own mother in the village rather than remain in Bombay for her confinement. And the increase of transport facilities has rather accelerated than diminished that tendency.

A-3283. But would not these factors mentioned by me make the task of dealing with unemployment in Bombay difficult?—Yes.

A-3284. Is it possible for the Provincial Legislature to initiate legislation dealing with welfare of labour or trade disputes or things of that description?—(Mr. Ewbank.) Under the constitution under which we are working there are certain industrial matters on which we are subject to legislation by the Central Government. And one or two industrial matters on which we are free to legislate, you will find them in part II of the schedule to the Devolution Rules.

A-3285. *Mr. Clow*: You can legislate on all labour matters.—Yes, but subject to the control of the Central Government.

A-3286. *The Chairman*: The position is that the Provincial Government can legislate on all labour matters subject to the previous sanction of the Governor General?—And subject of course to legislation already existing which has been passed by the Central Government.

A-3287. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The position is that subject to the previous sanction of the Governor General you can initiate legislation in connection with welfare of labour and matters of that description. Is that not so?—Yes, subject to the qualifications I have mentioned.

A-3288. Then has the Governor General refused his sanction in any case or prevented you in any manner from proceeding with any legislation dealing with labour matters that you have contemplated?—I do know of such cases.

A-3289. Can you tell us what they are?—I am not sure I would be in order in telling you of those cases. I have the information and I shall take orders of Government on that point. You refer to all matters coming under the head of labour legislation?

A-3290. Yes. I understand you have concurrent powers in the matter of introducing legislation. Is there any special advantage in having such legislation initiated in the Provincial Legislature or in the Central Legislature?—That would depend rather on the circumstances and the nature of the legislation contemplated. For instance, we have recently passed the Bombay Maternity Benefits Bill. As far as I know, no difficulty is anticipated in administering it as a piece of provincial legislation. On the other hand I can quite conceive of an Act like the Trade Unions Act which should certainly be an All-India Act, because its general principles are applicable to the whole of India.

A-3291. In your memorandum you refer to the setting up of "conciliation machinery within an industry itself set up by the parties concerned but validated if necessary by legislation". Is that legislation to be by the Provincial Legislature or the Central Legislature?—The Trade Disputes Act which provides the ultimate machinery in these trade disputes is of all-India application. Apparently it would be reasonable to suppose that legislation validating the conciliation machinery should also be *prima facie* of all-India application. But I am not empowered to express the views of Government on that matter.

A-3292. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: But was there any case in which the Provincial Government wanted to introduce legislation in these matters and the Government of

India said that they themselves contemplated introducing an all-India legislation and wanted them not to proceed with provincial legislation?—(Mr. Gennings) What happened was this. When the Trade Disputes Bill came up the Government of Bombay expressed the opinion that before they had a Trade Disputes Act there should be some Act providing conciliation machinery. But for reasons which we do not know the Government of India were not able to agree to that, and the Trade Disputes Act went through without the preliminary conciliation machinery.

A-3293. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What have you to say as a result of your experience of the working of the Act in the meantime?—The Government's view is that once the Trade Disputes Act has been put on the statute book, then it would not be right for a local legislature to legislate for an intervening machinery. It would be better if legislation setting up conciliation machinery applicable to the whole of India is made to precede the Trade Disputes Act.

A-3294. Did the Government of Bombay want to have a Trade Disputes Bill some years ago?—Yes.

A-3295. And they did not go on with that in deference to the wishes of the Government of India?—That is so.

A-3296. The Government of India passed a Trade Disputes Act. Therefore you think that the responsibility no longer rests with the local Government to initiate and put through any legislation concerning directly or indirectly trade disputes and conciliation machinery?—(Mr. Ewbank) We need not go so far as that. *Prima facie* it would be more consistent if the legislation continued to be done by the Central Government. But if the Central Government is unwilling to undertake legislation on those lines the local Government will consider the position.

A-3297. I shall leave that point. Now the Central Government can pass legislation dealing with welfare of labour and that may make it necessary for the local Government to find the necessary funds to finance the welfare schemes. What is your opinion with regard to this aspect of the relation between the Central and Provincial Governments on the question of welfare of labour? Would you prefer that legislation should be introduced by the Government of India or by the local Government?—The Local Government has expressed its opinion that it is not altogether reasonable while the income tax and the revenue derived from industrial undertakings go to the Government of India, that the functions of development, control and assistance to industry should be left to the local Government.

A-3298. Therefore unless the law is changed do the Bombay Government propose not to do anything in the matter of the welfare of labour?—That is not the position. The Bombay Government will do what it can according to its own resources, but the resources are limited.

Mr. Cliff: They have defined their position very clearly in their memorandum further on and they conclude: "It is imperative that no further obligation of this character should be assumed until either fresh sources of revenue can be made available or the Central Government undertakes to bear the expenditure".

A-3299. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is that still the attitude of the Government of Bombay?—Yes. The financial position is worse this year than it was last year. We think that in our present position it is imperative what we should not have further burdens put upon us.

A-3300. Therefore any amount of recommendations by this or any other Commission will not be of use, because under the present financial conditions the Government of Bombay will not be able to do anything?—Not under the present financial conditions, certainly. But we hope we are getting near the end of our financial stringency. If trade revives our revenues will rise.

A-3301. But do you think that trade will revive soon?—I hope so.

A-3302. Under the present constitutional relations between the Central and Provincial Governments in the matter of labour welfare legislation, as we understand it, is it possible for the Central Government to pass legislation imposing certain burdens on the Provincial Government and yet refuse to assist you to carry on the welfare work? Have you considered that aspect of the question?—They can certainly pass legislation imposing burdens on us in the matter of trade and labour. But whether they can give us a grant or not, I am not sure. That is a debatable point. I am inclined to think that it might be possible. Just as in the matter of agriculture which is a transferred subject, the Government of India have given a very large sum for founding the Central Agricultural Research Council, they might by some similar device be able to come to the help of Provincial Governments.

A-3303. Take the question of statistics. The Economic Enquiry Committee has recommended that every province should have a statistical department. What are your views on the point?—(Mr. Gennings) My own personal view is that it would be a very sound idea.

A-3304. I understand that some years ago a bill was introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council dealing with statistics, but was abandoned by the Local Government later on. Why was that abandoned by the Local Government?—That was a bill providing for the compulsory collection of statistics.

A-3305. But unless you resorted to compulsion how could you get reliable statistics?—In Bombay we have been able to collect a fair amount of reliable statistics without any compulsion.

A-3306. So that you are in favour of collecting statistics voluntarily and not compulsorily?—I can say this from my experience as head of the statistical department here. In the early stages till the people get accustomed to supplying statistics and until the area one has to cover is very much broadened, it is possible to collect good statistics without compulsion. But if you want more detailed statistics, or statistics which go to business secrets or trade matters of that sort, then you might want to have compulsion. But so far as the organized industries in Bombay are concerned, speaking for myself, I have had no difficulty in getting any information I wanted.

A-3307. "Statistics" is a central subject still, is it not?—Yes.

A-3308. Can you give me an idea of what statistics ought to be gathered by the Central Government and what by the Provincial Government?—I think it was the Economic Enquiry Committee that subdivided it in that way. Of course the primary function of the Central Bureau will be to collate and tabulate the statistics received from all the provincial bureaux.

A-3309. Is the collection of statistics a provincial subject?—I do not understand the question. The subject of statistics is definitely one for administration by the local Government.

Sir Victor Sassoon: "Statistics" in the main is a central subject, but the "Collection of Statistics" is a provincial subject.

A-3310. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can the Central Government dictate what kind of collection they want the Provincial Government to make?

The Chairman: They could, but they are reluctant to do so because the expenditure is to be borne by the Provincial Government.

A-3311. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the collection of statistics have you made any endeavour to ascertain what is a living wage in Bombay?—(Mr. Gennings) No, we have not.

A-3312. Therefore in fixing wages do they practically apply the ordinary law of supply and demand?—That is how it has been applied heretofore in India.

A-3313. The Indian Economic Enquiry Committee have made a reference to the subsistence level of the workers. Have you ever made any attempt to ascertain what that is?—No.

A-3314. Do you know of any other country that has ascertained what the subsistence level should be?—I do not know of any other country that has done that officially, except perhaps Russia. But I may be entirely wrong.

A-3315. The Economic Enquiry Committee suggested that the minimum subsistence level in India might be ascertained by taking into account the three standards officially fixed, i.e., the jail diet, the hospital diet and the Famine Code rations. Can you express any opinion as to the suitability of the average of these three standards being taken as the subsistence level in India?—I should not express an opinion. I have not studied the subject.

A-3316. Dealing with the question of workmen's compensation, we discussed yesterday the question of recurring payment of compensation instead of lump sum payment. It is stated that the average length of life in India is 25 years as against 50 in England. Would not this fact influence considerably the question of recurring payments of compensation?—It would all depend on what is the anticipation of life at the period when a person becomes entitled to the benefit. I do not know what actuarial estimates have been worked out for the expectation of life of a woman aged 25. The expectation of life of a child one month old may be 25 years. That is perfectly true. But I do not know what has been worked out as the expectation of life of a woman aged 25; it may be 50 or 60.

A-3317. All the same will not that factor affect your payment of compensation?—We were talking about those figures in connection with the question of infantile mortality. I was simply drawing attention to the fact that the expectation of life at 25 would be much more than at birth. For instance, a child born in England might have an expectation of life up to 50 or 60, whereas a child born in India might have a expectation of life up to 25 years only. But we have no comparative figures showing how long an English worker of 25 and an Indian worker of 25 are expected to live. I do not know whether the same relation that exists between the expectations of life at birth in the two cases exists between the expectations of life at a particular age. Whatever it is, the expectation of life is an important factor which has to be taken into consideration in connection with recurring payments of compensation.

A-3318. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Yesterday in reply to Mr. Cliff, I think it was, you said that Government was not prepared to advocate legislation so that mediation rules similar to those recommended by the Fawcett Committee might be compulsorily applied to all industries. How do you reconcile that with the statement made in your memorandum "that the gap should be filled by the establishment of conciliation machinery within an industry itself set up by the parties concerned but validated if necessary by legislation"?—(Mr. Gennings). I do not think I said that. (Mr. Ewbank). Yesterday on the question of mediation rules I undertook to refer to Government the possibility of adopting some system corresponding to the Industrial Relationship Committee in England.

A-3319. Even there if there is to be legislation, there should be a permanent body composed of representatives of the employers and workmen in a particular industry. Is it not necessary that the representatives of the employees should be fully representative of the industry?—Yes.

A-3320. If a trade union had only a minority of workers as its members, would you consider that as representative of the workers in that industry?—No, it must be able to answer for the bulk of the workers.

A-3321. Now I come to the question of monthly payment of wages. Is it in your knowledge that the workers in the textile industry in Bombay have by their action in the past shown a desire to remain on the system of monthly payments?—(Mr. Gennings). Yes, that is so.

A-3322. Have they shown any desire to have weekly payments?—No.

A-3323. And this question of weekly or monthly payments has never been an issue in any of the disputes in the mill industry?—No.

A-3324. With regard to the question of delayed payment of wages, do you consider that it would be feasible to pay the monthly wages on the first of the next month?—No, it would not be feasible.

A-3325. Should there not be some period for making calculations of wages due for workers doing piece-work?—Yes.

A-3326. If you were to legislate on this matter would 7 or 8 days be a reasonable time for making these calculations?—I think it would be.

A-3327. Could it not be less?—It cannot be less in the weaving shed or anywhere where piece-work is carried on.

A-3328. Therefore what is the difference between the state of things now and what is foreshadowed by you? A new workman might be able to get his wages 3 or 4 days earlier than he actually gets it to-day when he has to wait for 10 to 14 days.—I think legislation dealing with prompt payment of wages might provide that the time-workers might be paid several days earlier than that. But when you are going to legislate you must make provision for exceptional cases also.

A-3329. Do you agree that as long as wages are paid more or less at the same time every month, the difference of prompt payment or delayed payment only affects the workmen in the first period of his engagement. Or in other words he is going to get payments every month after the first six weeks of his engagement. Only in the first instance he has to wait for six weeks; subsequently he gets payment at intervals of one month each.—Yes, that is so.

A-3330. So the delay only affects him in the first place—the period of first engagement?—Yes, that is when he has to wait the longest time.

A-3331. *Mr. Clow*: So long as he remains under that employer?—Yes. If he takes up three or four different jobs in the course of a year, then the difficulty arises with regard to each job when he takes pay.

A-3332. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Let us assume that he leaves on the last day of the month and goes to another employer. Would he not receive his previous month's wages that month ?—Yes.

A-3333. Therefore it would not make any difference ?—Take the case of a man leaving after pay day. He would have then put in a fortnight's service. But he would have to wait for a month to get wages for that fortnight.

A-3334. If he left on the 15th he would receive his new wages on the 15th of the following month and also he would receive the wages for the fortnight which he has already earned in the previous employment ; that is, he would be collecting wages of two fortnights in two different places ?—Yes.

A-3335. Do you think that he would have to pay a higher charge to his *bania* if he were to make him wait for an extra ten or fourteen days for payment in the first instance ?—I do not know what the *banias* do here.

A-3336. With regard to the employment agency, if a number of mills in Bombay cease to work, the existence or not of an employment agency will not help those men who are unemployed if there was no demand for labour ?—It would not help those men unless, of course, your organization extended up-country and you could send them up-country and they were willing to go there.

A-3337. Supposing there was a demand for labour at Sholapur, would those men be prepared to go to Sholapur ?—I think a good many of them would go to Sholapur because it is in their own country.

A-3338. Would they go to Madras or Cawnpore ?—I think that is unlikely.

A-3339. I take it, therefore, that there is use for an employment agency only where you have a demand for labour on one side and a supply on the other. It may be said that a permanent employment agency will not be of much use if one mill closes down to-day and another re-opens to-morrow ?—I think the function of an employment agency is to regulate labour and to ensure that no job that is open remains unfilled.

A-3340. From your experience, when a labourer leaves one mill, is he prepared to go to the other side of the city, to live in another district ?—I have got no definite information on that point and therefore I could not express an opinion.

A-3341. If, as is said by some, there is likely to be a tendency, owing to the high cost of production, on the part of employers to remove mills to other parts of India, not necessarily within the presidency, would that be a matter of concern to the Government of Bombay ?—Yes, I think it would be.

A-3342. They would not like to see the industry closing down here even if it were to increase the production of textiles say, in the province of Madras ?—No ; that may be accepted.

A-3343. Have they considered what steps they might take to prevent such an occurrence taking place ?—(Mr. Ewbank) : Since the Noyce Committee reported, I am not sure that the Local Government have made any specific enquiry on that subject.

A-3344. That is not my point. Let me give you a concrete case. One of my fellow millowners came to us and asked for technical advice as to the possibility of removing one of his mills from Bombay to up-country, and from the figures that we worked out it was a very feasible possibility. I am not asking whether the Government of Bombay have made any inquiry, but I am asking whether they would consider what steps should be taken to prevent such an eventuality.—(Mr. Ewbank) : The prosperity of the cotton industry in the whole of the Bombay Presidency is a matter of vital concern to the Local Government, but whether, as economic conditions alter, it is desirable that the mills should be located up-country or in Bombay is not a matter which has recently been considered by Government, and the suggestion that measures should be taken to prevent mills moving up-country is not one that has been considered by Government.

A-3345. I earnestly wish that it should be considered ?—The proposal that measures should be taken to discourage the transfer of mills from Bombay city to up-country ?

Sir Victor Sassoon : Not necessarily. You might prevent mills finding it necessary to go up-country so as to contribute to the prosperity of the province.....

Dewan Chaman Lall : By offering inducements to stay on ?

A-3346. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Yes. If the Government of Bombay considers that for the vital prosperity of the province the mill industry should remain in the province, will they consider what steps should be taken, if it is found that mills are finding it impossible to continue in Bombay city and are therefore transferring the mills up-country ?—The

view of the Government of Bombay would be that the Noyce Committee have recommended very definite measures that shall be taken by the millowners themselves for the organization of the industry. When they see those measures being taken, the Bombay Government would consider the matter that you mention.

A-3347. No doubt it will be in your memory that there has been a serious attempt to carry out those recommendations but it has not been found practicable at the moment?—In certain respects, yes.

A-3348. *Mr. Cliff*: It would probably be present in the minds of the Government that even though the mills were out of Bombay they could still be in the Presidency, and there might be circumstances where that would be desirable?—Exactly; the Government is concerned with the prosperity of the industry in this presidency. I might say that Government are considering at the present moment a proposal to prevent diversion of trade from Bombay and that proposal does, in fact, also include measures which affect the mills.

A-3349. Is that for the whole of the Presidency?—No, for the Bombay city.

The Chairman: Since Mr. Gilligan, Collector of Ratnagiri, is unable to appear before us to give evidence, I propose to put to you one or two questions which I had intended to put to Mr. Gilligan, and I think they do come within your province, Mr. Gennings, because I understand that we are indebted to you to a large extent for these extremely interesting little life histories of workers who come from Ratnagiri district into Bombay?—(Mr. Gennings): They were got from our Eady Investigators particularly Mrs. Wagh.

A-3350. May I congratulate you on your Lady Investigator?—These little life histories, I think, do give a better picture than anything else I have yet seen of what the real facts are with regard to migratory labour particularly in the case of the city of Bombay, and they are well worth studying by persons—employers and others—who are interested in the human history of these workers in the factories of Bombay. They are really excellent little human documents. I would like, if I might, to ask you how these samples were taken. I think they were taken in Ratnagiri because they are accompanied by an excellent note from Mr. Gilligan who was then Collector in Ratnagiri?—They were taken in Bombay. We communicated with Mr. Gilligan who put up a note, based upon the experience of his district officers, of the people as they come back to the country from the towns and their life there before they go. My recollection is that there are two notes: one deals with the life histories of the workers, collected by our Lady Investigators in Bombay in the *chawls* by talking to these people, and the other note deals with what was ascertained from the district officers down in Ratnagiri.

A-3351. That leads me to ask this further question. Is there no system as between Ratnagiri and Bombay, taking Ratnagiri as the place from which the largest main stream of migrants comes of keeping count of the migrants, say, something like 100,000 persons in the course of the year—I do not mean 100,000 new comers, but 100,000 new workers and workers returning to industry in Bombay? Is there no system of registration in Ratnagiri of those workers living in Bombay who come from Ratnagiri?—No.

A-3352. There is no record of the state of health, or economics or morals of the people who return after a sojourn in Bombay?—No.

A-3353. There is no record available to us then from the village point of view of the effect of industrial life on this great stream of workers?—There is no information.

A-3354. We are left to form our conclusions from such human documents as you have supplied to us?—Yes.

A-3355. Do you think that any system of registration would be practicable both in the part of the province from which they come as well as after they are engaged for labour here in Bombay?—I think it is very doubtful whether that would be possible.

A-3356. They just come and go as they please on the advice of their friends?—Yes. They come to friends in Bombay and they hear about what is happening in Bombay from the people who come back to their village every year.

A-3357. And that is the only information on which they act?—That is so.

A-3358. There is no such thing as an information officer in the district from which they come, who can tell them where they would best obtain employment?—No, nothing of that sort.

A-3359. And they come to Bombay and form a surplus pool of labour in Bombay, not all of them ever finding employment at the same time?—Quite a good proportion will come up because they know that their friends or their relatives can get them a job in a particular mill where they are employed.

A-3360. Can you tell me, is there anything in Ratnagiri in the nature of a co-operative credit society?—(Mr. Ewbank): Yes; we have large numbers.

A-3361. Are these migrant workers when they are in their own homes members of these societies?—Not, of course, always, but frequently they are members in societies in their villages and also in societies started in connection with the mills or institutions like the Servants of India.

A-3362. Is it not possible to have a link between the village co-operative society and the provident society within the industry so that these people do not get into the hands of the money-lender and can go back at the end of their work in funds instead of in debt? Has that problem ever been thought out?—I cannot speak of the last few years in regard to co-operative societies but previous to that the village co-operative societies had not yet reached, as a rule, a state of efficiency which would enable them to co-operate in that matter. Theoretically, it is perfectly a feasible proposition, and I think that as the co-operative societies improve in general knowledge of the technique of co-operative credit and as they get better secretaries, it would be possible to arrange something on those lines.

A-3363. Supposing you had in every substantial industry in Bombay a labour officer whose duty was to care for the personnel of this large labour force, would it not be possible for him to be in contact with the village co-operative society where these people come from and to link them up with the provident society within the works so that throughout their time of working in Bombay they would be saved the necessity of going either to the *bani*s or to the money-lender and the whole of their earnings might go to their advantage and to that of their family?—I think that something on those lines is quite feasible, but we have to remember that the village co-operative society is based on unlimited liability which entails that every member has to keep an eye on how the other members are getting on.

A-3364. I am not suggesting that this should throw any additional liability on the village society; far from it; on the other hand it would work the other way round?—When he borrows from Bombay for the purpose of marriages, ceremonies and such other things in Bombay, then that debit, I take it, should be transferred to the village when he goes back.

A-3365. What I am asking you is whether any practical thought has been given to this because it seems to me a particularly favourable field where you have one large stream coming to one definite place, and these little human documents, more than anything I have ever read, show the need and the possibility for just the human guidance and connection that will make all the difference in these people throughout their industrial life?—I think that is a very valuable suggestion, if I may say so, and I will communicate it to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies at once. Of course it is a question always of debts and bankruptcy; a man who starts off with a burden of debt hanging round his neck is very often a man to whom you cannot give any advance.

A-3366. For instance, we are told by a man here that he is heavily indebted. He tells me he has Rs. 80 debt but on that he is paying 75 per cent. interest; so he cannot reduce his debt and yet he is paying interest practically equal to the principal. It does seem that a man like that cannot be relieved altogether of that burden. I do not think we can pursue that question at the moment. I want to ask you one more question about Ratnagiri. It is stated by some one that there is something in the nature of forced labour due to a certain land system which I do not myself quite understand?—(Mr. Gennings): You mean the *khotsi* system?

A-3367. Yes. Can you tell the Commission what that system is?—(Mr. Ewbank): I cannot give you exact information, but one of the conditions of the tenure of the land is that the tenant performs certain services for the *khotsi*. We have some evidence that some of the tenants prefer this system of paying their rents partly by service to paying cash rents, but we are not in a position, of course, to say generally that that system would be preferred if they had the alternative. If you would like to know the exact facts, under the law, regarding the *khotsi* tenure and what it entails, I could obtain it for the Commission.

A-3368. I should like to know that. Mr. Gennings, I am asked whether it would be possible for you to give us any figures showing the ebb and flow of traffic between Bombay and Ratnagiri. I understand that they all come by boat, and possibly some traffic returns might show the ebb and flow of this migrant labour?—(Mr. Gennings): I think the steamer companies could probably give us the monthly figures of outward traffic to Ratnagiri and the inward traffic from Ratnagiri to Bombay. I do not know, but I should imagine that those figures would be available.

A-3369. Perhaps the figures for the last two or three years may be vitiated due to the strikes, but you can give us the figures for the last five years and we will make our own adjustments.—A certain number of them come by country craft and a certain number by railway; of course, I quite agree that a great bulk of them come by boat.

A-3370. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You can, I take it, get the figures from the railway?—Yes, but not in respect of country craft.

A-3371. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Let us have a statement with regard to firing on the strikers. I want to know what action the Government take in regard to this matter, because in the last strike there was a great deal of agitation which was prolonged and bitter because this was one of the reasons. Did they hold an inquiry afterwards?—(Mr. Ewbank): An inquiry was held under the chairmanship of the Judicial Commissioner in Sind, called the Riots Enquiry Committee. You have the report, I think, before you.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Yes. If I am not mistaken there are three or four occasions during the last ten years on which firing took place. I think you had one about the 26th of January 1920 and one in 1928.

A-3372. *The Chairman*: Do the Government of Bombay publish a communique or statement on this question?—On the 1928 case we published a report, but I have no knowledge whether we published on the earlier cases.

A-3373. I do not think we can go further than 1928. What was the nature of the report you published?—The report drawn up under the presidency of the Judicial Commissioner in Sind.

A-3374. That is the one we have already with us?—Yes, the report of the Riots Inquiry Committee which deals with the riot of 1928-29. (Mr. Gennings): I think what Mr. Chaman Lall wants is if in the course of a strike there are disturbances and the police open fire, whether, as a matter of course, a departmental or other enquiry is held and the facts with regard to it published. I do not think that is so. The only thing is that there might be question asked in the Legislative Council to which the Home Member might have replied. But no inquiry is set up whenever firing is resorted to by the police.

The Chairman: Because it is the normal duty of the police to provide for public safety.

Diwan Chaman Lall: It will be helpful if it is shown whether in every textile strike during the last nine years this action was taken, or at least the number of occasions on which this was done during that period.

The Chairman: I do not see the relevancy. How are you going to decide what is a strike and what is not?

Diwan Chaman Lall: For instance, we can consider if it is advisable to suggest that a judicial inquiry should be instituted in all cases where a strike takes place and the police resort to firing. At present the impression on the mind of the strikers is that firing is done gratuitously and that means prolongation of the strike.

The Witness (Mr. Ewbank): If it would meet with Mr. Chaman Lall's wishes, I have here the speeches of the Honourable the Home Member in introducing the Bill for making intimidation cognizable and the Presidency Security Bill, the two Bills which were introduced last July to deal with troubles which arose last May. Those are the latest statements on this matter. I now put them in before the Commission.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-THIRD MEETING
BOMBAY

Saturday, 23rd November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
 Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
 Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,
 I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. A. HOOSAINBHAY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
 Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } *Lady Assessors.*
 Mrs. K. WAGH.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
 Mr. A. DIBDIN.

Mr. H. M. ROBOTOM, Acting Shipping Master, Bombay, and
Mr. R. R. SONALKER, Recruiting Officer.

A-3375. *The Chairman* : Mr. Robotom, how long have you held your present office ?—(Mr. Robotom) I was Deputy Shipping Master for eleven and a half years and I have been acting as Shipping Master for about two and a half months.

A-3376. We had evidence in Delhi from the Central Government with regard to the question of recruiting seamen and we were there informed that it is a Central Government question. Will you put before the Commission in a few words what your duties are in relation to the Central Government and to Bombay in particular ?—Since April we have come under the Government of India ; before that we were under the Government of Bombay. Before April all correspondence and orders used to come to us through the local Government ; now they come direct from the Central Government in the Department of Commerce.

A-3377. It is since that change was made that the Government decided to appoint a special recruiting officer ?—The subject was under consideration of the Central Government, and it was also under the consideration of the Bombay Government before that.

A-3378. The actual appointment was made by the Central Government ?—Yes.

A-3379. Can you tell the Commission from your experience of the last five months how, in your opinion, the new method has worked—since the appointment of the special recruiting officer ?—I think it has tended to make the men more satisfied. They are put up for selection in their turn and none of them need be absent at the selection. When there is a selection of *serangs* and butlers, the recruiting officer sees that all the men available are put up for selection. I think that satisfies them. Every man gets a chance for selection.

A-3380. As far as your experience goes, you think that it has been an improvement on the system that prevailed before ?—Yes ; it is an improvement to that extent, that it satisfies the men that they get an equal chance of selection.

A-3381. As between the two alternative systems of recruitment in practice—direct recruitment by companies and recruitment through the recruiting officer—which is preferable ?—I think direct recruitment by companies is preferable. The Peninsular

and Oriental and British India Steam Navigation Companies do their own recruiting and I think they are satisfied with it. It is a satisfactory way of recruiting seamen to have it done directly by the companies.

A-3382. For that reason you think that the method of direct recruitment is better?—Yes, because there is nobody to go between them; it is an actual transaction between the employers and the employed and there is no go-between.

A-3383. There is no broker between the sailor and his employer?—Yes.

A-3384. And your experience is that that system of recruitment has worked satisfactorily and if the other companies adopt it, it would be satisfactory both to the companies and to the men?—Yes; I believe so.

A-3385. *Mr. Clow*: You do not suggest, I take it, that direct recruitment by the companies of the men necessarily eliminates the possibility of bribery at some stage?—I cannot say it does eliminate it altogether. It does to the extent that there is no middleman in the matter.

A-3386. I suppose there is a runner or somebody?—Somebody has to be employed to get the seamen together.

A-3387. How far does this rotation system apply? Does it apply both to the companies that recruit direct and the companies that recruit through the recruiting officer?—The companies that recruit direct do what they like; I believe they go by rotation as much as practicable.

A-3388. The companies that go through the recruiting office have got to follow the rotation system?—We recommend it to them but they claim to select men according to their own wants.

A-3389. Is the rotation system applied strictly for instance, suppose a *serang* has been at sea for a year and the chief officer is satisfied with him, can the chief officer keep him on?—Yes.

A-3390. He is not compelled by the Union or any other authority to get rid of him and bring out fresh men?—No.

A-3391. Some of the memoranda submitted to us suggest to my mind that one effect of the rotation system is merely one of substituting under-employment for unemployment?—The rotation system would merely distribute the work more equally; it would not increase the work.

A-3392. Do you not think that it has the effect of keeping in this branch of industry a large number of men who are unnecessary; the average man gets too little employment and there are too many men waiting for the rotation?—The present system is just to take the men they want without rotation; we recommend rotation but they claim to select the men as they want.

A-3393. But in actual practice I understand in many cases there are definite instructions, particularly as regards saloon stewards, for example, by which a man gets employed about a year and then has to go out of work and wait for more than a year before his turn comes?—The Peninsular and Oriental Co., I believe, try to give all their men a chance in that way. After a certain time, a year I think, they bring the men out and put other men in their places so as to give them all a chance of employment.

A-3394. Do you not think it would be better to restrict the number of men? The effect of the present system is to keep in the shipping industry a large number of men than are really required to maintain the industry?—The supply of the men is voluntary; they come forward themselves.

A-3395. My point is this—the rotational system which the unions prefer, which distributes the work among the men, has the effect of keeping too many men and giving them too little work, and it would be better if the number of men were restricted?—If the number of men were less there would be more work for them.

A-3396. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What *Mr. Clow* says is, it would be better to have a smaller number of men fairly constantly employed rather than have a larger number of men who are only partially employed as under the rotation system?—Yes, it would be better for the men who are employed; but it would not be better for the men who are put out of employment.

A-3397. *Mr. Clow*: Would it not be better if they went and looked for other sorts of employment?—Yes. If there were less men there would be more employment for them.

A-3398. Would not that be an improvement?—Yes; it would lessen the men from whom to select, but there would perhaps be a time when the number of men would not be sufficient.

A-3399. I am not suggesting going to that stage. At present the number of men is much greater than is sufficient to keep an ample margin?—Yes.

A-3400. In the long time you have been in Bombay, do you consider that the evil of bribery has diminished or increased?—I think it is tending to diminish.

A-3401. Is the number of men unemployed diminishing or increasing within the last six years?—That depends on the state of the trade. Just now there is rather a large number of unemployed, but the number is not unusually large.

A-3402. Comparing the present time with 1922-23, would you say that the number of unemployed is greater than what it was?—I daresay it is.

A-3403. Unless other measures were taken, that would tend to increase bribery; do you not think so? After all bribery depends to some extent on the number of men who are unable to obtain employment?—It would perhaps be so.

A-3404. Is the system of workmen's compensation working satisfactorily?—Yes.

A-3405. Do all the companies pay compensation under the system?—Yes; they do. The seaman, in case he is not satisfied, can appeal to the Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation.

A-3406. Do you assist seamen in getting compensation?—Well, their applications go through us.

A-3407. Suppose a seaman dies at sea; take a Pathan employed by the Peninsular and Oriental Co., whose home is on the Frontier or beyond, what steps are taken to see that his widow is informed of her rights?—We do not inform the widow of her rights under the Workmen's Compensation Act; we simply write and tell her that her husband is dead and leave it to her to claim the wages and the compensation if she is entitled to compensation. If she comes to our office in Bombay we help her.

A-3408. I am assuming that she is a thousand miles away on the Frontier.—We do not inform her of that by letter.

A-3409. Do you not think that it is likely that a great many dependants of that type of seamen principally would be unaware of their rights?—It is possible, but our experience is that they know their rights pretty well.

A-3410. It is your experience that in most cases in which a claim lies a claim is preferred?—Yes.

A-3411. Do you not think it would be advisable that some machinery should be set up by which, on the death of a seaman the initiative would be taken by your office or some other office?—We are not supposed to take the initiative. In a matter of that sort it is a matter for the dependants of the deceased or the injured person.

A-3412. I am not thinking of the present. I am asking whether it would not be possible to have some such system?—You mean to say to inform the dependants of their rights under the Act? It would be as well perhaps to let them know.

A-3413. In Mr. Curry's memorandum he says: "Fines are fixed by the regulations for maintaining discipline." Does that mean that there is a fixed scale of fines?—Yes.

A-3414. How has that worked?—In the agreement a scale of fines is laid down, and it is left to the Master of the ship to levy those fines.

A-3415. Can you give some details?—They are in the agreement—

Not being on board at the time fixed	..	..	2 days' pay.
Failure to return to duty within the day on which the leave expires	..	..	1 day's pay.
Drunkenness (first offence)	..	..	1 day's pay.
" (second offence)	..	..	2 days' pay.
Disobedience to lawful commands	..	..	2 days' pay.
Sleeping or negligent while on the look out	..	..	7 days' pay.

and so on.

A-3416. Mr. Curry makes the observation that professional money-lenders do not lend money to seamen, and there is no facility, therefore, for them to get into debt. But they freely borrow money from the *serangs*?—I believe so.

A-3417. Is it not possible that they may get heavily into debt in that way?—No. I do not suppose the *serangs* would allow them to get into debt heavily; *serangs* are not professional money-lenders.

A-3418. In cases where they are money-lenders?—I do not think that they have sufficient money, to act as money-lenders.

A-3419. *Mr. Joshi*: Why do you say that direct recruitment by the employers is better than the system of recruitment through your office as it is going on now?—Because, as I have said before, it eliminates the middleman, and makes it a direct transaction between the employers and the employees, and I think that is more satisfactory than having a middleman.

A-3420. But you yourself agree that even in that direct recruitment there is scope for bribery. In the report made by one of the officers of the Social Service League, we are told that there is actual bribery even in the case of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. It is stated in that report that the members of the Union cannot get jobs unless they pay something to some persons. A man recently discharged stated that he paid Rs. 15 for securing a job. So far as your office is concerned, I take it that there is no corruption?—I believe there is no corruption in the Shipping Office.

A-3421. Suppose recruitment through your office continues, and that we abolish the broker, as recommended by the Clow Committee, will that not be better than direct recruitment?—From the point of view of lessening bribery and corruption; is that what you mean? Well, perhaps it would be.

A-3422. The suggestion is that recruitment will be done through your office, but without a broker. The real remedy lies in abolishing the brokers' license.—The broker does not recruit the men now.

A-3423. What does a broker do?—His principal duty is to give advances to the seamen; he gives them a month's advance.

A-3424. So far as recruitment is concerned, he performs no duty?—What he does just now is to assist. When men are required he helps to supply them.

A-3425. There is no great difficulty in abolishing the broker's license so far as recruitment is concerned?—Well, that remains to be seen. He assists at present in supplying men; it is a matter to be seen whether recruitment would proceed satisfactorily without the brokers. We have not tried that yet.

A-3426. Does your office or the special recruiting officer find it difficult to get men without the brokers?—No. As a matter of fact, the *serangs* come along to my office. They get their men but low they are getting their men we do not know.

A-3427. So far as the broker is concerned, he has no function at all in the matter of recruitment?—He assists.

A-3428. He does not perform any essential function?—No; not in that respect.

A-3429. The broker, so far as I know, performs another function, namely that of giving advances. Suppose we abolish brokers' licenses for recruitment and look to the unions or independent co-operative societies to perform this function of advancing money; would you favour that?—I would not recommend that.

A-3430. Co-operative credit societies would be under proper supervision and control; they would be properly supervised by the Government auditor and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. If a co-operative society of that kind is formed by the seamen, would not that be a better institution for advancing moneys than the brokers?—Well, they would have to be responsible in that case for desertions. The broker advances a month's wages and when the men desert, or are missing at the last moment, the broker is looked upon to supply the deficiency.

A-3431. As regards desertions the Clow Committee have made certain recommendations, and we may adopt those recommendations?—I do not remember the recommendations about desertions.

A-3432. That recommendation was to allow the recruiting officer to take in a reserve number of men in addition to those actually required. If you find that two or three men are missing at the last moment, the men from the reserve would take the place of the men missing?—That is what the broker does at present.

A-3433. That may be done by your office, and the co-operative society may help the men in the matter of advances?—I hardly think that our office should take up that work.

A-3434. There would not be additional work?—We would have to be responsible for desertions. In the case of advances made to the men it is now left to the brokers to recover them from the men who desert.

A-3435. The broker now makes the advance; but that function will be taken over by a co-operative credit society; the functions and powers of the broker will be exercised by the co-operative society?—It is a matter of doubt whether that would work satisfactorily.

A-3436. Are you following as far as possible the system of rotation ?—Yes, as far as *serangs* and butlers are concerned. I mean to say that we recommend rotation.

A-3437. Can you tell us from your experience how far that system of rotation is accepted by the officers of the ships ?—(Mr. Sonalker) : I shall explain the whole procedure. When an officer of a ship comes along with a request for *serangs* and butlers, he is requested to take the men who are the longest out of employment. All the men present themselves with their discharge certificates in their hands. The selecting officer sees each man with his discharge certificate. But the period of unemployment is not the only factor that he takes into consideration ; there are other factors which he takes into consideration, such as the man's previous service in his company's ships, his physique, general appearance and previous record. If the selecting officer happens to know that a particular *serang* has served under him before, he gives preference to that man over others. But there are some instances in which men who have been unemployed for one year or for a longer period are selected.

A-3438. I want some figures to show how far the system of rotation has been followed in actual practice. You have now had five months' experience ; you know how many *serangs* have been on your register and how many people have been recruited. Will you be able to give us figures showing in how many cases the system of rotation was followed and in how many it was not followed ?—I should have to take some time. The date of discharge was not shown in our columns until recently ; only recently I have opened a column for that.

A-3439. What is your actual experience ?—They do not follow the rotation system necessarily.

A-3440. Can you give us actual figures ?—Yes ; after some time.

A-3441. *The Chairman* : The point is this—how far the institution of your office has led to a spreadover of the employment amongst the would-be sailors.—I am not in a position to give the figures now.

A-3442. *Mr. Joshi* : You can give us them after some days ?—Yes.

A-3443. Are you aware that in some cases crew are brought into Bombay from Calcutta just to create some kind of competition between Bombay seamen and Calcutta seamen or, say, to lower the wages in Bombay when they find it difficult to get sailors at particular rates ?—(Mr. Robottom) : I do not know that they are brought here to lower the wages of seamen in Bombay but it is a fact that some companies bring Calcutta seamen.

A-3444. Can you tell us why they do it ?—I do not know. They say that they prefer Calcutta men in such cases.

A-3445. It is sufficient for me to know that they are brought here. Can you supply us with a copy of the sailors' agreement form ?—Yes.

A-3446. You stated that *serangs* cannot make large advances to the seamen as they have not much to lend. In my experience I have seen in Bombay that *serangs* go on feeding the lascars for a number of months.—That is quite possible.

A-3447. Is that not a kind of loan to the lascars by the *serangs* ?—Yes.

A-3448. So, generally the lascars are indebted to the *serangs* ?—Yes ; I believe in some cases.

A-3449. In a large number of cases, because most of the men, Hindus as well as Mahomedans, in Bombay are generally fed by the *serangs* themselves ?—Many of them are, I believe.

A-3450. As you are now keeping a register of *serangs*, would you explain to us what the difficulty is in keeping a register also of the men under those *serangs* ?—The work would be enormous.

A-3451. If you have a larger staff the work will not be very difficult ?—With a larger staff it will not perhaps be very difficult, but the work will be enormous.

A-3452. With a larger staff the work may be done ?—It may be possible.

A-3453. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What will be the cost of that larger staff ?—I cannot say just now.

A-3454. *Mr. Asale* : What are the respective functions of the Shipping Master, the Deputy Shipping Master, the Assistant Shipping Master and the broker ?—The Shipping Master attends to all ships except the Peninsular and Oriental Company's ships ; the Deputy attends to the Peninsular and Oriental ships and the work connected with them ; the Assistant Shipping Master works in the office, he is superintendent of the office practically, and Mr. Sonalker is the other Assistant for recruitment.

A-3455. What are the functions of the shipping broker?—The functions of the shipping broker just now are to assist in the recruiting of the crew when called upon and to pay advances to the seamen.

A-3456. Any other functions?—Not that I know of.

A-3457. Do they not take the crew to the ships' officers?—Not now. All applications for seamen come to the Shipping Master and he deals with them, and when there is difficulty in obtaining crews the *serangs* apply to the shipping broker.

A-3458. Are you sure that they do not interfere with the employment of the seamen?—I do not think the broker interferes more than he is asked to do.

A-3459. Was there not a complaint from a *serang* that the Assistant Shipping Master supplied him to the Master of the ship, but that a broker interfered?—The broker has never interfered with the selection of a *serang*.

A-3460. Not with the *serang*, but with his employment on the ship?—I do not know.

A-3461. Do seamen get signed on and off on Sundays and holidays?—They are signed on on Sundays as on any other days.

A-3462. On Sundays and holidays; they are paid their advances later?—That is very seldom I should think.

A-3463. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do they not get usually paid from the date of signing on?—Usually, yes.

A-3464. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: But not always?—In a few cases, where it is convenient to sign on a crew about a week or so beforehand, i.e., before they join, the broker sometimes speaks to the Captain, and if the Captain agrees he pays the advances later.

A-3465. *Mr. Asavle*: Are they also signed on out of office hours?—Yes.

A-3466. Does any officer get any extra payment for this work?—Not for doing it out of office hours.

A-3467. On Sundays and holidays?—Yes.

A-3468. Do you not think that it is extra expenditure for Government?—I suppose it is a matter of justice to pay officers for working on Sundays and holidays.

A-3469. When they are paid advances for a long period, why should they be signed on one week before time?—It is a question for the Master of the ship and the shipping company to decide; if they decide that they do it.

A-3470. Will you furnish us with a statement of the number of signings on on Sundays and out of office hours for the last two years? You said that it was a small affair?—I did not say that it was a small affair. We can furnish a statement if necessary. We give a statement, as a matter of fact, to Government.

A-3471. They get some allowances; the Shipping Master gets paid for it.—The Shipping Master gets paid for working on Sundays.

A-3472. What is the practice as regards recruitment by the British India Steam Navigation Company?—The Peninsular and Oriental Company do their own recruiting, and the British India Steam Navigation Company do most of their own recruiting; but they call upon the brokers through the Shipping Master sometimes to assist them.

A-3473. Still the broker is called?—Yes. He is called upon sometimes by the officer to assist in producing a portion of the crew.

A-3474. Is it not a fact that the Shipping Master sometimes prohibits one set of men from entering the Shipping Office and gives all sorts of facilities for another set of men, allowing their representatives to move about freely in his office?—That is absolutely untrue.

A-3475. Do you know any of the gentlemen whose names I shall presently read out—Patrick DeSa, Logario Pereira, Augustus Fernandez, Antonio Rodrigues?—I know the first two.

A-3476. Do they come to your office?—Logario Pereira is a Peninsular and Oriental man; he has business to come to my office but not very often.

A-3477. Is he sent by his office?—Oh yes; I think so.

Sir Victor Sassoon: What is your point, Mr. Asavle?

Mr. Asavle: These are the few favourites, and they are given a monopoly to recruit men?—I can deny that absolutely.

A-3478. Are the men taken into service according to their order in the rotation ?—No.

A-3479. Do you not think that this is a hardship on the seamen ?—I do not think so. Ideally it is a very good thing, but in practice I do not think it would suit the companies, because it would mean that they would get men whom they do not want.

A-3480. Is it a fact that even seamen with the best certificates have been refused service ?—It is quite possible. The selecting officer selects men according to his own ideas of what he wants. We have nothing to do with the actual selections.

A-3481. Will not that increase the volume of unemployment ?—I do not think so.

A-3482. Are there not many seamen in Bombay who have been out of employment for 4, 5 or 6 years ?—Of course there are a number of men who have bad characters. The selecting officers do not wish to take them.

A-3483. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Do you mean to say that there are not good characters among seamen who have been unemployed for 4 or 5 years ?—I should not think that in their case, i.e., the men with good characters, it would be such a long period as four years.

A-3484. *Mr. Ahmed* : But many of these seamen who have been without employment for such a long time possess certificates from you and you have put your signature to those certificates. How then can you say that they are all bad characters ?—I did not say that they were all bad characters. Some men there are who are bad characters.

A-3485. *Mr. Asvale* : The Clow Committee recommended the employment of seamen by rotation and the Government of India passed their resolution No. 2863, Department of Commerce, dated 25th May 1922, approving of the recommendation. Is not your present practice in contravention of that recommendation ?—No, it is not. We have not received any orders that seamen must be employed in rotation.

A-3486. But there is the recommendation of the Clow Committee and the resolution of the Government of India ?—I do not think that all the recommendations of the Clow Committee were adopted by the Government of India.

The Chairman : Yes, we were so informed in Delhi.

A-3487. *Mr. Asvale* : Are pathans stationed at the shipping office ?—No. There is one Pathan employed by the shipping broker to safeguard his money. Generally when he goes on board to advance money to the crews he carries a good sum of money with him and in order to safeguard that he has employed a pathan.

A-3488. But why should he sit there at the shipping office the whole day ?—Because there is his master, the shipping broker. But he does not interfere with the shipping office.

A-3489. Did the seamen individually or the seamen's union prefer any complaint that these shipping brokers employed Pathans to assault Indian seamen ?—Perhaps there might have been a complaint from the union, but we never found that to be true.

A-3490. Did not the Police Commissioner draw your attention to this and post his own men to protect the Indian seamen ?—No, not so far as I know.

A-3491. Will you make enquiries and find out whether or not these Pathans generally assault the Indian seamen ?—I can say that they do not.

A-3492. *Mr. Ahmed* : How long have you been in this line before you took over charge of the present department ?—11 years.

A-3493. The Clow Committee recommended in 1922 that the broker system of recruiting seamen should be abolished altogether as it led to corruption and favouritism and as there was a widespread discontent amongst the ranks of seamen. Seven years have elapsed and still Government has not taken any action in the matter. Do you know why ?—They have given effect to the recommendations of the Clow Committee by appointing Mr. Sonalker as special recruiting officer.

The Chairman : This witness is not responsible for the actions of the Government of India. We dealt with this question at Delhi when we had Mr. Woodhead before us. He gave us the reasons why the full recommendations of the Clow Committee had not been carried out.

A-3494. *Mr. Ahmed* : Have you not received a number of petitions and memorials from the Seamen's Union regarding matters arising out of their employment ?—Yes, occasionally we have received them.

A-3495. Did they not ask for a State Employment Bureau for recruiting Indian seamen ?—I believe they asked for that.

A-3496. You give your men no housing accommodation and they have to live in lodging houses?—Yes.

A-3497. Do not the lodging house keepers extort a lot of money from these seamen?—I do not know of that. They have to pay rent to the lodging houses.

A-3498. But no accommodation is given to them either by Government or by the Shipping companies?—No.

A-3499. Do they not generally suffer from diseases such as malaria and typhoid?—I think they are generally more healthy than the men on shore.

A-3500. Is there any provision for medical attendance when they are ill?—When they are on boardship the shipping companies provide the necessary medical facilities. But while on shore and unemployed they have no special facilities.

A-3501. If a workman died at sea in the discharge of his duties, you simply inform his wife or his relatives and do not take any steps to get compensation for his family under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No, we leave that to the dependents to do.

A-3502. Is it not very difficult for the dependents to get compensation from companies which are not registered in India?—No, the shipping companies now-a-days put in a clause in the agreement that they will pay compensation according to the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. That difficulty has now been removed.

A-3503. The memorandum of the Indian Seamen's Union, Bombay, says that the Peninsular and Oriental and the British India Steam Navigation Companies retain their seamen for four or five years thus swelling the waiting list of seamen wanting to be employed. Have you no voice in the matter?—It might be true in some cases. We cannot do anything except recommend rotation to the companies. All the seamen should have a chance for selection and if they are not selected we cannot help them.

A-3504. So that there are many who have been unemployed for 4 or 5 years?—I do not think they have been so long as that.

A-3505. Do you keep a register of seamen?—No. We only keep a register of *serangs* and Butlers, not of others.

A-3506. How then can you contradict my statement that there are many who have been unemployed for four or five years?—I have not noticed any such cases, nor has Mr. Sonalker done so.

A-3507. With regard to fines collected from seamen, how do you utilize the amount?—The amount is credited to Government.

A-3508. Have these Indian seamen any sailors' home or training school or any other facilities?—A scheme for building a sort of *Musafarkhana* is under consideration. A committee has been constituted for collecting the necessary funds. Besides this, the sailors have got their own clubs or *jamats*. For instance, the Goanese seamen live together in their clubs.

A-3509. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Reference was made to ships in Bombay recruiting seamen from Calcutta. Are the ships entitled to employ whatever type of seamen they choose?—I believe they are.

A-3510. I understand that the Peninsular and Oriental Company like to have as firemen, men from the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. The British India Steam Navigation in Calcutta like to have men from Bombay as their firemen. Do you agree that a ship's master can choose his crews from any part of India he likes?—He can legally.

A-3511. Do you think it advisable that there should be a restriction to the effect that ships in Calcutta should take their crew only from Calcutta, ships in Bombay should take their crew only from Bombay and ships in Karachi only from Karachi?—If that is done, it would satisfy the men, because they would be employed in their respective ports.

A-3512. What about Karachi men?—I think there are hardly any men in Karachi.

A-3513. But we had complaints in Karachi that preference was given to men from Bombay?—I do not know of any ships that recruit their crew from Karachi.

A-3514. When the seamen are signed on to whom are the advances given? Are they given to the seamen themselves?—Yes.

A-3515. Not to the *serangs*?—No.

A-3516. Do you pay actually to the individual men concerned?—We see to it that that is done. The shipping office clerk does that.

A-3517. To whom are the wages paid?—To the men themselves individually.

A-3518. *Mr. Lallji* : Is there a broker employed in your office for the purpose of bringing seamen ?—Now the broker does not do what he used to do. He only helps when he is called upon to do so.

A-3519. Does he not give advances to the seamen ?—Yes, he does.

A-3520. What rate of interest does he charge on the advances ?—He does not charge any interest.

A-3521. But he lends the money ?—He advances a month's pay to the seaman on behalf of the company, and charges a commission to the company and not to the seaman.

A-3522. What is the commission ?—I believe it is about 5 to 7½ per cent.

A-3523. How many companies employ these brokers ?—I believe all the companies except the B. I. S. N. and P. & O. The broker does not supply the crew now except when he is called upon to assist a *serang* who has not been able to make up his full quota. It is only then that he assists the *serang*.

A-3524. What staff do these brokers have ?—I think they have about five or six *ghat serangs*, a cashier and three or four clerks.

A-3525. You have a list of *serangs* and butlers ?—Yes.

A-3526. Do they not occupy a position similar to jobbers in mills with regard to mill-hands ?—I do not know the system in the mills.

A-3527. Have you not heard of the *mukadams* supplying mill-hands ?—I am sorry. I could not say what the system is.

A-3528. I take it that under the present system you have got a register of *serangs* and butlers and they supply you with most of the seamen required ?—Yes, that is so.

A-3529. With regard to the amount of compensation payable to a workman under the Workmen's Compensation Act, is there any difference between the maximum and minimum amounts payable formerly under the English Act and those payable at present under the Indian Act ?—I have not compared the amounts payable in the two cases and I do not know whether there is any difference. But it is more satisfactory for the men to have the Indian Act, because they can get their compensation in Bombay and if they are not satisfied they can appeal to the Commissioner in Bombay.

A-3530. How can a man employed in a cargo boat which has no agents here in Bombay get compensation in case of accident ?—If he is signed on in Bombay there must be an agent here.

A-3531. Does the shipping office insist on the owner of boat depositing a certain amount in advance in case a necessity arises for paying compensation ?—No, we do not do that.

A-3532. Do you not think it advisable to ask the owners of steamers to do so ?—I hardly think so.

A-3533. Suppose a man comes from the Punjab and is engaged in a Japanese Cargo boat. If he had to get compensation, how could he do it ?—We have never heard of any cases where the shipping company has not paid compensation.

A-3534. Do you not think it advisable to ask these shipping companies to deposit a certain amount for compensation ?—We have never found that necessary. I do not think it will be necessary to do that.

A-3535. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do other countries do that ?—I do not think they do.

A-3536. *Mr. Lallji* : Have you had experience of any other country ?—At any rate I have never heard of that being done.

A-3537. In your memorandum it is stated that the supply of labour exceeds the demand. Why then do you want brokers to assist in recruitment ?—As a matter of fact we get on mostly without brokers and they are called upon only to assist any *serang* who has not been able to make up his seamen.

A-3538. With regard to housing you say that five or six people live in a single room. Have you seen those rooms ?—No. I believe they are living like that.

A-3539. How then did you say that their health was very good when you have not seen their houses even ?—I said that the general health of the seamen compares favourably with the general health of men on shore.

A-3540. You spoke of a scheme for building houses for these seamen. How long has this been under consideration ?—I think about two years.

A-3541. *Mr. Cliff* : In your memorandum you have described the duties of the special recruiting officer. Has he any other duties to do besides those mentioned here ?—

(Mr. Sonalker): Besides those duties he has generally to investigate complaints of seamen which are generally made to him. He also carries on correspondence with the Calcutta Shipping Office.

A-3542. Can a new recruit get on your register as a leading hand or a *serang* or a butler?—If a *tindal* is promoted as a *serang* he can be registered.

A-3543. Have you any control over the number of new recruits that come as seamen?—No.

A-3544. Have you adopted a policy similar to that adopted in Calcutta?—I do not know what policy is followed in Calcutta.

A-3545. In Calcutta they tell us that the number of new recruits was reduced under the orders of the shipping master. Are you giving any orders in order to reduce the number of new recruits in Bombay?—(Mr. Sonalker): No.

A-3546. Does the policy pursued at present lead to the casualization of seamen labour or to the de-casualization of seamen labour; in other words, are you in any way restricting the number of seamen available for employment?—No.

A-3547. I understand that a *serang* being next on turn for employment under the P. & O. is warned about a month in advance. Can you tell me whether he receives any pay prior to the actual signing on?—I am not concerned with the P. & O. recruitment.

A-3548. Can you tell me the basis of pay of *ghat serangs*?—I do not know.

A-3549. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have a statement here from Messrs. Chichgar and Co., Shipping Brokers wherein they say "Ever since the substitution of a special recruiting officer we have no hand in the recruitment of crews." Is that a proper statement of the position?—(Mr. Robottom): Yes; I believe so.

A-3550. Then why do you say that the brokers are sometimes used?—As I say, when a *serang* cannot make up his crew he goes to the broker for assistance and the broker assists him in getting his crew. There are cases where the *serangs* apparently cannot get men themselves and they call upon the broker to assist them in getting men.

A-3551. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has not that been happening since 1st July 1929?—Yes.

A-3552. Are Messrs. Chichgar and Co. doing this work since the 1st of July?—Yes, when they are called upon to assist.

A-3553. But they state definitely here that they have no hand?—They have no hand unless they are called upon to assist.

A-3554. So they have a hand in obtaining the crew when they are called upon to do so?—Yes.

A-3555. *Mr. Asvle*: In your memorandum under the heading "Health" you say "Provision is made for complaints from seamen regarding bad or insufficient food or water and for compensation therefor to the seamen." You must be aware that many representations in regard to the supply of bad food were made. May I know whether they ever got compensation, or what did you do in those cases?—I personally have not received any complaint about bad food. I believe Mr. Curry also has not received complaints—if at all it must have been very seldom—because I remember asking him on that point and he said that it was practically unknown for the men to complain about their food.

A-3556. Did you get representations from the Seamen's Union with regard to this matter?—I do not remember having received any complaints about food. I may state that the food is inspected by the shipping master at the beginning of a voyage.

A-3557. Have you received any complaints about the insufficiency of food that is given to them?—I have never received any complaints of that sort.

A-3558. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is there a difference in the quantity of food given to the Indian seamen and the European seamen?—The food is different in each case.

A-3559. I am speaking of the quantity. Take, for instance, sugar. Is there any difference in the quantity?—I have not compared each item like that; but it is altogether a different food.

A-3560. *Mr. Asvle*: Under the heading "Trade Combinations" you say "It will be seen . . . that the majority of the seamen in the deck and engine room departments do not belong to the Unions . . ." Have you got the report of the union?—Yes.

A-3561. Do you know that almost all the men in the deck and engine room departments are members of the union?—I do not think so.

A-3562. Who gave you this information that the majority of the men in the deck and engine room departments are not members of the union ?—We deal with the men every day, and we ask them.

A-3563. Do you know that nearly 5,364 members of the engine room and 5,246 of the deck are members of the union ?—I do not know about that.

A-3564. With regard to strikes and lock-outs, will you tell us where was the strike amongst seamen ?—As we say here, there have been no proper strikes.

A-3565. Do you know the reason why there is no strike now ?—I suppose the men are satisfied.

A-3566. Have not representations been made through the union ; if they were satisfied no complaints would have been made ?—I think the men themselves are generally satisfied with their wages and the treatment generally.

A-3567. Will you tell us whether complaints have been received from the union by your office or not ?—We receive complaints from the Union.

A-3568. Then how do you say that they have no complaints ?—If they had they would have personally come to us.

A-3569. Do you not know that they have a registered Union and that it is not their duty to go personally but that they go through the Union ?—I do not know what they say to the Union.

A-3570. You have received several times representations through the Union ?—Yes, sometimes.

A-3571. You cannot therefore say that they have no grievance ?—As I say, the men seem to be generally satisfied with their wages and conditions generally.

A-3572. *Divan Chaman Lall* : Even when there is unemployment ?—Unemployment is another point. It is true that there are a number of unemployed ; that cannot be helped.

A-3573. *Mr. Asale* : With regard to wages, up to 1922 the men were getting increased wages but from 1923 their wages have been decreased. What is this due to ?—Excluding the P. & O. Company the other companies' rates of wages were slightly higher than the last rates fixed in 1923.

A-3574. *Mr. Joshi* : It is less now ?—Yes, but it is more than what it was at the time of the war.

A-3575. *Mr. Asale* : Do other companies offer less wages than the P. & O. offers ?—They do.

A-3576. How do you say that the people of other companies are satisfied when they get less wages than the wages given by the P. & O. ?—It depends upon the standard of men. I think the P. & O. get the best man ; I think they get a better man because they pay for him.

A-3577. Is it not a fact that in the absence of any union of seamen and as recruitment entirely rested with the brokers the rates of wages were reduced by 10 to 15 per cent. in 1923 ?—The wages were fixed at a conference of shipowners in 1923. Those wages were slightly lower than the wages fixed about 1920 but they were a good deal higher than the wages which were in force before and during the war.

A-3578. A cut of 10 to 15 per cent. was made in 1923 ?—It was not as much as that.

A-3579. *Divan Chaman Lall* : Do you know what the figure was ?—No, but I have seen the wages ; I believe the reduction was very small.

A-3580. *Divan Chaman Lall* : Will you kindly supply us figures showing the number of *serangs* and butlers who are actually employed and those that are unemployed and obtain also information of a similar nature from the P. & O. and B. I. S. N. Companies ?

A-3581. *The Chairman* : The Commission would like to know whether there is any movement to decasualize seamen's labour, or on the other hand whether the policy is intending to increase the casualization ; that is to say, the proportion between the number of men employed at any one time and the proportion on the lists of would-be sailors ?—We have got no register of the unemployed seamen ; we maintain registers only in the case of *serangs* and butlers. We cannot give the number of unemployed. We do not have any influence on increasing or reducing the number of seamen.

A-3582. We were told that in Calcutta there has been a reduction of about 5,000 in the lists ?—There has been no reduction here.

A-3583. Therefore the number of men over whom the work has to be spread is not diminishing in Bombay but perhaps increasing ?—Yes ; it is not diminishing, as far as I know.

A-3584. And the steps recently taken have done nothing to bring the industry of shipping to a position where more regular employment can be given?—As I say, we are only dealing with *serangs* and butlers; we recommend employment in rotation.

A-3585. Have you any figures which would enable us to understand the position in Bombay as regards unemployment?—I understand that there is unemployment just now on account of the trade depression.

A-3586. The shipping trade always does fluctuate?—The unemployment is not greater, I think, than usual at times of depression.

A-3587. What we would like to know is whether the tendency in Bombay is the same as it is in Calcutta or whether anything is being done?—Nothing is being done in that respect to increase or decrease the number of men.

A-3588. Will you give us figures to enable us to understand at any one time on an average how many seamen are at sea compared with the total number of seamen?—You want figures in respect of *serangs* only?

A-3589. Can you give us figures in respect of *serangs* and butlers?—Yes.

A-3590. That would enable us to judge whether the present system is a good one or not, and whether any further steps should be taken to limit the field of recruitment so that there can be more continuous employment?—We have taken no steps to limit the field of recruitment.

The Chairman: We have made enquiries both from Calcutta and from the Central Government so that we can be quite clear on that point, whether the position is improving or getting worse or whether it merely remains stationary. We want to get an idea as to how long, on the average, the men have to wait between one period of employment and another.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. MOHAMMED EBRAHIM, Serang, Acting General Secretary,
Mr. A. B. MORAES, Joint Secretary, and Mr. P. G. KANEKAR,
Adviser, representing the Indian Seamen's Union.**

A-3591. *The Chairman*: Have any of you served as seamen?—(Mr. Ebrahim): I have been a seaman for about 30 years. The other two witnesses have not been seamen.

A-3592. What is the date of the formation of the Indian Seamen's Union?—The present union was formed in 1926; before that date there was a union of the saloon department only which was formed in 1919.

A-3593. What is the membership?—12,007 saloon workers, 5,367 engine room workers, 5,246 deck workers, making 22,620 in all; that is the present membership of the union.

A-3594. And that membership is out of a total, as you tell us in your memorandum of about 70,000 seamen in Bombay?—Yes.

A-3595. We observe that there are two unions representing the seamen of Bombay?—There is another union called the Bombay Seamen's Union in which only saloon workers are included, no deck and engine room workers. Our union includes all classes of workers: saloon, deck and engine room. When the Indian Seamen's union was first formed it included only saloon workers, but it was re-organized in 1926 and the deck and engine room workers were then included.

A-3596. Was that the point of difference between your union and the Bombay Seamen's union, that they preferred to include only saloon workers?—There is that difference as to sphere of work, but there is also another difference: ours is an independent union while we have reason to suspect that the other union was set up by the employers in order to defeat our union.

A-3597. I noticed that statement in your memorandum; of course we shall hear from the other union what their point of view is. But with regard to your own union, I think I have it clearly now that you include saloon workers as well as deck workers and other classes of workers: the whole body of seamen as the term is generally used?—Yes.

A-3598. With regard to the 70,000 seamen which you tell us there are of all ranks and categories in Bombay, can you tell me how many of that 70,000 on the average

are employed and how many unemployed at one time ?—One-third of that 70,000 are employed and two-thirds are unemployed. That is, of course, an approximate figure.

A-3599. I understand you to say that in the present state of trade there is only employment at any one time for one-third of the total number of seamen, and in your memorandum your claim is that that employment should be spread over the whole body so that all should get an equal chance of engagement ?—Yes, by turns.

A-3600. That would mean that on the average a seaman would only get one year's employment in three years ; there would be two years gap between each of his engagements if they were spread absolutely equally over the whole body ?—Yes.

A-3601. Do you think it is desirable that there should be so many seamen waiting for engagements that it would only be possible for each of them to obtain an engagement in one year out of three ? We are told, for instance, that in Calcutta they are endeavouring to reduce the number of seamen, on the registers so that more constant employment can be given to those who remain as seamen ?—If employment is given by turns, if a man is discharged after one year's service instead of serving continuously for four or five years, as happens at present, there will be less unemployment.

A-3602. That is to say you would wish such employment as there is to be equally spread over the whole body of 70,000 ?—Yes, and there should be no further recruits for the time being.

A-3603. Reading your memorandum, I take it that the second main point is that you ask for the full application of the recommendations of the Clow report ?—(Mr. Kanekar) : Yes.

A-3604. And you wish that to be applied to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co. as well as the other shipping companies ?—(Mr. Ebrahim) : Yes. The engine room and deck workers are changed after one year but in the saloons they are kept on year after year, and in consequence there is great discontent among the saloon workers.

A-3605. I have just been informed that you, Mr. Ebrahim, were yourself a member of the Clow Committee ?—Yes.

A-3606. And joined in those recommendations ?—Yes.

A-3607. Therefore what you put before the Commission, which I am sure will have their consideration, is that although the Government of India has partially applied the recommendations, it has not applied them in full and you ask that they should be applied as a whole. Since the Report of the Clow Committee the Government has taken one step, at any rate, in the appointment of this Special Recruiting Officer. You say in your memorandum that no doubt his appointment was an effective check on the evils of the broker system in selection of seamen, but the advantages which have resulted are so meagre that they have not in any material way improved the conditions of engagement and recruitment. Do you maintain before the Commission that the experience of the last five months has shown no improvement in recruitment ?—It has made some improvement in diminishing the bribery and the payments that have been made, but it has not made an improvement in the equal spreadover of the employment so far as *serangs* and butlers' are concerned. Officers still pick up men ; the selection still remains with the shipping authorities ; they favour some men in the way of continuous employment and that makes it worse for the rest.

A-3608. Mr. Clow : Suppose your system was adopted, as the Chairman has explained, it would mean that every *serang* would have one year's work and two year's idleness ?—After the seaman has served the first year, he will go back home after being discharged and will wait for his turn when the other people come back.

A-3609. If, as you say, there are three *serangs* for every job, on an average a man will be idle for two-thirds of the time ?—Yes, but not exactly for one year and two years.

A-3610. On an average ?—Yes.

A-3611. Do you not think that would be a very bad system ?—It would be much better than the present system.

A-3612. Why ?—At present one man gets continuous employment while another man does not get employment for seven years.

A-3613. But do you not think it would be better if as many men as possible got very nearly continuous employment and the others were forced into some other occupation ?—The best way would be to stop fresh recruitment, so that there would not be much encouragement to other people to come ; men should only be taken from the register of seamen.

A-3614. Do you agree with me that efforts should be made to reduce the number of seamen looking for jobs?—Yes, that is desirable; but further recruitment can only be stopped by registering all the seamen and selecting men only from that list.

A-3615. Do you not think that a seaman who has only two or three months' holiday is likely to be more efficient than a man who is looking out for a job for two or three years?—If he rests for some years he may be in better health and more efficient.

A-3616. But a man who has only two or three months' unemployment at a time will be better paid?—Yes.

A-3617. You remember that the Committee recommended that the officers should be at liberty to choose *serangs* from those who had been not more than three months out of employment?—Yes.

A-3618. But that recommendation is not the same as the recommendation now made by the union. Does the union agree with that recommendation of the Committee or not?—I do not agree; it is impracticable.

A-3619. Why do you think it is impracticable?—There are a number of seamen who have not been employed for a number of years and preference is given to fresh men over their heads.

A-3620. In your supplementary memorandum you complain that the wages are very inadequate and that it is hard to live on the wages; but in your first memorandum, when you are pleading for this rotation system, you say the seamen can very well afford a holiday as they will have accumulated some savings. Do the seamen come back with savings?—Yes.

A-3621. How long do their savings last?—It depends upon the circumstances; if the man stays in Bombay it will not last long; if he goes to his native place it will last for a longer time—4 to 6 months.

A-3622. The pay is not inadequate provided a man can secure fairly continuous employment?—Provided he gets continual employment, of course he can save, but his savings become exhausted during unemployment.

A-3623. In other words, if your system were adopted and men were unemployed for long periods, the pay would be inadequate?—Yes.

A-3624. *Mr. Joshi*: As regards workmen's compensation do you experience any difficulties as to seamen on coasting steamers?—Seamen on coasting steamers are taken up without any agreements and if they are injured they are not entitled to any compensation.

A-3625. These coasting steamers are generally registered not in India but in the United Kingdom?—Yes.

A-3626. What remedy do you suggest for the difficulty caused by crews being brought from Calcutta to Bombay?—There should be two separate registers for Calcutta and Bombay and in Bombay only seamen on the Bombay register should be taken.

A-3627. Have these *lascars* to pay a fee when they are discharged?—Yes, one rupee.

A-3628. Do they get a receipt for that?—No.

A-3629. Who takes that rupee?—The clerk of the Shipping Master takes one rupee at the time of discharging.

A-3630. *The Chairman*: That is the office charge for the certificate?—No. Extra Rs. 3 are charged for a certificate.

A-3631. *Mr. Joshi*: Why do they not give a receipt?—There is no practice of giving a receipt.

A-3632. Have you any difficulty with regard to the Shipping Office itself?—The present Shipping Office is at a distance of about 3 miles from the docks, which causes much inconvenience to seamen; the Shipping Office should be as near the docks as possible.

A-3633. Is there any difficulty experienced on account of the advances given by the broker under the Merchant Shipping Act which prescribes that at the time of signing on a man should get an advance?—In actual practice it is sometimes paid 4 days afterwards and consequently there is great difficulty.

A-3634. Are you satisfied with the rations that are given?—Some articles of food are insufficient in quantity, such as mutton, sugar, tea, *ghae*, which are insufficient for Indian seamen.

A-3635. As regards accommodation the Merchant Shipping Act provides that so far as European seamen are concerned they should have 60 cubic feet, while for Indian

seamen it prescribes 36 cubic feet. What do you think of this discrimination?—It is a hardship to Indian seamen that there is insufficient accommodation; the Indian seamen should be given the same accommodation as the English seamen.

A-3636. What are your relations with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company?—In respect of saloon workers there is trouble between the union and the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

A-3637. *Mr. Joshi*: As regards your articles of agreement, if the *lascar* seamen do not serve for the period mentioned, they are fined; is that true?—Yes.

A-3638. Do the companies undertake a similar responsibility of giving you employment for a particular period?—No.

A-3639. What is your suggestion in that respect?—The agreement should be binding on both parties.

A-3640. In your service sheet there is a column for remarks regarding the quality of work done and the character of the seaman; have you anything to say on that point?—Sometimes even after a service of 20 years or so a man gets a very bad mark on the service sheet and it makes it very hard for him to secure employment afterwards. That column should be abolished.

A-3641. *Miss Power*: I should like to know how accurate are the figures as to the monthly cost of food for a sailor on shore which are referred to under different paragraphs in your memorandum?—The articles of food for people of different Provinces are different. During times of unemployment a man has to live on a very spare diet, but that should not be taken as a standard.

A-3642. What do you say is the minimum upon which a seaman can live in Bombay?—Food for a man costs at least Rs. 21 or 22.

A-3643. *Mr. Asale*: Is bribery still going on?—Yes.

A-3644. Who takes the bribes?—The *serang* takes money from the men who are to be employed under him. The ship's officer or the broker then has to be paid. Of course, there are some officers on ships who are free from this bribery, but others take bribes. The *serang* represents to the men that the officer has to be gratified by paying him something. The men have no means of knowing the facts, they have to believe the *serangs* because the *serang* goes to the officer and talks to him and something transpires between them. The facts are unknown to the men. There is bribery at present.

A-3645. Did you not make representations as regards this bribery to the shipping authorities as well as to the Police Commissioner?—Yes, we did.

A-3646. What do you propose to do?—If the Police prepare a case against them, we shall take the matter up.

A-3647. Were these advances given to the seamen near the shipping office or outside the shipping office?—Inside the shipping office.

A-3648. Did the Police Commissioner say it was not within his jurisdiction?—Yes. All this occurs in the shipping office which is not within the jurisdiction of the Police; it is not on the public street; it is in the office and so the Police cannot take any steps.

A-3649. Is there any fresh recruitment of seamen at present?—Yes, on every steamer several new men are taken on.

A-3650. You have said in answer to Mr. Clow that when a seaman returns from service his savings will last him 4 to 6 months if he lives in his village; but how long has he to serve to be able to save that amount?—He must have served at least one year in order to be able to save so much.

A-3651. Where the recruitment is done by the companies themselves, does the broker still take away those men?—Yes, the broker interferes even now as regards employment. Some companies have said to the Assistant Shipping Officer that the brokers interfere with the recruitment; that is so with regard to the British India Steam Navigation and other companies.

A-3652. Has there recently been such a case?—Yes, the union people are harassed by the brokers. In one case a *serang* was refused employment by the brokers because he was working as one of the secretaries of the union; a complaint was afterwards sent by the union to the Assistant Shipping Master.

A-3653. What did he reply?—No reply was received.

A-3654. Is it a fact that almost all the deck and engine room seamen are members of your union?—Yes, they are, with the exception of a few *Punjabis* and *Pathans*.

- A-3655. When was the last strike ?—1919.
- A-3656. Is it not a fact that since this union has been formed the union authorities have been trying to induce the men not to go on strike ?—Yes.
- A-3657. Is it not a fact that you have sent all grievances to the Shipping Master as well as to Government ?—Yes.
- A-3658. Do you know how many complaints have been made ?—20 or 25 recently, other than previous ones.
- A-3659. Will you give the Commission a statement about that to-morrow or the day after ?—Yes.
- A-3660. What wages were paid to saloon workers in 1915 ?—A *serang* would get Rs. 60.
- A-3661. I see in a statement which has been submitted to the Commission it is given as Rs. 40 ?—I myself received Rs. 60 in 1915.
- A-3662. When were the wages cut ?—In 1923.
- A-3663. What was the cause ?—The brokers and the shipping master told the men that one or two ships had not taken crews from Bombay, and said : “ Therefore it is better for you to take smaller wages than that ships should not take crews from Bombay ; you had better put your finger impressions on these documents ”. They reduced the wages by that means. The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was the only company which did not reduce wages.
- A-3664. *Mr. Lalji* : If the *serangs*, butlers and brokers were abolished, would you be able to supply men to the shipping companies ?—Yes.
- A-3665. What have the seamen to pay to the brokers in order to get employment ?—Those who come back from voyages and are able to pay as bribery Rs. 30, 40 or 50 get employment immediately ; those who have been ashore for a long time, being without money, cannot pay anything, and do not get employment.
- A-3666. *Mr. Cliff* : Is the principle of sharing work advocated in order to avoid favouritism ?—(*Mr. Kanekar*) : Yes.
- A-3667. I think you advocate that there should be registration of seamen ?—Yes.
- A-3668. Would the union propose along with the scheme of registration that a period should be allowed for all the seamen to register who desired so to do, and then no more should be able to register after a stated period ?—So long as the present unemployment continues.
- A-3669. Is it the desire of the seamen that there should be no more seamen registered than are required ?—No. All must be registered.
- A-3670. Would you be in favour of no more recruitment being allowed until such time as the numbers have been decreased to the requirements ?—Yes, I should be in favour of that.
- A-3671. We are informed that as far as recruitment at Bombay is concerned the firemen are recruited from the *Pathans*, the saloon stewards from the *Goanese*, and the deck hands mainly from around Bombay ?—No. That is the case only with the P. & O. Company.
- A-3672. Taking those three classes, what holiday do they desire after being a year at sea ? It is put in this way, that a seaman after a period of service wants to return to his native place. May I take it that these three classes all want a holiday ?—Yes.
- A-3673. What period of holiday would meet the general desire ?—3 or 4 months' holiday after a year's service.
- A-3674. Is that applicable to all the three classes to which I have referred ?—Yes.
- A-3675. And may the Commission take it that the statement in your memoranda with regard to the establishment of a bureau with the assistance named therein expressed the general demand of the members of your union ?—Yes.
- A-3676. *Mr. Ahmed* : You were a member of the Clow Committee, which has condemned the system of brokers and recommended its abolition ?—(*Mr. Ebrahim*) : Yes.
- A-3677. That system has not been abolished for the last seven years, and that is your grievance ?—Yes.
- A-3678. You wanted that a State Employment Bureau for Seamen should be established immediately ?—Yes.
- A-3679. That has not been done, and that is another grievance of yours ?—Yes.

A-3680. How many hours have the seamen to work ?—From nine to twelve hours, according to the nature of the officer. If the officer is good he will give them easier hours. Usually they are working from morning to evening with only two hours' interval for taking food.

A-3681. What is the condition as regards hours in other countries ?—I do not know that.

A-3682. As regards accommodation, the seamen of other countries are given a place in the saloon ; what is the practice here ?—They are given a separate place in the deck, but the accommodation is less spacious than that given to seamen of other countries.

A-3683. As regards food and clothing, how do you compare with other countries ; what will be the comparative costs ?—I cannot say.

A-3684. There is a great deal of difference ?—Yes.

A-3685. If the cost of the food given to seamen in India is Rs. 20, what will be the cost in other countries ?—We get only 4 ounces of meat, whereas in other countries they get half a lb. or more.

A-3686. As regards vegetables and other things ?—Except rice, flour and *dal*, in other countries they get a larger supply than we get.

A-3687. As regards clothing ?—We do not get any clothing.

A-3688. What do they get in other countries ?—I cannot say. When a ship goes to America we are given clothing, but when it returns to England the clothing is taken back from us.

A-3689. Have you got rest houses or centres for the education of your children ?—No.

A-3690. No recreation grounds either ?—No.

A-3691. Some of you work for many years ; do you get pensions or gratuities ?—We do not get even proper food ; how can we get pension or gratuity ?

A-3692. You stated that the *serangs* take bribes to higher officials. Who are they ?—The Chief Officer and the Chief Engineer.

The Chairman : He did not state that as a fact ; he stated that there was a suspicion.

Mr. Joshi : He said that some of them do, but not all.

A-3693. *Mr. Ahmed* : As regards housing, you stated that there are private lodgings ; what is their condition ?—We get a small lodging where 50 or 60 of the men put up, and each man has just enough space to put a box and sleep on it.

A-3694. You have seen other countries ; will you kindly tell us whether you have seen in any other country in the world the sort of conditions under which Indian seamen have to live ?—No.

A-3695. You desire that Government should come forward and pass necessary legislation to compel the employers to supply you with all that is given to seamen in other countries ?—Yes.

A-3696. You want the same comforts, and you are entitled to it as a matter of right ?—Yes.

A-3697. *The Chairman* : May I take it, as a result of what you have told us, that you would wish to register the whole of the seventy thousand seamen at present and to divide the employment as near as may be possible equally between them ?—Yes.

A-3698. But you would wish by closing recruitment for a time to reduce the total number, so that more work might come to each person on the register ?—Yes.

A-3699. I take it then, as you said that three to four months is the average holiday that a man would wish to have after 12 months' voyage, therefore you would wish the total to be reduced from 70,000 to about 30,000 in order to achieve that object ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. J. P. LOBO, B.A., LL.B., and Mr. PATRICK DeSA, representatives
of the Bombay Seamen's Union.**

A-3700. *The Chairman* : Mr. Lobo, you are appearing in place of Mr. S. B. de Silva, M.A., LL.B., the President of the Bombay Seamen's Union ?—Yes.

A-3701. What is Mr. Patrick DeSa ?—He is the present Secretary of the Union.

MO 7 15—15g

A-3702. Mr. Lobo, may I take it that you have not served as a seaman served as a seaman ; I was the Secretary of the Union ; I resigned ; now th to help in the matter. I have been in touch with the Union.

A-3703. The other gentleman, the present Secretary, has been a seaman ; he has been a seaman.

A-3704. Would you tell me the date of the formation of your Bombay Union ?—There has been a Seamen's Union among the Goans or Christians o the last 35 years ; but the present union, under its present name, was forme 7 w 15th March 1926.

A-3705. Would you tell me the present membership of the Union?—6,500.

A-3706. Are those confined to the saloon ?—It is inclusive of saloon, pan^t galley departments.

A-3707. We have been told that there are 70,000 seamen in the City of Bombay, do you agree with that figure ?—I do not, but I am not in a position to say how muc^h that figure is exaggerated.

A-3708. Among the members of your Union, can you tell us how many of them are usually employed at one time ?—2,500 are permanently employed ; a larger number is unemployed.

A-3709. That does not differ very substantially from the statement that two out of three on the average are unemployed ?—That is correct.

A-3710. Is it the desire of your union that the employment should be equally spread over the whole of the registered seamen ?—It is our desire that the present seamen on the register should be kept on the register but that no new recruits should be enlisted, so that after some time there may be service available at shorter intervals than at present.

A-3711. I take it, after reading your memorandum where you refer to the arrangement of direct engagement by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, that you are satisfied with that system ?—Yes ; we are. The unfortunate thing is, during the War there was a demand for a larger number of seamen than existed during the past ; we had to man almost all the ships in the British Mercantile Marine that touched Bombay ; and that demand gave rise to an increase in the supply of seamen from 5,000 to about 8,000 or 9,000. That has created the present difficult situation. We should wish that the War had continued.

A-3712. What is your suggestion ?—My suggestion is this : that no fresh recruits should be taken until the number is reduced. There are a large number of men at present ; when the old men retire, the young men will get service at least after a period of six months' rest.

A-3713. Do you not think that it is possible by any means short of that or in addition to that to reduce the number of people waiting so long for employment?—The conditions in Bombay are such that there is no scope for employment elsewhere. The union has been trying its level best to induce the members to take to various jobs, but we have not succeeded so far.

A-3714. In your memorandum you say that the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company "has not definitely recognized the necessity of distribution according to turns ; but thanks to the Superintendent Purser, Mr. W. Gordon, the union has been allowed to call the members of the service after a period of one year." Is that an arrangement arrived at between you ?—Yes. We have been given such facilities particularly during Mr. Gordon's time ; but the union wants that the Company should recognize the right of the union to call back men who have been in service for a particular period, so as to give chances of employment to others who have been unemployed for a particular period. Till now that has not been done.

A-3715. That is a practical arrangement which has been made now ?—Yes, with a view to meet the present situation.

A-3716. In your memorandum you suggest that recruitment to the various classes of seamen should be made directly through the respective unions ; or in other words you want to have a monopoly of recruitment ?—The saloon service has been exclusively recruited from the Indian Christians from the very beginning of the mercantile marine. I had a conference with the representatives of the several unions in 1926 when we tried to amalgamate them all into one union. They would not consent to amalgamation unless the various lines of service were divided among the different unions, so that deck and engine crews might be recruited from other than Indian Christians, and Indian Christians might monopolize the saloon service. There was also one reason for this proposal. The ways of life of Indian Christians were different from those of others. From the economic

A-3680. Ho according to it was thought that this method of recruitment would diminish the volume of recruitment. Usually they

taking food. Is it the policy of your union to confine itself to a particular class?—Yes.

A-3681. When we admitted to our union members who were not in the saloon service, that only very few. The union wanted to discourage the admission of members

not saloon crews, so that within four or five months of the starting of the union nothing to do with other classes of people.

A-3682. The membership of your union is about 6,500?—Yes.

A-3683. What proportion of the total crew engaged in the saloon, pantry and so on, but the a. d. you include in your union? Will that be 50 or 70 per cent.?—Our union contains what w. h. thirds of the total crew engaged in these departments.

A-3684. You claim that in regard to this class of seamen your union has two-thirds of them as members?—Yes, we do.

A-3721. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum you say that the advances to be made to the seamen should be made by the Unions so that it might bring to them a handsome revenue. How will you get the revenue?—I understand that the companies pay the brokers a certain percentage of the sum advanced as commission. The companies fear that the men may not turn up after they are signed on and pay a certain percentage to the broker who takes the risk. We want that the right of advancing money to the seamen should be given to the union and that the broker's commission should be given to the union.

A-3722. You suggest that the union should be allowed to do the same service as the brokers do now, and get the same return as they get. Yes, but there is this difference. The union is an organization controlled by the seamen themselves. The money that is now paid to the contractor is wasted and is of no benefit to the seamen. On the other hand if the union gets the money it will utilize it for welfare work among seamen.

A-3723. But why should you be given this percentage of commission? Why should not the seamen be given the full amount?—The funds of the union are for the benefit of the seamen.

A-3724. Why not then take the whole amount of the advance?—At present after paying the seamen their full advance amount, the company pays an extra amount as commission to the broker. We want only that amount to be paid to us.

A-3725. But the broker is doing the same service as you want to do?—But in times of crisis the union as an organization of seamen themselves will be able to do more than any broker.

A-3726. *Mr. Ahmed*: Yours is not a profiteering concern as the broker's. Your object is to help the seamen?—Yes, that is correct.

A-3727. *Mr. Clow*: You say that the brokers are "useless parasites"?—Yes.

A-3728. And you want to be parasites yourselves?—No. The union belongs to the seamen, and under the proposed arrangement what is now lost to the broker will be gained by the seamen themselves through their union.

A-3729. *The Chairman*: You want direct employment without the intermediary contractor coming in?—Yes, just as it is the case with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

A-3730. *Mr. Clow*: Is that quite fair for the union to take a percentage from the men?—No, not from the men, but from the company which now pays it to the broker.

A-3731. But ultimately that has to come from the men?—No, besides the amount that is paid to the men the company pays a percentage as commission to the broker. And we want that this should be given to us so that we might utilize that for welfare work among seamen.

A-3732. *Mr. Asaul*: In your memorandum you refer to seamen recruited for the saloon and other services residing in residential clubs in Bombay. By whom are these clubs governed?—By the managing committees of the clubs concerned. Every village in Goa has its club in Bombay and there are sometimes five or six hundred people in such clubs. Only the unemployed live in those clubs. The employed live elsewhere in separate houses, so that it is an asylum for the unemployed.

A-3733. *The Chairman*: Is that a co-operative arrangement?—Yes.

A-3734. *Mr. Asaul*: What rent do they charge per seaman?—The rent varies from annas 12 to Rs. 2-8-0. The club of which I am the president of the managing committee charges Rs. 2. The charges in other clubs range from 12 annas to Rs. 2. It may be possibly more, but I do not know.

A-3735. What accommodation have you in your club?—My club consists of four big halls.

A-3736. How many are accommodated there?—The total membership is 600. We have on an average about 50 persons living there, because ours is mostly a seamen's club. The other clubs are very congested.

A-3737. Do you charge rent for seamen while they are away at sea?—Yes, we do.

A-3738. *The Chairman*: Is that rent or subscription for membership?—That is contribution for membership.

A-3739. And they continue their membership during the time they are at sea?—Yes.

A-3740. That is a sort of co-operative arrangement?—Yes, that is.

A-3741. And a very sensible one too?—That has been in existence for over 100 years.

A-3742. *Mr. Asavle*: You have referred to the help given by your union to seamen who are unemployed or ill and so on. Till now, to how many members have you given these benefits?—To several members. At present I have not the books with me to tell you the exact number.

A-3743. Approximately what amount have you spent on such welfare work among your seamen?—Not less than Rs. 2,000.

A-3744. In how many years?—In two years, i.e., ever since the rules relating to these benefits were passed by the union.

A-3745. How many members have been benefited?—I cannot give the exact number off-hand.

A-3746. Could you give a statement to the Commission embodying all these details?—Yes, I could.

A-3747. Why do you prefer the present system of recruitment adopted by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company?—Because under that the broker has the least to do.

A-3748. But do you not think that it would be better if this power is given to the shipping master?—The shipping master and the brokers are sometimes on friendly terms.

A-3749. In what way?—Of course, I cannot state as a matter of fact; it is only my suspicion that the shipping master and the brokers are very often on friendly terms, and the seaman after all has to pay for their friendliness.

A-3750. If it were so, you must have received complaints from your members to that effect?—As I said, I have no direct information though there are many complaints made to that effect.

A-3751. Have you in your union these gentlemen: Patrick DeSa?—Yes, he is here.

A-3752. Logario Pereira, Augustus Fernandez, Antonio Rodrigues, Diago Fernandez?—No. They are all Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's servants.

A-3753. Do they not come to help your union?—Of course, we are co-operating with the company; we are not warring with the company. I do not know what you mean by their giving us help.

A-3754. By engaging those men who go through your union?—I do not suppose they are the engaging officers of the company.

A-3755. *Mr. Lallji*: You say that your union is confined to saloon crews who are men from Goa. Are there no Goanese in the other union?—There may be a few.

A-3756. Is it a fact that out of the 12,000 saloon men in the other union a great majority of them are from Goa?—I do not think that is a fact.

A-3757. How many of the 12,000 members of the other union you think are Goanese?—At the most 2,000 or 3,000.

A-3758. As I have said, the other union claim a membership of 12,000 and if only 2,000 of them are Goanese to what class the rest of them belong?—I do not think they have a membership of 12,000, because in that case they should be getting an income of Rs. 60,000.

A-3759. That means that the figure of 12,000 is not right?—No, because I know that their income is not Rs. 60,000.

A-3760. You admit that there are about 2,000 to 3,000 Goanese in the other union?—Yes, but some of them are also members of our union.

A-3761. So there is no class distinction made by the other union?—Our union has restricted its membership to one class of people because otherwise it might lead to riots.

A-3762. May I take it that your union will not admit other classes of people while the other union will admit and has admitted?—May be.

A-3763. I put it to you that most of your members are in the employ of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation and British India Steam Navigation Companies and not in other lines?—Yes.

A-3764. So far as the other lines are concerned it is the other union that supplies the men?—The saloon crews of other lines put together will not be more than one-tenth of the P. & O. crew.

A-3765. You have not got any deck or engine crew?—We do not take them.

A-3766. Do you not think it is in the interests of seamen that all classes of people should join together?—My view is that there should be a separate union for each class of people and a joint committee composed of representatives of all the unions.

A-3767. If Government were to appoint an employment officer, do you think there will be any difficulty?—I do not think there is any reason to incur that expenditure.

A-3768. My question is whether there will be any difficulty?—Yes, there will be difficulty.

A-3769. What help do you get from the shipping companies? Do you get any subsidy?—We do not get any subsidy from the companies.

A-3770. You have about 6,500 members of whom 2,500 get employment at one time, that means that you give each member a turn after three years?—At the time when I wrote this memorandum, those who were in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company were getting employment after 13 months in rotation, but the employment period, as I have ascertained it to-day, has become only of one year.

A-3771. May I take it that at present there are 2,500 persons employed?—Yes, in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

A-3772. If every one of you were to get a turn once a year, what must be your membership? Would it be 6,500?—It is 6,500.

A-3773. Then how do you reconcile the two statements, namely, that you have 6,500 members and only 2,500 are employed and still every one gets a turn once a year?—You have missed this important fact that certain of our members who are working in other companies do not get employment. So far as the members who are working in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company are concerned, they get a chance once in a year, but others are not getting employment for three or four years.

A-3774. May I take it that your union wants to give preference only to those who are employed in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and does not care for those who are employed in other companies?—We are trying our level best to help the others, but we cannot force the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company to employ them. I would like the Government to do that.

A-3775. It comes to this that in this respect you are unable to give a fair treatment to all your members?—We are trying our best.

A-3776. But you are unable to do it now?—The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company agreed to our representation but the other companies have not. What can we do?

A-3777. Why not request the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company to give chance to all the members of your union?—In that case, the period of unemployment will be far greater; members who are now getting turns every 13 months will be getting only every 20 months.

A-3778. But the average will be reduced?—That will not allay unemployment; unemployment would be the same in any case.

A-3779. I think so far as your members working in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company are concerned there is no complaint about food, clothing and such other things?—No.

A-3780. *Mr. Cliff*: It is stated in a document that one of the officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was the President of your union; is that true?—It is not true.

A-3781. Who is he?—He is one of the servants of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. According to the constitution that was passed at a general meeting, the member of the Committee had to be a manager of a village club. The gentlemen

you refer to was the President of three village clubs, and we elected him as a member of the committee.

A-3782. I just wanted to know what office this person held?—He was the President of the temporary committee that was appointed to organize the union.

A-3783. *Mr. Joshi*: An official of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company came to organize the union?—He did not come in his capacity as an official of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company but came in his capacity as manager of three village clubs.

A-3784. *Mr. Cliff*: I understand that the officer referred to was the President of the temporary committee that formed the union?—Yes.

A-3785. Had he any concern as an officer of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company with recruitment and employment of seamen?—No, none whatever.

A-3786. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you know the Draft Conventions and recommendations that have been adopted by the International Labour Conference?—Yes.

A-3787. You know that the Draft Conventions refer to the limitation of hours of work, the establishment of an international seamen's code, the age of employment, giving facilities for finding employment for seamen and the repatriation of seamen. The Government of India do not want to give effect to these ratifications of the International Labour Conference and they have passed resolutions to that effect. I suppose you do not agree with the Government of India for passing those resolutions which will be detrimental to the interests of Indian seamen?—Certainly, some of them are detrimental because the resolutions have been passed without actually knowing the conditions of seamen.

A-3788. So you accept the recommendations of the Draft Conventions of the International Labour Conference which will be beneficial to your interests?—Some of them will be beneficial, but others may not be applicable to our conditions in India.

A-3789. *The Chairman*: You do not accept all of them?—I do not.

A-3790. *Mr. Ahmed*: You accept about the hours of works; you also accept about the repatriation of seamen?—Yes.

A-3791. You want an international seamen's code which will be beneficial to your interests?—Not necessarily.

A-3792. You want facilities for employment?—Certainly.

A-3793. You said that there are many people who served during the War and who cannot now find employment?—Yes, unfortunately.

A-3794. I suppose there are some of those Indian seamen whose boats were torpedoed in the Mediterranean?—Yes. A large number of them were Indian Christians; they were made prisoners of war in Germany and in Persia; no less than 50 of them died; they had to undergo a lot of suffering. Many of them are at present unfortunately unemployed.

A-3795. Did their heirs, relatives or dependants get any compensation or reward?—Some of them did get.

A-3796. And the others did not?—No.

A-3797. You are in favour that Government should enquire into this matter and that what is due to them, according to the distribution of money by way of compensation, should be given to them?—Yes.

A-3798. Your union consists of a sufficient number of saloon crews but not of men in the other departments; but I suppose you are speaking all the same on behalf of all men?—No; I am concerned only with the saloon crew.

A-3799. Your wages in the saloon department are not exactly the same as the saloon men in other countries are getting?—Our wages are slightly less than what a European gets, but I think they are fair and reasonable where the P. & O. Company are concerned. No man has ever made a complaint, and as far as we know our saloon men are satisfied with their wages in the P. & O. Company.

A-3800. Do they get employment all the time?—They do not, that is my grievance.

A-3801. You are in favour of registration?—Yes, registration in separate departments. No new seaman should be recruited till those who are on the waiting list are fully absorbed.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING
BOMBAY

Monday, 25th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

<p>Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Sir ISRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.</p>	<p>Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
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<p>Mr. HOOSKINBHROY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.</p>	<p>} <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i></p>
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<p>Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. Mrs. K. WAGH.</p>	<p>} <i>Lady Assessors.</i></p>
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<p>Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN,</p>	<p>} <i>Joint Secretaries.</i></p>
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**Mr. T. W. JOHNSTONE, M.B.E., Chief Inspector of Factories and
Dr. R. J. TATA, Certifying Surgeon, Bombay.**

A-3802. *The Chairman* : You are the Chief Inspector of Factories in Bombay ?—
(Mr. Johnstone) Yes.

A-3803. And you have with you Dr. Tata, Certifying Surgeon ?—Yes.

A-3804. How long have you held the office of Chief Inspector of Factories ?—Since
May 1923. I was Inspector from 1913 to 1923, and then I was Chief Inspector.

A-3805. You have had a long experience of factory work in Bombay ?—Sixteen years.

A-3806. In your memorandum you deal with the value and effects of the system of
employing jobbers. You say that the system has certain advantages, but that the jobber
wields far more power than his capabilities warrant and he often abuses it. You do not
however suggest a remedy ?—I think that is a very difficult proposition.

A-3807. Have you experience of any factories where they employ a personnel officer ?—
I think in Sholapur there is a full-time welfare supervisor who also looks into certain
questions connected with the engagement of the personnel.

A-3808. Do you think that where there is such an officer the evils which arise in some
cases from the power of the jobbers are diminished ?—I think that would undoubtedly
follow.

A-3809. Do you think that if all mills had an officer of that kind it would
tend to diminish the undesirable power of the jobber ?—It certainly would, but it would
take sometime before the system could be radically altered.

A-3810. It is a very old rooted custom ?—That is so.

A-3811. But you think that an officer of that kind, dealing specially with the employ-
ment of the personnel, would tend to diminish the power of the jobber ?—His work would
be subject, of course, to the managers. He would not be able to override the managers.

The managers would have full controlling power. It would, however, give access of approach to the managers, and in some cases it might tend to prevent many of the difficulties connected with the engagement and dismissal of labour.

A-3812. The manager would have in that way more direct contact with the workers?—Yes.

A-3813. With reference to the method of payment of wages, you tell us that in several Bombay mills the envelope system has been introduced. Do you consider that an improvement on the other system?—I think it is. There was one place in Bombay where they introduced it and they found that they had an increased production on pay day in the weaving shed of about 1,500 pounds.

A-3814. You think the Inspector of Factories should have power to order special drinking facilities for women?—Yes. In some factories there is an ample water supply, but there is a good deal of scrambling round the taps and it is the women who usually suffer. Therefore I think there should be power to the Inspector to allocate definite water taps to women.

A-3815. You recommend that some of the provisions of the English Factory Acts should be put into the Indian Factory Act. Will you indicate which provisions those are?—It is rather difficult for me to do so, as if legislation is passed incorporating certain provisions I may officially have to deal with those particular points; but I will give two cases which I think may be of interest. In the colour mixing factories in Bombay we have secured for the women definite cloak rooms and washing accommodation. It is a filthy industry, and we have persuaded the owners to provide these facilities for women in the factories. Recently in the course of my inspection I came across a factory in which half a dozen men were engaged for most of the day in fishing articles out of a cold water tank. It was in a part of the Presidency which is somewhat cold at certain seasons of the year and these men were spending all their time doing this sort of business naked with just a coating of sweet oil on them. I immediately arranged that these men should not enter the tank until after 10 or 11 o'clock in the day when the water was hotter. In cases like this I think the owner or occupier should have to provide suitable protective clothing and shelter. As a matter of fact in this case arrangements were made but not sufficiently so.

A-3816. You give some interesting cases with reference to debt, and you tell us that in a certain mill 50 per cent. of the people in the spinning department were in debt. That is a very much more favourable estimate than we have had. In some cases we have been told that 80 or 90 per cent. of the workers are in debt?—As a matter of fact this information was taken at a place where the Agent of the Mill has done a considerable amount for a long time past in reducing indebtedness. He has been advancing money to the mill hands for a number of years and has been doing his best to reduce the evil. The reason I quote the case is that I do think indebtedness is a very big problem in regard to Indian labour, and I think it would be to the interests of the employers to take steps to reduce it.

A-3817. The point is that in a case where a special personal interest has been taken by the firm it has been possible to reduce the indebtedness to 50 per cent. Is there any objection to giving the name of the mill?—No. It is the Sholapur Spinning and Manufacturing Co., Sholapur.

A-3818. You go on to tell us about the great improvement recently brought about in many of the mills in ventilation and atmosphere. On that point we have had a suggestion made to us that additional power should be given to Inspectors of Factories with regard to temperature as apart from moisture. Do you agree with that suggestion?—Yes, entirely.

A-3819. You think it is desirable that that power should be given?—I think it is very necessary. It would not be abused. It would be subject to appeal, and it would allow an Inspector of Factories to make considerable improvements in certain directions in certain cases.

A-3820. *Mr. Clow*: With regard to what the Chairman has just put to you as to temperature in factories, that question has been considered at great length, has it not?—Yes.

A-3821. It has been found, has it not, that there is a difficulty in finding a suitable definition?—What is wanted is a simple clause in the Factory Act stating that the temperature of factories should be reasonable, and giving the Inspector power to order measures for reducing temperatures. That power would be subject to appeal. It would be more or less on the lines of the section dealing with lighting. There is no standard of lighting, but the Inspector has power under the Act to order measures to secure an improvement in lighting.

A-3822. But it is precisely over the word "reasonable" that the difficulty arises, is it not? In a factory in Northern Sind it would be impossible to adopt any measures, short of colossal expense, in order to maintain in the middle of the hot weather temperature which, by ordinary standards, would be regarded as reasonable?—That is so from that point of view. In that case it would have to be "reasonable having regard to all the circumstances of the case."

A-3823. Then does not the difficulty arise of measuring the cost of the orders which you desire to enforce in connection with a reduction in temperature? How is any satisfactory standard to be devised of judging whether the expenditure is one which the employer can reasonably be called upon to make?—It would depend to a great extent on the Inspector, and the way in which he used his power. There is a similar section in the Act regarding lighting.

A-3824. That is quite different. There is no difficulty in securing reasonable lighting, but in certain circumstances it is impossible, short of tremendous expenditure, to secure a reasonable temperature?—The Inspector's order would be subject to appeal.

A-3825. I am not suggesting that the Inspector would abuse his power, but the difficulty is for the Inspector or the appeal court to decide what is reasonable. In England the word "reasonable" is intelligible, but in a country like this how are you to define it?—In England there has been a similar section for about 50 years.

A-3826. The same difficulty does not arise there because there are not such phenomenal temperatures as there are in this country?—On the other hand the question of cold arises in England.

A-3827. You can heat any factory without any reasonable difficulties, but cooling is a much more expensive thing?—I admit that, but it costs a good deal to heat up a factory. The cost of heating up a large factory in England from 40 to 50 degrees is a big proposition.

A-3828. You state that you are in favour of having control over the construction of factories?—I do not think that is quite my recommendation. All I recommend is that new large factories should submit a certificate of stability with the notice of occupation. In Ahmedabad in 1924 there was a very bad collapse of a building in which 26 people were killed. We found that a similar building was breaking up.

A-3829. Is it not conceivable that at the time the particular factory of which you speak was built it could have produced a certificate of stability?—No competent architect would have given a certificate of stability for that factory.

A-3830. A mill which is stable when it is first built may, by reason of vibration of machinery, gradually become unstable?—That is so, but on the other hand in the cases I refer to if the mills had been competently designed the collapse would never have occurred. In one case we found a mill with a 19" wall at the plinth, a 23" wall on the first floor, and a 26" wall at the top.

A-3831. You do not want control for any other purpose, for example, to ensure that a factory can be reasonably ventilated?—No.

A-3832. You do not think that necessary?—It will be under another section, but my point here is to see that new large factories are competently designed.

A-3833. Dealing with the extension of hours in ginning factories, you talk of the difficulty caused by a heavy crop. Does that mean there is a shortage of factories, or does it mean that there is a shortage of labour?—The conditions in the Presidency vary considerably. In Sind the ginning factories work for about seven or eight months in the year, and there is no trouble in ginning the crops; but in most of the Surat areas the ginning season does not start until February, and if there is a very heavy crop and there is a prospect of an early monsoon, the factory owners are in a difficulty.

A-3834. In the factories in this Presidency is there a system of pooling whereby in slack seasons a number of factories are kept closed?—That is so, but I do not think it is so prevalent in the areas referred to as in other areas. It is fairly common in Khandesh. It is not so common in Broach and Surat. If there is a heavy crop and a prospect of an early monsoon, the owners are in the difficulty of not being able to gin their cotton in the short time available.

A-3835. If all the factories were working that difficulty would still arise?—That is so.

A-3836. Have you considered how far your recommendations would conflict with the Washington Convention as regards hours of work?—I think the definition of "night" is not absolutely certain. "Night" in Japan means from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., with power to extend to 11 p.m.

A-3837. I understand you are in favour of deleting the provision whereby the consent of the operatives is necessary for half an hour intervals?—I think that ought to go, because, in my opinion, an employer should have a certain amount of liberty in fixing the intervals with reference to efficiency. Personally I think that in Bombay an hour's interval in the middle of the day is not as good as two intervals, one from 9 to 9-30 in the morning and another in the afternoon.

A-3838. Why are the operatives in Bombay opposed to half an hour intervals?—I cannot say.

A-3839. You say that the Factory Act should provide that every child should receive a weekly holiday? Is it not covered at present?—Not quite. At present under the Act it is possible to give exemptions for children from the weekly holiday.

A-3840. Your point is that there should be no such exemption?—That is so.

A-3841. Why are you in favour of including in the Act factories in which, if you add up the shifts, the total comes to more than 20?—We find it difficult in bringing certain factories in when they are just on the border line. It is quite easy for a factory to get out of the Act. We have to prove, in connection with small factories, that every person is individually employed within the strict meaning of the Act. I think there are some of these small factories which ought to be under the Act.

A-3842. They can be included at present?—Only by declaration. There is one important point in this connection. The Compensation Act is only applicable to 2 (3) (a) factories. Compensation is not applicable to a 2 (3) (b) factory.

A-3843. That is rather a question of altering the Workmen's Compensation Act?—If that Act is altered it would affect this particular point, but up to the moment of the amendment of that Act the difficulty will remain.

A-3844. One of the difficulties as regards bringing extra factories under the Act is that all the provisions may not be suitable. Do you think it desirable that there should be power to apply only certain sections of the Act to smaller factories?—I think in the first instance it would be advisable simply to amend the Act and bring in small factories for the purpose of fencing machinery and reporting accidents.

A-3845. And child labour?—I should be inclined to get experience of that first. It would mean that we could not deal with a very large number of factories without a very big increase in staff, but it would be possible to cover the whole of India within a couple of years, and once a factory fulfils the requirements of fencing it will not require the same amount of attention.

A-3846. Are many children employed in the smaller factories in this Presidency?—Not many in the aggregate.

A-3847. You say that an Inspector of Factories should have control of shifts in seasonal factories. What kind of control do you contemplate?—The control that was in the Act originally. The Inspector had power, prior to 1922, to control shifts.

A-3848. That made it impossible to work shifts unless the Inspector agreed?—That is so.

A-3849. Do you think that desirable?—Yes. A good many of the ginning factories are working ten hours a day. With a ten-hour day it is quite easy to see that the law is observed. Other ginning factories work on a batch system, of probably 12 or 13 hours a day. In very many cases the owners would be willing in certain cases to go down to a ten-hour day, but they are opposed by one or two people who prefer to work both day and night or else on the batch system.

A-3850. If you had this control do you contemplate that you would prevent factories which are working 13 hours a day from working more than ten hours?—No, but I think it will be possible to get better control in some areas.

A-3851. You do not want an Inspector to be given the power, which he had under the old Act, of preventing an employer from working his machinery as long as he desired?—No, but the Inspector would be able to exercise a certain amount of moral persuasion on the employers to reduce the number of hours of work.

A-3852. *Mr. Joshi*: You state that three cases of chrome sores were found last year in dyeing works. Is this an industrial disease?—I think so. It is definitely caused through handling the dyeing materials.

A-3853. Does it impair a man's earning capacity?—It may or it may not. The chrome sore can heal up in a week or it may take a couple of months.

A-3854. You give comparative statistics of accidents occurring in Great Britain and in Bombay, which show a lower percentage in the case of Bombay. Is that due to an

evasion in the reporting of accidents?—No, there is very little evasion in the reporting of accidents in the town and Island of Bombay.

A-3855. What is the law as regards the reporting of accidents?—An accident which involves more than 48 hours of absence from work must be reported. Part of my difficulty is that factories report more accidents than they legally need do.

A-3856. Is your staff quite adequate for efficient factory inspection?—I think so. If there was a larger staff we could do more efficient work.

A-3857. Have you a separate factory Inspector for Sholapur?—No. That is toured from Bombay. The Inspector visits Sholapur from time to time.

A-3858. Do you think that is sufficient?—I think the conditions in Sholapur are satisfactory. One mill there recently went on night work. The Inspector visited it about four times and prosecuted the mill. Since then we have had no complaints.

A-3859. As regards intervals, are you aware that a large number of workmen have to go to their homes during the interval for their food?—That is so.

A-3860. In that case half an hour's interval is not sufficient, is it?—It is a question of balancing the needs of the few with the demands of the majority.

A-3861. Have the majority demanded a half an hour's interval in the textile industry in Bombay?—We have had no application.

A-3862. The majority do not want half an hour's interval?—I am not proposing that at all. I say that the whole matter should not be left to the operatives. The factories might have power to allow intervals subject to the sanction or the control of the local Government, in the same way as at present factories can give half an hour's interval if they are working $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day or less, instead of an hour's interval.

A-3863. You want to give the power to the employers?—Not altogether, but I would not leave it entirely to the operatives.

A-3864. Then what would you do?—I would probably give the local Government the power to accept two intervals instead of one.

A-3865. Two intervals, one of one hour and the other of half an hour?—I would not fix a definite limit.

A-3866. Have the workers ever objected to half an hour's interval for a meal in the morning in addition to one hour's interval at mid-day?—To the best of my knowledge there is only one mill which has done that—and that is closed down now. As far as we know we never received any complaint from the people in that mill.

A-3867. So the workers will not object to an additional half an hour's interval?—I cannot say that.

A-3868. As regards the piece-rates, the English Act compels employers to put up notices as regards the piece-rates. Would you have any objection to that being introduced into the Indian Factory Act?—That is probably linked up with the question of standardization in the mill industry. If standardization is adopted it will be a simple matter to put up all rates.

A-3869. *The Chairman* : In some factories I believe they do now put the piece-rates. Others do not, and there were some complaints in the latter cases?—There is nothing against it in theory.

A-3870. You have no objection to it?—Not in theory. If a clause is adopted I think the owner should have a certain amount of protection. In the English Act there is a definite provision that if anybody interferes with an indicator he is liable to prosecution.

A-3871. That is a different matter from piece-rates being put up on the notice board?—That is so, but it is incorporated in the same section in the English Act.

A-3872. *Mr. Joshi* : Do you think any provision is necessary fixing the weight to be lifted by women or children?—I do not think so at the present time, for the reason that we have never had a case of rupture reported from any factory.

A-3873. *Miss Power* : That is because there is no reason why it should be reported?—If it is an accident it must be reported.

A-3874. *Mr. Joshi* : Are not people employed in lifting weights in textile factories?—Yes.

A-3875. And it is quite possible they may have to lift heavy weights?—Yes.

A-3876. *Miss Power* : Dr. Tata says that it is possible that many cases of industrial disease go undetected, and also that there is no compulsory notification of such diseases. The memorandum further says that there is no case of occupational disease which has so

far been reported to the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation. Do you advocate a clause making notification of industrial disease compulsory? I take it there must have been some cases of occupational disease in the whole of this Presidency?—We have never had a case that has come to our knowledge, and no claim has ever been made.

A-3877. That may be so because there is no machinery for bringing such cases to your knowledge?—The Certifying Surgeon is always visiting these places and examining the people from time to time.

A-3878. You do not suggest, do you, that there are sufficient officers going round to enable all cases of this kind to be brought to your knowledge?—I think it is quite possible that the Certifying Surgeon would find out such cases in Bombay.

A-3879. It is only Bombay with which you are concerned?—In most of the other places there is not anything likely to cause an occupational disease.

A-3880. You think there is no necessity for any compulsory notification?—It would not do any harm, but I do not think the present circumstances justify it.

A-3881. You said just now that you would be in favour of safety devices and fencing protection being extended to unregulated places. Do you think that such regulations should be extended to places using power where at least ten persons are employed?—If there is any alteration, such regulations, I think, should be applied to such places in the first instance.

A-3882. Would you suggest that they should be extended to places not employing power?—I should not like to state anything definitely before making a thorough enquiry into the conditions throughout the Presidency.

A-3883. Do you know anything about the conditions in the unregulated places not employing power to be aware whether there is any necessity for such regulation?—I cannot say.

A-3884. Have any enquiries been made by any independent body?—I do not think so.

A-3885. That means that there is no knowledge available in the Presidency?—Not full and complete knowledge.

A-3886. Would you suggest the necessity for any investigation of that kind before considering an extension of the Act?—Up to the present we have not had any complaints from these people.

A-3887. That is not always a very good gauge, is it? If people do not come under any form of regulation there is no reason why they should complain since they have nobody to complain to. Have you any statistical information as to the number of workers industrially employed in the Presidency in such places, as opposed to places using power?—No.

A-3888. Have you any machinery for getting information of that kind?—No.

A-3889. On the question of the adequacy of your staff, you have altogether 8 Inspectors, have you not?—Yes.

A-3890. You implied that you thought that was adequate?—I do not think I said that. I said we have sufficient staff to cover the inspection of factories according to the rules laid down.

A-3891. How much additional staff would you consider would enable you to do inspection as efficiently as you would like to do it?—I should like another Assistant Inspector to be at my disposal to go round the seasonal factories to supplement the present staff.

A-3892. Is there any need for any additional women industrial inspectors, not necessarily doctors?—I think Ahmedabad could do with a full time lady Inspector, if funds were provided.

A-3893. What about Sholapur?—I think Sholapur could come in with Bombay.

A-3894. Could you do with one extra woman Inspector?—If another lady Inspector were appointed it would be helpful.

A-3895. Do you employ *ex-officio* inspectors in this Presidency?—Yes, in every area the District Magistrate is an *ex-officio* Inspector and every small division has an *ex-officio* inspector.

A-3896. Do they in point of fact undertake any inspection?—Yes.

A-3897. Are they a valuable addition to your staff?—They form a very useful supplement.

A-3898. Would you prefer in their places full time properly qualified inspectors?—Naturally I would prefer my own full time staff.

A-3899. There is no compulsory registration of factories, is there?—Each factory has to send in a notice of occupation under the Act.

A-3900. How does it come to your knowledge whether a factory, employing power does or does not employ 20 persons or 10 persons? Is that left to you to find out?—Yes often, but it is an offence not to report.

A-3901. Has any action ever been taken against factories which have not reported?—Yes.

A-3902. Is it a common offence?—We almost always have a certain amount of difficulty in getting registered a factory that is on the border line.

A-3903. On the question of the admission of children to seasonal factories the memorandum from the Government of Bombay states that "A general order has been issued to all ginning factories prohibiting the admission of children between the ages of 2 and 12 to all places where machinery is at work," and then it is stated that there have been a few prosecutions. How successful has that general order been?—I think it has been fairly successful.

A-3904. The Inspector of Factories for the Punjab told us that he made such an order and later withdrew it in view of the impossibility of enforcing it in his area. I want to know whether you have had a similar difficulty in this area—whether in fact you have found that the order is more or less a dead letter?—I think it is fairly effective.

A-3905. Has there ever been any effort made to enlist the services of All-India Red Cross Society in such matters as "safety first" propaganda, first-aid lessons, and so forth?—Not that I am aware of.

A-3906. The Federal Red Cross Society in America were able to do very good work in some of the more thinly populated States in America among comparatively illiterate types of factory work-people by such means. I wondered whether any arrangements have been made here to try and enlist the services of the All-India Red Cross Society?—I do not know.

A-3907. *Mrs. Wagh*: We should like to have your views on the general question of the housing of workers. You state in your memorandum that the housing conditions are bad. You admit that there must be some improvement, but you are not in favour of housing for workers being provided by the employers?—I have not stated that. I have said that I am not entirely in favour of housing being provided by employers. I am not in favour of any compulsion on the employers in regard to the provision of housing.

A-3908. You state that you are not entirely in favour of housing being provided by employers; and you also state that Government once tried to provide housing for industrial workers and failed and they are not willing to come forward now. Therefore can you suggest any remedy—who do you think should provide the housing?—Of course one remedy is that the labour themselves should provide their own housing—on a co-operative basis.

A-3909. It would require a great deal of money and these people are very poor?—It requires money and a great deal of time.

A-3910. Therefore it cannot be done at present?—I do not think you will be able to make a very rapid improvement at once.

A-3911. The present number of crèches in Bombay is 14 as compared with the number of working mills, which is 76. Do you not think that there should be one crèche provided for each mill?—Certainly it would be an advantage if every mill, employing women had a crèche.

A-3912. In the absence of a sufficient number of crèches, what arrangements do you think should be made for the care of the newly born children. The Maternity Benefit Act simply provides for the payment of a certain sum, but it makes it compulsory for a woman to return to work four weeks after delivery?—I suppose they would have to carry on the same way as they did before the crèches were in existence.

A-3913. Again, considering the mentality of the women workers, will it not be advisable to appoint lady doctors not only to certify the pregnancy, but to watch the cases, to see whether they are normal or not?—Naturally anything that will improve the condition of the working classes must be supported. But I do not quite follow who would appoint the lady doctors.

A-3914. Whether the Government is to appoint the lady doctors or somebody else, that is another matter. But if we are to draw the attention of the Government to that question. I think first of all we shall have to decide whether it is necessary or not; and I want to have your personal view on that?—I think your point is, whether if there were more lady doctors it would not be advantageous. I agree with that for the whole of India. But the question is who is to appoint them.

A-3915. If the Government thinks it necessary, naturally they will appoint. That is a different question. First of all we have to decide whether it is necessary?—I think your point is that there should be more medical relief workers.

A-3916. Yes?—I quite agree with that.

A-3917. Do you think the appointment of a lady Factory Inspector has helped to improve the conditions of the women in any way?—I think so.

A-3918. I take it that you are in favour of appointing more lady Inspectors?—I am naturally in favour of getting a larger staff.

A-3919. Whenever a new legislation is passed, such as the Maternity Benefit Act what steps are taken to make it known among the factory workers? Do you put up posters in the factory?—Yes.

A-3920. Do you think people can read these posters?—In addition to that you have the factory inspectors going round the factories and discussing the questions with the employees.

A-3921. My experience is that persons entitled to maternity benefit do not know of the facilities?—But how were they entitled to the maternity benefit?

A-3922. It came into force from July last?—Yes, but they have to work some time before they earn the benefit.

A-3923. *Mr. Asavle*: You say in your memorandum: "The latrine accommodation for the factory workers is on the whole adequate". It may be adequate, but are the latrines conveniently situated for the workers?—I would not support any proposal to have latrines in factory buildings; I should prefer to see them outside the factories.

A-3924. You say the insanitary basket privies are gradually disappearing due to the action taken by the Bombay Municipality in providing the necessary drainage connections and paying half the cost of conversion from basket system to the sanitary flushing system". When the flushing system is installed, is there any harm in providing latrines in the factory building?—Yes, on principle I object to latrines going into factory buildings; I prefer to see them outside the factory.

A-3925. When the latrines are outside the factory building do you not think the time of the workers is wasted?—Not necessarily, no. I mean my experience is that the work-people use the latrines to idle their time.

A-3926. But in order that they may not waste their time, should not the latrines be provided where they actually work?—I am strongly against it. In one case a mill put latrines in the factory and we made them take them out.

A-3927. *The Chairman*: Why?—For health reasons.

A-3928. *Mr. Asavle*: But we want a flushing system in each bungalow and house?—Yes, but the people who use the latrines in the bungalows and houses are more sanitary than some of the mill hands.

A-3929. With regard to payment of wages to workers you say in your memorandum: "In several Bombay mills the envelope system has been introduced", and you desire that it should continue. But do you know that the workers in the mill industry are illiterate?—Of course there is a good deal of illiteracy, yes.

A-3930. Then if the envelope contained less than the correct amount of pay, what would happen?—As a matter of fact I think in the mills where they have introduced this system they print the amount of the money on the envelopes, and there are other mills where they have transparent envelopes, where they can actually see the money in the envelope.

A-3931. How can they see the money in the envelope?—They have a transparent slip across the face of the envelope.

A-3932. When they are illiterate, how are they to count to see whether they are getting their right money?—I do not think I have met any millhand who is not in a position to count his wages.

The Chairman: Is it your suggestion, *Mr. Asavle*, that this envelope system has some objections from the point of view of the worker?

A-3933. *Mr. Asavle*: Yes. As a matter of fact, I think it has been in force in several of the mills for about 8 or 10 years.

The Chairman: Of course, it is the common practice in Western factories where it is much preferred by the workers.

Mr. Asavle: But they are illiterate, while the workers here are illiterate; unless they themselves count the money, they will not be satisfied.

Sir Victor Sassoon : But if they cannot count, what are they going to do ?

Mr. Asavle : They do count.

Sir Victor Sassoon : You tell us they cannot count.

Mr. Asavle : I do not say they are not able to count, but under this system they are to be paid their wages under a sealed cover.

A-3934. *The Chairman* : Have you ever heard any objection from the point of view of the workers to this system ?—As a matter of fact, I think the workers generally welcome it ; it saves them time in getting their money, and there is a case in Bombay where the weavers themselves were able to earn more by the introduction of the system.

A-3935. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How ?—By saving time when the money is paid in the envelopes.

A-3936. *Mr. Asavle* : Then as regards sanitary arrangements, are any receptacles for spitting purposes kept in the departments themselves ?—A few mills maintain spittoons.

A-3937. How many are there in Bombay City ?—I could not say exactly, but the number is not very large.

A-3938. Do you not think this arrangement should be introduced in all the mills ?—I think I should go a little further : I would prevent the spitting.

A-3939. But you cannot when they are chewing pan ?—I think I should be inclined to stop the pan-chewing.

A-3940. *The Chairman* : Would your staff be prepared to carry that out ?—No ; I should want a factory inspector for every mill I am afraid.

A-3941. *Miss Power* : Could you have a clause in the Factory Act, as you have in England, prohibiting spitting ?—It is not in the Act yet ; I think it is in the Bill, but it is not passed yet.

A-3942. *Mr. Asavle* : With regard to dining places, you have admitted that people should be given only half an hour, but are dining sheds provided ?—I think you have misunderstood me ; I have not admitted that ; I simply said I think the clause in the Factory Act could be deleted. I have not said half an hour would be suitable.

A-3943. Do you not think dining sheds should be provided for those who at present take their meals in the compound of the mill ?—That is rather a big problem.

A-3944. *Mr. Asavle* : Do you say they would not use sheds ?—I say you could not compel the work-people to use any sheds which could be provided and there would be caste difficulty in the mills.

A-3945. What do you mean by that ?—Some years ago in Ahmedabad I happened to visit a mill and I found about 70 or 80 people fighting with the rods they use in the blow room ; half a dozen of them were laid out. They were all low caste people, *wagri* and *dhed*. The trouble arose through a *wagri* touching a *dhed*'s food.

A-3946. With regard to medical arrangements, is a doctor provided in each mill ?—I think there are a few mills without doctors, but I think most of them have doctors.

A-3947. How much time do the doctors work ?—Some are part-time doctors and I think some are full-time.

A-3948. Do not they work only half an hour or an hour daily ?—I think in most of the factories they come in for an hour or two a day.

A-3949. What happens to workers who fall ill or are injured when the doctor is not there ?—Most factories have a compounder for first-aid dressing ; if a man is seriously ill I think the best thing to do is to send him to hospital.

A-3950. At present are there any mills in which posters are exhibited as to maternity benefit ?—I think you have misunderstood what I said ; I said steps have been taken to get them in.

A-3951. Section 15 of the Maternity Benefit Act provides that such notices should be exhibited in the vernaculars of the employees ?—That is so ; the Section is in the Act and I think employers are taking steps to post them. I have been very busy and I do not think personally I have been into many mills looking into the question of maternity benefits.

A-3952. *Mr. Lalji* : Are you having any difficulty with the millowners in carrying out the requirements of the Factory Act ?—I do not think a factory inspector will ever get out of difficulties.

A-3953. But do you experience difficulties in that respect ? Do they carry out the provisions of the Act immediately or do you have to take the matter to Court often ?—We do prosecute sometimes, but I think the millowners in Bombay have really tried to comply with the provisions of the Factories Act.

A-3954. You say in your memorandum: "the jobber wields far more power than his capabilities warrant and he often abuses them." What alternative can you suggest?—That is a very wide problem. Education, of course, would be one alternative. I mean if the people are better educated naturally they would be able to know their position better. Probably the appointment of a welfare officer would help.

A-3955. Do you find the Bombay Municipality taking all necessary actions in the mills with regard to malaria and other diseases?—I have never taken up the question of malaria; it does not really come under me; it is not a point on which I can give a definite opinion.

A-3956. The hours of work in the mills are 10; how many hours do the work-people actually work in the mills?—I could not say definitely.

A-3957. About 8 hours?—That would depend to a great extent on the department in which they work; I mean a time worker will probably be able to get a little more rest than a piece-worker.

A-3958. *Colonel Russell*: What standards do you use in deciding whether a child is of age or not for a factory?—(*Dr. Tata*): There is a standard laid down for height and weight of the child.

A-3959. Are you satisfied with that standard?—It is a very low standard.

A-3960. So that in some cases a child may be under age, although you have to certify under the Section that it is of proper standard?—There is not a legal standard laid down.

A-3961. Then how do you decide in doubtful cases?—We had investigations carried out about two years ago: we examined about 500 children in different schools where their ages are known by birth certificates and we fixed a standard of height and weight, and we act according to those standards when children are presented to us for examination.

A-3962. Are there any definite standards for deciding whether a child or adult is unfit for employment or not?—We see the physical fitness of a child but not of adult workers.

A-3963. What proportion of children are rejected by you in your examinations in Bombay, for instance?—I can give you the figures afterwards if you like.

A-3964. You might send them. Is there any general provision for use of first-aid posts in the factories in Bombay?—No.

A-3965. Do you not think that that would be a great advantage?—Oh yes.

A-3966. In addition to the provision of first-aid posts, I suppose you would want to have a certain number of individuals in the mills who were acquainted with the methods of using the materials in these posts; how would you arrange for that?—In the big factories there should be I think a whole-time factory surgeon who should look after the sickness as well as the welfare work of the workers.

A-3967. What size of factory would you make the lowest limit for the provision of a whole-time factory surgeon?—Those that employ say more than 2,000 workers.

A-3968. What would you do with the smaller factories?—Have a first-aid post.

A-3969. Then nobody would be there able to use it?—They could train a compounder.

A-3970. Would it be possible to have a medical officer for a group of two or three mills, for instance, in the smaller mills?—Yes, it could be done.

A-3971. Do you think it is sufficient that there should be only an unqualified compounder distributing stock mixtures to the sick population of a mill?—I should say no.

A-3972. But does that actually occur in Bombay or not?—I have no particular knowledge of that.

A-3973. You are not prepared to say whether it does exist or not?—No.

A-3974. In connection with the question of malaria which has been shown by Major Covell to be so excessive in mill areas in Bombay, are you acquainted with the measures that are now being taken to improve conditions?—Measures are taken by the Municipality.

A-3975. You do not know anything about them?—No.

A-3976. In your examination of factory employees do you find a large percentage of them suffering from malaria or the results of malaria?—The results of malaria, yes: enlarged spleens, for example.

A-3977. Can you give us an idea of the percentage?—I should say about 50 per cent. of those rejected for physical unfitness suffer from malaria or the effects of malaria.

A-3978. In the Government of Bombay memorandum it is stated that there are only 832 hospital beds in all in Bombay. Mr. Johnstone has said that when a case of serious illness occurs these cases should be transferred to hospital; do you think you would be able to transfer all serious cases to hospital if you have only 832 beds?—I do not think so; the number of beds is not sufficient.

Col. Russell: How would you suggest that an additional number should be obtained?

The Chairman: Does that come within the province of the witness? I understand the certifying surgeon's duties are confined to certifying children; is that so?—Yes, and I am also working as an additional inspector with regard to the sanitary provisions of the Act.

A-3979. *Col. Russell*: I was leading up to a question which arises out of Mrs. Wagh's questions; that is, as to the provision of a State medical service. Would you approve of the idea of having a State Industrial Medical Service?—Yes.

A-3980. For industrial workers only?—That would be very helpful.

A-3981. In a memorandum that has been sent in to us by a medical practitioner, who is also I understand a medical officer of a mill, he said that he sees often cases of men working against their strength with high fevers because of the fear of loss of wages for time they are absent. Does that actually occur?—I have no knowledge of it.

A-3982. Mr. Johnstone, with regard to some of the questions that Miss Power put to you in connection with the number of inspectors you had, are there officers like district health officers and municipal health officers in Bombay Presidency?—(Mr. Johnstone): No, we have none of those.

A-3983. But you surely have municipal health officers?—Certainly.

A-3984. Would it not be an advantage if a municipal health officer were an *ex-officio* inspector under the Factory Acts for the Sections dealing with health and welfare?—I do not think so in the Bombay Presidency. We have medical men appointed as Certifying Surgeons who have also been given powers.

A-3985. I was not referring so much to Bombay as to the other towns, for instance, Ahmedabad and Sholapur?—I think I should be inclined to keep the appointments of additional inspectors as regards the municipality to State officers.

A-3986. But these officers might be State officers. Would you prefer them to be confined to Assistant Directors of Public Health?—At present, yes.

A-3987. But these officers can only inspect factories about once every two years?—I get reports from them from time to time.

A-3988. But how often do you think a Director of Public Health or an Assistant Director can inspect a factory?—I do not think they can cover many.

A-3989. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Dining sheds were suggested; have you any knowledge that such sheds would not be liked by the work-people owing to caste prejudices?—It would depend to a great extent on local conditions.

A-3990. Are there not a very large number of castes and sub-castes among the workers in certain mills?—Of course.

A-3991. And if there is such a large number, would there not be great difficulty in having a dining place for them all to take their meals?—I should not like to say there would be very great difficulties, but I think there would be a certain amount of difficulty.

A-3992. You have not heard of a man objecting to being watched while eating and going behind a bale to have his food?—I believe there are people like that.

A-3993. And therefore it might not be possible to use these dining sheds even if the employer were willing to do so, if there were 15 or 16 castes and sub-castes?—I think some dining sheds would be used in some factories by the whole of the workers, but in others you would get difficulties. In some cases I think there would probably be a better feeling between the different castes than in others; in the former cases they might go to a combined place.

A-3994. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: A statement was made by you just now that the millowners have tried to comply satisfactorily with the provisions of the Factory Act?—I meant that as a general statement, that they have never been law-breakers, in a deliberate sense.

A-3995. I do not suppose anybody would be a deliberate law-breaker?—I think some would, as a matter of fact.

A-3996. Your Annual Report for 1928 says that in the entire Bombay Presidency there are 1,478 factories under Section 2 (3) (a) covered by the Factories Act?—That is so.

A-3997. On page 18 of that Report it is stated that 326 prosecutions were instituted against 59 factories. Have you any record of the warnings you have given?—I have not got here a definite record of warnings actually given, but we do give some warnings; I think our proportion of warnings to prosecutions out here is considerably less than in England. For instance, in England in 1928 they issued 198,000 contravention notices to occupiers of factories as against 1,647 prosecutions. I can safely say that our ratio is much less than that. We always prosecute in serious offences of breach of the Factories Act.

A-3998. I suppose here the number of warnings would be more than the number of prosecutions?—The number of warnings would be 200 to 300 I should say.

A-3999. With regard to fines you give 17 shillings as the figure in Great Britain and Rs. 23 here?—That is so.

A-4000. It is almost double. There is a certain amount of discontent about the present system of fining; what is your opinion with regard to that?—I think the fining on the whole is fairly reasonable.

A-4001. Do you think there is any necessity for legislation?—I do not think there is a very important case for legislation at present.

A-4002. On page 11 of your Report you say you issued notices to ginning factories and two children were killed as a result of failure to comply with the order, a manager being fined Rs. 80. Do you think that is satisfactory?—As a matter of fact, I did not consider it adequate and I moved the High Court for an enhancement and it was increased to Rs. 150.

A-4003. Do you think that is satisfactory? You say yourself that under the Workmen's Compensation Act if he had been over 11 he would have got Rs. 200?—I think it is a fairly reasonable fine under the circumstances, but I do not know all the facts; the child may have come into the factory against instructions.

A-4004. Did you deal with this case yourself?—No, this is one of my inspectors' cases.

A-4005. You considered the fine not to be adequate?—At Rs. 80 certainly.

A-4006. I take it that that is the average in cases of this nature, which is apparently a serious case?—No, in some cases we get much heavier penalties than that for the loss of a finger and arm.

A-4007. This child was not employed?—No, he simply came in or was brought in.

A-4008. In your Report you speak of the jobber system. Is it your considered opinion that the present state of affairs is satisfactory, or would you advocate employment exchanges?—I do not think I would advocate employment exchanges in Bombay town and island.

A-4009. Why not?—I think in Bombay the supply of labour is really greater than the demand.

A-4010. If the evils of bribery and corruption do exist, as pointed out by the Fawcett Committee and the Tariff Board, in connection with this jobber system, would you not advocate a better system to prevent these evils?—I should certainly advocate a better system, but I do not think it would be altogether secured by employment exchanges.

A-4011. *Mr. Ahmed*: What would be a better system?—If the mills had an officer directly concerned with recruitment of labour, I think the power of the jobber would be greatly broken.

A-4012. Do you think direct employment by the millowners would solve the difficulty?—I do not say that; if the millowners had an officer who simply looked into the question of engaging labour, or if the managers paid a little more attention to it, I think it would tend to cure the problem.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. R. R. BAKHALE, General Secretary of the Bombay Textile Labour Union, Mr. MAHOMED UMAR RAJAB, Vice-President of the Bombay Textile Labour Union, Mr. MAHOMED ISAKH (weaver), Mr. ABDUL RAHIM (weaver), Mr. D. H. PATIL (rover), Mr. ABDUL KHAN (spinner).

A-4013. *The Chairman*: How long has this Union been in existence?—(Mr. Bakhale): This union was started on the 1st January 1926.

A-4014. What is the present membership of the Union? If you give us the present membership and the fluctuations in recent years, I think that will be sufficient?—According to the latest annual report, for the period ending March 1929, our average membership was 3,816; the highest was 5,083 and the lowest 1,881 and so the average comes to 3,816. Then the strike intervened for about three or four months and we lost some membership; after that owing to the reaction that has come as a result of the last strike we have not been able to make up the lost membership yet.

A-4015. At what figure does your present membership stand?—It is very difficult for me to give you the exact figure, because according to our constitution members not paying subscriptions for three to six months are entitled to remain on the register book. We have been collecting during the last three months from September onwards an average of Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 per month.

A-4016. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many have you got that have actually paid?—From September onwards we have been collecting an average of Rs. 400; multiply that by four—four annas is the contribution of each worker—and that will give you the number of those who have actually paid; it is 1,600.

A-4017. *The Chairman*: So that you have 1,600 regular paying members at the present time?—Yes, during the last three months.

A-4018. Is that membership drawn from particular districts or particular classes of workers; how is it distributed?—Well, the membership at present is confined to the Madanpura locality of the mill area in Bombay and to Kurla, and we also get some membership from Parel, particularly from the spinning section.

A-4019. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many have you got from Parel?—I think about 400 members.

A-4020. *The Chairman*: Does your membership cover all the classes of workers in all the departments of a mill, roving, card room, spinning, weaving?—Yes.

A-4021. Do you accept members from all grades of workers in a cotton mill?—Yes.

A-4022. What is your method of increasing your membership?—By means of propaganda meetings, and leaflets.

A-4023. Is your best membership concentrated in anyone mill or group of mills?—Our best membership is concentrated in a few mills in Madanpura and one mill in Kurla.

A-4024. Your 1,600 members are out of a total, I suppose, of about 130,000 textile workers in Bombay?—Well, I should think so.

A-4025. 150,000 was the number in the past, but the number actually working is 130,000?—Well, I have no idea of it.

A-4026. You have submitted to us a memorandum, which you tell us is Part I of your memorandum; are you proposing to submit a further memorandum?—Yes.

A-4027. We can examine you now only on what you have submitted to us. You have stated that you would be willing to be further examined in Sholapur if the Commission so desired?—Yes.

A-4028. Now, my questions will be chiefly addressed to what you submit is your Union's opinion about the organization of works committees within the factories. You have taken a good deal, I see, from certain reports on the organizations of works committees, and you express a preference for the German system of statutory workers' committees?—Yes; that is what it amounts to.

A-4029. Have you yourself any personal experience of the two systems, the voluntary system in England and the statutory system which is in existence in Germany?—I have not got any personal experience of the working of these two systems, but last year I attended an International Textile Workers' Conference at Ghent where the question of organization of these committees on the voluntary or the compulsory system was discussed to a very considerable extent, and I found from the general trend of the discussion that the Conference as a whole preferred the German system, although the Lancashire people who were there stated that their method also had produced equally good results.

A-4030. Does the Indian temperament tend towards the freedom of Lancashire or rather to the statutory compulsion of Germany?—I cannot say anything about temperament, but I can say this much, that under the existing conditions no voluntary scheme is possible.

A-4031. I take it that is because of the weakness of the trade unions?—Because of the weakness of the trade union organizations and the opposition of the employers.

A-4032. We are told by the employers that they would welcome stronger trade unions and voluntary co-operation?—They have been saying so, but I have not got much faith in what they say.

A-4033. Hitherto there have not been strong trade unions to form the basis of that co-operation?—No. In a recent instance we had sufficient strength and we carried on negotiations through a workers' committee, and my experience was that although we had the strength there was the millowners' opposition and the negotiations collapsed.

A-4034. Do you think that an officer in the position of a labour adviser within the Labour Department would be of help in bringing about better co-operation between the employers and the trade unions?—I have no idea.

A-4035. That is a suggestion which has been put forward in some quarters. Are you yourselves sufficiently equipped to be able to negotiate with the employers on the details of price lists, piece-rates and so on?—My experience is that there are enough, at any rate a fair number, of weavers and spinners who can deal effectively with the employers on questions of detail. During the course of the last strike, when the Bombay Millowners' Association prepared a standardization scheme, Mr. Rajab himself prepared his own standardization scheme for the Strike Committee. I think if our people are given sufficient opportunities they will be able to deal with the employers very effectively.

A-4036. You feel that you have already a sufficient number of technical experts amongst your actual members to be able to meet the employers on equality when questions of changes of prices come up?—Yes, given the necessary opportunities.

A-4037. That is an interesting statement. Do the workmen in the mills form the greater part of the managing committee of your trade union?—Yes.

A-4038. With regard to the managing committee of your trade union, what proportion consists of persons outside the industry and what proportion of those inside the industry?—In the managing committee, when we had a fairly good membership, we had about 50 members, out of whom only 7 or 8 were non-workers like myself, the rest being all workers elected by the workers themselves in a certain proportion.

A-4039. You say "when you had a fairly good membership"; how does the matter stand now?—Even to-day although our membership has gone down, the non-workers are only 6 or 7 and the workers are about 12 to 15. We generally do not make it very strict for those people who were members of the managing committee but ceased to be members on account of the fall in membership; we are anxious to bring them in our managing committee with the object of acquainting them with the work of the union and the problems that we discuss, and we therefore make it a point to call in people who may not be technically members of the managing committee but who are all workers and have been in the managing committee for some time.

A-4040. Are those persons regular subscribing members?—Yes; they are.

A-4041. I think you will admit that your membership represents only a small fraction of the total textile workers in Bombay Island?—I do.

A-4042. Have you hope that you will be able to build up a comprehensive labour organization representing a substantial proportion of workers in a short time?—That depends upon the circumstances.

A-4043. You will see that it is a little difficult for the employers to take your union, with a membership so small as that which you stated to us, as representing the whole body?—They have to thank themselves for that position.

A-4044. I am not at present going into the reasons; I am dealing with facts. The declaration of the millowners is that they would wish to see a strong labour organization with whom they can deal?—At one time we were much stronger than we are to-day.

A-4045. *Mr. Joshi*: What was your highest membership?—Nine thousand. And yet they never cared to negotiate with us. It is no use saying now that our union represents only a fraction of the textile workers and that they find it difficult to negotiate with us.

A-4046. *Mr. Cliff*: Did the employers recognize the Union?—They made a declaration during the last general strike that they would recognise such unions as were registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act.

A-4047. That was after the strike?—It was during the strike.

A-4048. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In your memorandum you state: "The object of the industry should, therefore, be not profits but public service and it cannot be achieved unless the industry is removed from private hands and put under public control." Do you mean by that nationalization of the textile industry?—Quite so.

A-4049. On the question of unemployment insurance, you say that the present low level of wages would not allow the textile operator to pay his share, but you suggest that the employer and the State should pay theirs. As far as the Bombay branch of the textile industry is concerned, would you not think that it would be equally difficult for the employer, having regard to the present condition of the industry, to pay a share?

Under the present condition would you not agree that it would be a burden to the employer to pay towards this fund just as it is to the operative?—I have no adequate idea of the present condition of the industry.

A-4050. Do you think the industry in Bombay is flourishing?—The millowners have been saying that the industry has been in a depressed condition.

A-4051. You do not agree?—I partially agree.

A-4052. That is my point; would you agree that in this depressed condition it would be an extra burden; do you want an extra burden on it in spite of the industry being depressed?—Even if you accept the scheme to-day it will take some time to bring it into operation, and it is very likely that by that time the industry may improve.

A-4053. You maintain that workers generally stick to the mills in which they are first employed; that as far as the Mussalman workers are concerned, a large majority between 20 and 30 years and in the case of the other workers between 15 and 20 years. Are you quite sure of those figures?—That is the impression that I have gathered from my contact with the workers who bring in complaints to the union.

A-4054. You say a large majority. I have tried in one of my mills to get figures, and those figures show that only one in ten, a very small minority, are so employed. You have no actual figures; have you?—That may be as regards your own mill, but it is quite likely that some of the people who have put in five or six years in one mill may be working in another mill. I did not say that they worked so many years in the same mill.

A-4055. You have no figures; it is only an impression?—I have no figures.

A-4056. You say that the managing agency system is obsolete. How would you propose to supply your mills with working capital among other things?—I have not considered the financial question. The discussions that took place when the Tariff Board was taking evidence and the recommendations of the Tariff Board in that regard lead me to the conclusion that this system must be changed if the industry is to prosper.

A-4057. You have not considered what the difficulty might be with finance?—I have not considered the financial difficulty.

A-4058. Turning now to another interesting book which you have submitted with your memorandum, namely the third annual report, are you in favour of one strong union or are you in favour of a number of small unions?—I am in favour of one strong union.

A-4059. The whole of your report appears to me to show how your union backed up financially a lot of competing unions; that you paid out all the benefits and they apparently took all the credit?—We did not give any money to any union. What we did was that when we received the money we gave that money by instalments to the Joint Strike Committee on which our union also was represented.

A-4060. Then you were helping other unions as well as your own?—We were helping the Joint Strike Committee and through the Joint Strike Committee the workers on strike.

A-4061. Take rule 41 of your union—

“If at any time not less than one thousand members of the union desire to secede from the union with a view to form a new union and make an application to the managing committee to that effect, they shall be entitled to do so and shall receive after the formation of the new union, from the funds of this union, a portion of it in proportion to their number.”

That is encouraging the people to break off from your union and to form new unions?—Certainly not.

A-4062. Does this rule obtain in any union in Europe?—I do not know that.

A-4063. I should have thought that by having a rule permitting payment from the funds of the union to those who secede you were encouraging secession?—I do not think so.

A-4064. In your Third Annual Report you deal with certain mills. In connection with the efficiency methods adopted by them you say: “If the millowners and the representatives of the union had sat together and exchanged views, some common understanding might have been arrived at and the consequent strike might have been possibly averted.” Of course in this particular mill—the Apollo Mill—I think your union had no standing. Mr. Mayakar was the Labour Union leader in that mill. Have you heard it, or is it within your knowledge, that when there was a strike in this mill, which took place after the system had been in force in another place for six months, Mr. Mayakar came, saw the system and said that, in his opinion, the three-loom system meant less work and was more favourable to the worker than the ordinary two loom system in the Rachel Sassoon Mill?—I do not remember to have read a statement of that kind in the Press.

A-4065. It was not in the Press; but have you heard that statement?—I hardly meet him.

A-4066. Then you do not know. When he walked out of the mill, the men said that they did not care what he thought and they were not going to have it. Then he turned right round and said that he was going to back up the strike. Do you think that the leaders of the present union have any control over their workers?—What kind of control do you mean?

A-4067. I mean, supposing I was able to persuade you that what actually took place in the mill was reasonably to the advantage of the work-people, you could not get the work-people necessarily to agree?—My own experience is that whenever there has been any reasonable proposal from the millowners and whenever we have been able to impress upon them the reasonableness of the proposal, in 75 per cent. of the cases the workers have agreed with us.

A-4068. Only when you are able to persuade them?—Yes.

A-4069. My point is that often times you are not able to persuade them?—That depends on the man.

A-4070. Do you mean the worker?—I mean that it depends on the man whose business it is to convince the workers of the reasonableness of the millowners' proposals.

A-4071. But the fact is that the leaders of the unions have not been able to convince the workers in a majority of cases; do you consider this as a criticism of the leaders and not of the men?—I cannot say.

A-4072. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum, dealing with the introduction of efficiency or rationalization schemes in the textile industry you say that the industry "being one of the most competitive industries in the world such schemes are bound to come sooner or later, rather sooner than later"?—Yes.

A-4073. Again you say that "they will have no alternative but to introduce those schemes, thereby reducing a large number of operatives"?—Yes.

A-4074. Dealing with jobbers you say in your memorandum that they flourish on inefficient workers, because they cannot hope to get, and continue in, employment without keeping the jobber contented by giving illegal gratification?—Yes.

A-4075. Does it not follow that if you introduced rationalization or efficiency methods and increased the efficiency of your workers, you would automatically do away with the jobbers?—No, I do not think so. Because in some mills where these rationalization or efficiency schemes have been introduced, the jobber is really the man even to-day who recruits labour, and his powers are still there.

Sir Alexander Murray: But you say that the jobber makes his money on inefficient men, not on efficient men. If you increased efficiency, you would automatically reduce the number of men from whom the jobber got his income.

A-4076. *Mr. Joshi*: The question is not whether the jobber system could be abolished, but whether the corruption underlying the system as it exists at present, could be put an end to, if the workers became more efficient?—Certainly, it might be possible.

A-4077. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Therefore you agree that rationalization or efficiency schemes will put an end to the jobbers and corruption will disappear?—Provided at the same time the powers of the jobbers are considerably reduced from what they are to-day.

A-4078. In what way?—He should not have the power to fine or dismiss a worker.

A-4079. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has he now?—Yes.

A-4080. And not the manager?—No, not the manager.

A-4081. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum you say "Whatever the method adopted by the jobber to obtain the work-people necessary for replacing absentees the final selection and appointments are made by the heads of the departments concerned...."?—That is not my opinion. I am simply quoting a statement by the Millowners' Association.

A-4082. Do you not accept that?—No, I do not. I challenge the correctness of it.

A-4083. And you say that that is entirely in the hands of the jobbers?—Yes, absolutely.

A-4084. How many workers have you brought with you to-day?—Five, including Mr. Mahomed Umar Rajab.

A-4085. Are they all working in the mills?—Yes, except Mr. Mahomed Umar Rajab who was working till four or five months ago.

A-4086. I wish to ask them a few questions. Mr. Rajab, how old are you?—(Mr. Rajab) 30 years.

- A-4087. Are you a weaver?—Yes.
- A-4088. How long have you worked as a weaver?—For 15 years.
- A-4089. How many mills have you worked in?—Five mills.
- A-4090. In how many places?—All of them in Bombay.
- A-4091. How long were you in your last mill?—Three years.
- A-4092. Were you a jobber?—No, I was never given a chance to be a jobber.
- A-4093. Mr. Abdul Rahim, how old are you?—(Mr. Abdul Rahim) 35 years.
- A-4094. How long have you worked in mills?—20 years.
- A-4095. In how many places?—In Kuria, a suburb of Bombay.
- A-4096. Have you worked only in one mill for the last 20 years?—Yes.
- A-4097. What are you now?—A weaver.
- A-4098. You have worked 20 years and still you are only a weaver?—Yes.
- A-4099. Have you ever been a jobber or an assistant jobber?—No.
- A-4100. What is your monthly pay?—Rs. 40 to Rs. 45.
- A-4101. Would you like to be a jobber?—Yes, but I was never given a chance to become one, because I was a union man.
- A-4102. Mr. Patil, how old are you?—(Mr. Patil) 45 years.
- A-4103. What are you?—A rover.
- A-4104. How many years have you been working as a rover?—20 years.
- A-4105. What were you before you became a rover?—For some time I was working in the spinning department on Rs. 3 a month. Then I became a rover. I have been working in mills since 1892.
- A-4106. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: He must have been a half-timer for a long time?—(Mr. Bakhale) Yes, he must have been so while a boy.
- A-4107. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is your pay now?—(Mr. Patil) Rs. 30 to Rs. 31 on the average.
- A-4108. Have you ever been a jobber or a *sardar*?—I was a jobber for about four years, but I was reverted to my old position.
- A-4109. Why did you give that up?—I took leave for about 6 days and went to my native place. I returned only after 8 days. Therefore I was reverted to my old position.
- A-4110. How many mills have you worked in?—I was mostly working in that Swedeshi Mill at Kuria. But after I returned from leave I could not get permanent employment anywhere. I was working as a substitute all the while.
- A-4111. How many different mills have you worked in?—In two or three mills.
- A-4112. Have you always been in Bombay?—Yes, in Kuria and Bombay.
- A-4113. Mr. Mohamed Isakh, how old are you?—(Mr. Mohamed Isakh): 40 years.
- A-4114. How long have you worked in mills?—22 years.
- A-4115. What were you doing before you went into a mill?—I was not doing anything particularly.
- A-4116. In how many mills have you been working?—Four mills in Bombay and two in Ahmedabad.
- A-4117. In all those five or six mills did you give any *bakshis* to anyone to get a job?—No, I never gave any.
- A-4118. Mr. Abdul Khan, how old are you?—(Mr. Abdul Khan) 40 years.
- A-4119. How long have you worked in mills?—13 years.
- A-4120. What were you doing before you went into a mill?—I have been working in a mill since I was a boy. I came to Bombay only 13 years ago.
- A-4121. In how many places outside Bombay have you worked?—I have worked in Cawnpore, Amritsar, Ahmedabad, and Surat.
- A-4122. What are you now?—A spinner.
- A-4123. What is your pay?—Between Rs. 30 to 31.
- A-4124. You have been going from place to place to get employment. In any of those places did you ever pay any *bakshis* to get a job?—Yes, in Bombay only.
- A-4125. At no other place?—No.
- A-4126. In how many cases?—In two or three mills in Bombay.
- A-4127. How much did you pay?—I did not pay in cash, but paid a good deal in kind, i.e., tea, wine and so on.

A-4128. How often did you do that ?—I used to do that off and on, whenever I went with the jobber.

A-4129. *Mr. Ahmed* : Does the jobber generally pay something in cash and also in kind to the manager ?—(Mr. Rajab) Yes, he does.

A-4130. Why does he do that ?—It is only for that he is given the post of jobber very soon.

A-4131. Is there keen competition among the weavers and other workers to get the posts of jobbers ?—Yes.

A-4132. And the manager makes the most of this ?—Yes.

A-4133. And the manager is often a person in whom the Agent is interested ?—Yes, and very often he is a relative of the Agent.

A-4134. Is it not one of the duties of the Agent, not merely to look after the interests of the manager, but also to look after the interests of the men ?—Yes, it is.

A-4135. If that is not done now, are not the millowners responsible for that ?—Do you mean they are responsible for the corruption that exists ? If so, yes.

A-4136. Generally speaking the millowners are responsible for this corruption and you want to abolish that ?—Yes.

A-4137. You suggest that recruitment should be made either by a public employment agency or by the unions themselves ?—Yes.

A-4138. My friend Sir Victor Sassoon was asking you some questions regarding the profits of the mill industry. Did not the millowners make huge profits six years ago ?—(Mr. Bakhale) Yes, they were making bumper profits.

A-4139. There was a boom then and these millowners became rich. Was that not so ?—Yes.

A-4140. Can they make such huge profits now ?—No.

A-4141. But have they realised the capital invested in their mills ?—Yes.

A-4142. Did they get much more also ?—May be.

A-4143. If the millowners helped your unions would they not develop well ?—I do not want their help. It is enough if they do not hinder us.

A-4144. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : You want them to keep their hands off ?—Yes.

A-4145. *Mr. Ahmed* : Who, do you think, were responsible for the last strike ? You must have seen the report of the Pearson Committee and various other reports. From your personal experience who is responsible for the strike ?—I think that both the millowners and the Girmi Kamgar Union were responsible between themselves for the last general strike.

A-4146. *The Chairman* : You yourself were not in favour of the strike ?—No, I was not.

A-4147. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Not at all ?—Not at all.

A-4148. *Mr. Joshi* : At no stage ?—At no stage.

A-4149. *Mr. Cliff* : Have you been able to organize meetings for recruiting members for your Union and so on ?—No, not recently.

A-4150. How long is it since you have been able to do so ?—I cannot tell you the exact date. Some time during the continuance of the last strike, the Commissioner of Police issued an order prohibiting meetings firstly of the Girmi Kamgar Union and afterwards of all the textile workers including our own Union.

A-4151. Is it true that they are prepared to grant permission to hold your meetings ?—I have not tried that.

A-4152. Do you know whether it is true or not ?—Before this general order prohibiting meetings of textile workers was promulgated, we held one meeting at one of our centres. We were perfectly within our rights in holding that meeting. But the police came there, an inspector and a few constables, and asked us to stop the meeting. We declined to do that. After some time we were allowed to hold our meetings. That was an unnecessary interference on the part of the police with our meeting which was perfectly legitimate.

A-4153. That must be more than 12 months ago ?—No, only a few months ago.

A-4154. So this year you were prevented from holding your meetings ?—Yes.

A-4155. In your memorandum dealing with the migratory character of labour you say : "The Union therefore, believes that a vast majority of the textile labour in

Bombay is more or less permanent and cannot be called migratory." That seems to be in conflict with a very large number of statements submitted to the Commission?—Yes.

A-4156. Did you select your deputation which appears here this morning with a view to proving that contention?—No.

A-4157. Then it seems to me rather striking that a deputation not selected with that special object, should be able to show such a record of permanent service here in the cotton mills in Bombay?—Yes.

A-4158. Is it from your personal experience that you made the statement in your memorandum?—Yes.

A-4159. In your memorandum you have dealt with the question of recruitment in detail. After dealing with the basis on which the present system is based you go on to the possible improvements in the system, and in that connection quote the recommendation of the Tariff Board that recruitment should be done through a departmental head of each mill. Has that recommendation been put into operation by the mills?—No, it has not been put into operation.

A-4160. Do you know of any mill in which that has been done?—I am speaking generally, not with reference to any particular mill.

A-4161. Assuming for a moment that public employment agencies are not established, are you prepared to accept this recommendation as an improvement on the present system?—As a matter of fact we ourselves recommended this system when we sent our memorandum to the Tariff Board. The Tariff Board made their recommendation which practically tallied with ours; but the millowners did not give effect to that for the last two or three years. My difficulty is this. If we now asked the millowners for a particular thing which they did not do during the last two or three years, the abuse might continue to exist.

A-4162. Did the Tariff Board accept the recommendations of the Union?—Yes, they did.

A-4163. And the millowners speaking generally, are not prepared to accept that recommendation?—No.

A-4164. And your Union recommends the establishment of public employment agencies, in large industrial cities to begin with?—Yes.

A-4165. Is that an attempt to copy here the system that is current in the West?—Yes.

A-4166. And your suggestions are an endeavour to deal with that in a practical way.—Yes.

A-4167. *The Chairman*: Presumably you mean that no employer should be allowed to engage his labour except compulsorily through a public employment agency?—Yes.

A-4168. *Mr. Cliff*: Is that the practice in the West?—I have no idea.

A-4169. Do you think it is practical to establish public employment agencies now?—It will be difficult in some centres.

A-4170. Is it practical?—It should be practical in a place like Bombay.

A-4171. With regard to the point put by the Chairman, would you be prepared to consider whether or not, in the first place, instead of it being compulsory, it might be permissive?—Yes, we are prepared to consider that.

A-4172. It has been suggested, and suggested very strongly, that though there is unemployment, there is no unemployment problem here in Bombay. Do you agree with that?—If it is admitted that there is unemployment, then there must be unemployment problem.

A-4173. The suggestion is that there is a certain amount of unemployment but it does not constitute such a problem as to require the attention of the Government?—So far as the textile industry is concerned the number is fairly large.

A-4174. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What will be the number?—About 80,000 to 40,000.

A-4175. *Mr. Cliff*: I note in your memorandum that in connection with rationalization the Fawcett Committee recommended an out-of-work donation fund. That was done, I see it stated, because where men are thrown out of work as a result of rationalization there should be some recognition by the employers of the fact that men were being displaced and therefore they ought to be compensated?—Yes.

A-4176. May I ask whether the Millowners' Association are willing to put that scheme into operation?—Not so far as I am aware.

A-4177. May I ask whether, as I understand it, certain mills have already retrenched millhands?—Yes.

A-4178. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : I think you might perhaps differentiate between the efficiency system and the retrenchment of hands under the standard list ?—In both the cases, I think, the millowners are not willing to consider the out-of-work donation fund.

A-4179. *Mr. Cliff* : Leave out efficiency for the moment. Has any individual mill, to your knowledge, applied the principle of the Fawcett Committee's recommendations ?—So far as retrenchment is concerned, no.

A-4180. Let us come to efficiency. Is there any difference between the rationalization scheme and the efficiency scheme in respect of allowances for men who are displaced ?—*Sir Victor Sassoon* tried to make a good deal of difference between the rationalization scheme and the efficiency scheme.

Sir Victor Sassoon : I think what *Mr. Cliff* wants to know is whether you think there will be any difference if a man were retrenched from a mill working under the old system, or if he were retrenched because of the mill working under the efficiency system.

A-4181. *Mr. Cliff* : Take the Manchester Mill, for instance. Tell me whether, within your knowledge, the men who were displaced in that mill have received a compensatory grant on the lines suggested by the Fawcett Committee ?—No, so far as I am aware.

A-4182. In your memorandum you have dealt with the question of alleviation of unemployment. I understand that you are in favour of a scheme of unemployment insurance, financed by the State and the employers ?—Yes.

A-4183. Would you be prepared to consider a scheme of unemployment insurance wherein the operatives of certain standing must make a contribution ?—Certainly, I am prepared to consider that.

A-4184. It appears from reading your memorandum that you are not in favour of the employees making a contribution at this stage because of their low wage standard ?—I have made it clear somewhere in my memorandum that so far as the low paid people are concerned an additional burden should not be placed upon them, but in the case of those who are well paid we will not object to their making a small contribution.

A-4185. Will you say what kind of standard you have in mind ?—We have not got accurate figures about the cost of living and the wages paid in Bombay and as such we cannot fix any standard.

A-4186. You know roughly what a workman gets?—According to the family budget prepared by the Labour Office we find that almost each and every worker who gets less than Rs. 30 a month runs into a monthly debt of one rupee, or so.

A-4187. May I take it that your personal opinion is that there should not be a contribution from a worker who receives less than Rs. 30 ?—As regards the figure of Rs. 30 I cannot express a definite opinion, but I am in favour of fixing some standard.

A-4188. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You have read the Tariff Board's Report on Cotton textile Industry ?—Yes, long ago.

A-4189. On page 152 of that report they say " We have pointed out how few of the directors of the Bombay mills have any technical qualifications for appointment and we have no reason to believe that Bombay is peculiar in this respect. The absence of such qualifications among directors is merely a reflection of its absence among managing agents for the directorates of the Bombay mills are very largely composed of members of firms of managing agents. " Do you agree with that statement ?—Generally I do.

A-4190. There was a leading article in the Times of India of the 18th October 1929. The Times of India is not a labour paper ?—No.

A-4191. This is what they say : " They might inquire what the managing agents do in return for the very large sums which they draw from the companies. The directors are presumably paid their fees by the shareholders. Probably, too, the agents draw a certain sum for office expenses. If we are right in these deductions, then the expenses of the office would be the same if they were controlled through a board of directors and an administrative staff, and the whole of this six lakhs, or whatever sum it may be, is drawn from the resources of the companies or the pockets of the shareholders, in addition to the necessary expenses of management. " And further on they say, with regard to the point that managing agents finance these concerns : " Times have changed. The public are ready to find the money necessary to inaugurate any sound industrial enterprise. There is no longer the obligation on managing agents that there used to be. The position has to be considered in the light of these altered conditions. " Do you agree with that statement ?—So far as the first portion of the extract you read out is concerned, I generally agree with that, but as regards the latter portion I am not just now in a position to express an opinion. It is a matter for investigation.

A-4192. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In view of the loss made by the cotton mills, do you think that the banks would finance the cotton mills in Bombay just now if they knew that they could not fall back upon the managing agents, and in some cases the directors ?—I cannot say.

A-4193. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you know that the system has been so far that the banks advance not only on the assets of these concerns but also on the guarantee given by the managing agents, and this has been the complaint generally against the banks ?—I understand that banks have been financing money.

A-4194. *Sir Alexander Murray* : On the security of the managing agents ?—I do not know that.

A-4195. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is it not a fact that if the shareholders are not satisfied with the managing agents they can turn them out ?—The shareholders are absolutely powerless.

A-4196. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Is it not a fact that in the case of many of these managing agents a term of 31 or 51 years is put down during which period they cannot be turned out ?—I have no knowledge of that.

A-4197. Do you know whether or not one of the troubles of this industry in Bombay is this system of managing agencies ?—Yes, it is.

A-4198. Do you agree with the American saying that no industry can really afford to bear the burden of three generations ? Perhaps it would be too much to ask that question. With regard to unemployment insurance, a question was put to you whether this industry to-day in its depressed condition is in a position to bear this burden. Suppose there are 2,000 hands in a mill, and if we take two annas per head as the contribution to be paid by the managing agents, that would come to 4,000 annas a month, or roughly about Rs. 200. You do not consider that to be a very heavy burden on the industry ?—I should not think so.

A-4199. Do you consider that a scheme based on such a condition and on a compulsory basis will be a practical and a workable scheme ?—Yes.

A-4200. With regard to the industry in Bombay, it is not a fact that every mill in Bombay is losing money ?—I do not think it is a fact.

A-4201. Do you know that the balance sheet for 1928 of the Prahlada Mill in Bombay shows that on a capital of 17 lakhs, after paying for preference shares, etc., they made a profit of Rs. 4 lakhs ?—I do not know ; it may be so.

A-4202. You said something about the harassment by the jobbers. I want you to ask these gentlemen who have come with you whether it is a fact that when they work on piece-work they have got to pay bribes in order to get good yarn and good looms to work on ?—(Mr. Rajab) Some workers have to pay bribes and some do not.

A-4203. I want to ask you a question about indebtedness. If you do not want to answer you can say so. May I know whether you are indebted ?—Yes.

A-4204. Will you kindly ask those gentlemen who have come with you whether they are indebted ?—Yes, they are.

A-4205. Generally the worker is indebted ?—Yes.

A-4206. With regard to the owners' attitude towards trade unions, has there been much victimization or no victimization ?—There has been much victimization.

A-4207. Is it because a man happens to belong to a union and takes an active interest in that union that he is victimized ?—If one were to take an active interest in the union he is surely victimized.

A-4208. Is that one of the reasons why trade unionism has not been very successful ?—Yes.

A-4209. Are you satisfied with the sanitary arrangements in the mills ?—No.

A-4210. Why are you not satisfied ?—Because there is a number of privies which are not on flushing system and those that are on flushing system, are not kept clean. In some of the mills there is not a sufficient number of privies, and the *bhangis* comes only once a day for cleaning.

A-4211. Suppose a worker becomes old and feeble, is there any provision made for him ?—There is no provision made in a few mills, but in two or three mills the managers by way of mercy give something ; the others do not give anything.

A-4212. Suppose a worker has no other wage earner in his family and he dies. Is there any provision made for his wife ?—No ; as I said, the managers of two or three mills, by way of mercy, give something, and others do not. In some of the mills the old

workers are turned out because they become inefficient when they grow old ; instead of giving them something they are kicked out ; they are told frankly that they are not required because they have become inefficient.

A-4213. Is your union in favour of old-age pensions and widows pensions ?—Of course.

A-4214. You must have known of cases in which a worker dies leaving little children with no one to support them. Will you tell us what happens to them ?—They are put to great hardships and some of them take to begging.

A-4215. And that is a great nuisance in Bombay ?—Yes.

A-4216. *Colonel Russell* : I think you have implied in one part of your memorandum that part-time medical officers are not of any use. What scheme would you suggest instead of that ?—(Mr. Bakhale) I would suggest a full-time officer for every mill.

A-4217. Do you think that a small mill of about 1,200 to 1,400 workers would be able to support a full-time medical officer ?—Yes.

A-4218. Will you be in favour if, say, three or four smaller mills combined together and had a full-time medical officer ?—I am quite prepared to consider alternative suggestions provided they are reasonable.

A-4219. Is there usually provision made for first-aid posts in the mills ?—Yes, in some mills.

A-4220. Where these first-aid posts are fixed, what proportion of the staff of the mills are trained in first-aid work ?—I understand that in many mills there is a compounder and a part-time doctor, and that the staff is not regularly trained in first-aid.

A-4221. But I take it that the union would approve if some method was introduced by which a proportion of the workers could be trained in first-aid work by a medical officer or a man who knows first-aid work ? Do you think that is possible ?—It may be tried.

A-4222. You would not object to it ?—I suppose they will not find time to receive the training.

A-4223. That is another matter altogether. In one of the memoranda which has been sent by a medical officer of a mill it is stated that occasionally he sees men suffering from fever and actually working because of fear of loss of wages. Does that take place ?—That is just possible.

A-4224. Can this be avoided by having a whole-time medical service ?—I do not know how it can be avoided, as it is a question of loss of wages.

A-4225. Will you be in favour of a state medical service instead of a sickness insurance scheme ?—I have not thought over that.

A-4226. At present there are only, I think, about 830 or 850 hospital beds in Bombay. That is insufficient, I take it, for the mass of workers in Bombay. In a state medical service, you will have a larger number of beds and a full-time medical service. Would that not be a better position ?—I would welcome any additional medical facilities to be created.

A-4227. You think the medical facilities which are now in force are not sufficient ?—I do not think they are sufficient.

A-4228. With regard to housing, you say "The overcrowding and insanitary conditions almost everywhere prevailing demonstrate the callousness and wanton neglect of their obvious duties by the authorities concerned." Which authorities are you referring to ?—This is an extract from the report of Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth who were delegates of the British Trade Union Congress.

A-4229. As you have printed it in your memorandum, I take it that you agree with it ?—Yes.

A-4230. Which authorities do you refer to ?—Government as well as the municipality I suppose.

A-4231. You have already said that housing ought not to be a function of the employer ?—Yes.

A-4232. You think that houses should be put up by the Municipality or by Government for all workers ?—Yes.

A-4233. You are in favour of a Town Planning Act ?—Yes.

A-4234. Is there any Town Planning Act in Bombay ?—I think there is.

A-4235. What industrial diseases exist in Bombay ?—I do not know.

A-4236. But you mention them in your memorandum ?—We have suggested that it is just possible that industrial diseases prevail in Bombay.

A-4237. You have no evidence that they do exist ?—No.

A-4238. Do you know anything about the rate of venereal disease among the general workers in Bombay ?—No.

A-4239. You are in favour of the extension of crèches for every mill ?—Yes.

A-4240. Are there any welfare officers now at work in any mill in Bombay ?—I do not think in the majority of mills there are any welfare officers.

A-4241. These officers, I take it, should be Indians ?—Yes.

A-4242. Where could they be trained in welfare work ?—Experience is the best teacher.

A-4243. You said that the factory inspection staff is inadequate. What additions you would suggest should be made ?—I want the number of factory inspectors considerably increased, especially the number of women factory inspectors.

A-4244. Is there a food adulteration Act in Bombay ?—I do not know.

A-4245. *Mr. Lallji*: Probably you know that the depression in the mill industry has started since 1922 ?—Yes.

A-4246. We were just now told that the millowners were making bumper profits. That was seven years back ?—Yes.

A-4247. When you say "millowners" do you mean the managing agents or the shareholders ?—No, not the shareholders.

A-4248. There are 80 managing agency firms. Do you consider them to be 80 millowners ?—I consider the term "millowner" as it is generally understood.

A-4249. That is to say, managing agents or the shareholders ?—Not the shareholders.

A-4250. You know that there are 80 mills working in Bombay ?—I do not think there are 80 mills working.

A-4251. Will the number be 70 ?—May be.

A-4252. Of these not more than 50 are under managing agents ?—I do not know definitely.

A-4253. You know that certain mills are under managing agents ?—Yes.

A-4254. The number is not more than 50 ?—I do not know the exact number.

A-4255. I put it to you that it is not more than 50. Do you know how many shareholders are there ?—I do not know.

A-4256. If I put it at 50,000 will it be all right ?—I cannot give an answer because I do not know.

A-4257. Have you ever been to the share bazaar ?—No, never.

A-4258. You have been very carefully watching the working of the Apolo mills recently ?—Yes.

A-4259. There have been many strikes in Apolo mills ?—In 1928 there were some strikes.

A-4260. I put it to you that most of the shareholders of that mill are millowners ?—I have no information at all.

A-4261. Will you kindly tell us what was the condition of labour during the 4½ months of strike ? How did the labourers maintain themselves ?—They maintained themselves by starvation.

A-4262. Were there many deaths ?—It is very difficult for me to say how many people died on account of starvation during that period.

A-4263. You can give us an idea how they maintained themselves during those 4½ months ?—I just now told you that they maintained themselves by means of starvation.

A-4264. You were against joining the strike ?—Yes.

A-4265. But afterwards you joined the strike and formed a joint strike committee. Why did you do that ?—Because our Managing Committee decided to do so.

A-4266. The Managing Committee was not against joining in the strike but you were personally against joining ?—I was in Europe at that time; I do not know. Perhaps my colleague will be able to say something on that point. (Mr. Rajab) Prior to the strike of 1928 reductions in wages were made by a number of mills. There were individual strikes and there was great unrest. The workers took the opportunity and joined the strike.

A-4267. Is it a fact that you had to join because a large portion of labour force had gone on strike and otherwise you would have lost your leadership?—No, that is wrong; when we joined the strike in 1928 the number of strikers was not even 20,000. The strike was declared in Parel area and there was firing on the workers.

A-4268. Under the orders of the Police Commissioner the Girni Kamgar Union cannot hold meetings at present?—Nor can we.

A-4269. That is because you joined the Girni Kamgar Union people?—No, that is not the reason.

A-4270. You were with them for 4½ months?—No, for six months. (Mr. Bakhale): I think you are confusing this year's strike with the last year's.

A-4271. You have admitted that the Girni Kamgar Union was creating troubles?—I never said that.

A-4272. Do you think that their meetings were peacefully held?—I never attended their meetings.

A-4273. But what is your opinion?—I cannot express an opinion on a thing which I did not see.

A-4274. You say in your memorandum that *dasturi* is paid to the jobbers. Is it paid monthly or only at the time of the first employment?—(Mr. Rajab): In some mills it is paid monthly.

A-4275. Do you mean to say that out of a wage of Rs. 30 that a spinner gets or Rs. 40 that a weaver gets, he has to pay monthly Re. 1 to Rs. 5?—Yes, some of the weavers have to pay, otherwise they are turned out.

A-4276. Speaking about the rent charged for the development department *chawls* you say "In the case of poor workers whose wages do not exceed Rs. 30 per month, they are asked to pay for rent from 25 to 33 per cent. of their wages." Are you aware that in Bombay it is usual that in one room more than one millhand stays?—Yes.

A-4277. So the rent is not paid by one man only?—He has to adopt that for the simple reason that he is unable to pay the whole rent.

A-4278. But they are accustomed to live together?—They have no other alternative but to do that.

A-4279. Why are the development *chawls* not taken up; is it because of the high rent?—Because of the wonderful structure of those *chawls*.

A-4280. What is wonderful in them?—There is nothing which I can possibly approve of in those *chawls*.

A-4281. Did you raise any protest when these *chawls* were being built?—Our union was not in existence at that time.

A-4282. After that?—We have protested sometimes.

A-4283. The authorities have not tried to meet with your wishes, or to make some improvements?—Not, so far as I know.

A-4284. Colonel Russell: What is the matter with the *chawls*?—The *chawls* are too hot in summer and very cold in winter because they are built of cement. There are no facilities inside the *chawls*.

A-4285. What facilities?—(Mr. Rajab): We want that they should be similar in all respects to the *chawls* which the private owners have built.

A-4286. Mr. Lalji: You like the *chawls* built by private owners?—Yes.

A-4287. Because the rent is moderate?—Not, in all cases.

A-4288. There was a question put to you that on the board of directors you often find a large number of persons having no technical experience. I think you know that most of the mills have debentures and the debenture-holders have their representatives on the directorate?—May be.

A-4289. Is that not sufficient?—I think I am not competent to express an opinion on that.

A-4290. Mr. Asale: Will you kindly explain in full how indirect cuts in wages are made?—(Mr. Bakhale): That will be covered by Part II of my memorandum, but if you want any information from the workers who are present here my colleague will be able to furnish it to you.

A-4291. Will you please explain it to the Commission Mr. Rajab?—(Mr. Rajab): Sometimes varieties are changed and new rates are fixed at a low level; and thus the worker loses very much.

A-4292. *The Chairman* : There is no consultation with the workers before a change in rates is made ?—No.

A-4293. *Mr. Asavle* : Do they give you notice ?—No.

A-4294. Is it not a fact that the introduction of the two sides and three-loom system in the Apolo mill in the year 1927 led the people to strike ?—Of course that was one of the causes.

A-4295. Do you not think that unless the whole system is changed and improved on improved lines it would never be accepted by the workers ?—Yes.

A-4296. You stated that the worker changes mills. Will you tell us what is the reason for this ?—In some of the mills the workers are harassed ; if they go on leave, say, for ten days and return to duty after 12 days they are dismissed ; in some of the mills the rates of wages are reduced and thereby the worker is forced to go to another mill where higher wages are paid.

A-4297. Are you at present indebted ?—Yes.

A-4298. To what extent ?—To the extent of Rs. 250.

A-4299. What are the reasons for your indebtedness ?—There are many causes. We went on strike in 1928 ; I myself was ill for some time ; my children were ill.

A-4300. Is there no other reason ?—Is your wage sufficient to maintain your family ?—If my wage was sufficient why should I agitate to have my wages increased ?

A-4301. You have already replied to some questions about victimization. Will you explain how you are victimized, and what are the reasons for victimization ?—We are victimized for many reasons. Sometimes we are asked to pay bribes and if we do not pay we are victimized.

A-4302. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Bribe to whom ?—Bribe to jobbers and head jobbers ; if it is not given we are turned out. Sometimes the workers are turned out because they are active members of the union.

A-4303. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Can you tell us how to stop this bribery ?—By curtailing the power of the jobber.

A-4304. How ?—When there is a dispute between a worker and a jobber or a worker and a head jobber, the worker is never believed ; he is always told that he is a liar.

A-4305. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You would prefer a right of appeal to an impartial body ?—Of course.

A-4306. *The Chairman* : Do you think if you had a welfare officer in each mill who could listen to the troubles of the men, and when they were in genuine troubles take them to the heads of the firm that would help in diminishing this danger of corruption and bribery ?—Yes ; if he is an independent man then of course we will welcome that idea.

A-4307. *The Chairman* : What I mean is an officer of the firm but whose duty was to understand and interpret the wishes of the workmen to the heads of the firm ?—That will be better for us.

A-4308. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Do you think the managing agents have the leisure to attend to these matters themselves ?—They can have if they wish.

A-4309. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What does Mr. Bakhale think about the welfare officer ?—(Mr. Bakhale) : I would rather prefer a man elected by the workers to deal with genuine complaints of the workers but who is paid by the employer. This system obtains in the cocoa works at York. The man who looks after the grievances has got the confidence of the people because he is elected by them.

A-4310. *The Chairman* : You must remember that that is a luxury trade ?—But the principle seems to be quite sound.

A-4311. *Mr. Asavle* : When you go on leave for a week or so you put a *badli* in your place. Who pays that *badli* ?—(Mr. Rajab) : The worker who goes on leave has to pay. He pays it from his pocket and gets it back on the pay day.

A-4312. Does he always have the money with him to pay to the *badli* ?—No, he is forced to borrow.

A-4313. At what rate of interest does he borrow ?—One anna per rupee per month.

A-4314. Before inflicting a fine on a worker is an enquiry made into the matter by the officers ?—Nominal inquiries are made. The worker is summoned and shown the spoiled cloth ; he is told that it is his mistake and that he is fined so much ; if the worker protests no one hears him.

A-4315. Whether it is the worker's fault or not, still you say the worker is fined?—Yes. In this connection I would like to say that in the Simplex mill where I worked, the manager had ordered in 1925 that a sum of Rs. 700 should be recovered in the shape of fines in the weaving shed.

A-4316. *Mr. Clow* : Why was that?—For the benefit of the company.

A-4317. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Whether the weavers were at fault or not, Rs. 700 must be fined?—Yes.

A-4318. *Mr. Asavle* : Is it not a fact that sometimes when the yarn is bad, the weaver has to suffer for the fault of a spinner?—For the fault of the spinner, for the fault of the machinery and for the fault of bad raw material, it is the weaver who suffers.

A-4319. You know that at present housing is provided by the Government by building development *chawls*. Why is it that those *chawls* are not occupied?—They are very far from the mill area; the worker has to change his mills and the mills are spread all over the island of Bombay; there is no facility for transport; there is no tramway or railway in that part; there is no police protection and dacoities take place very often in that section.

A-4320. In what section?—In Worli where these *chawls* are built.

A-4321. Have the workers faith at present in the medical aid given in the mills?—No.

A-4322. Why not?—Because the doctor does not attend the whole day. If a worker is attacked by sickness and absents himself from the mill he is not allowed to enter the gates of the mills; these dispensaries are situated in the compound of the mill and workers have no access to them; how can they derive benefit from them?

A-4323. *Mrs. Wagh* : Will you please tell us what steps are generally taken by your Union to educate the working classes regarding sanitation, clean habits and a better mode of living?—(*Mr. Bakhale*) : We are not doing anything in that direction; we are engaged in some other more important work.

A-4324. Have you tried to investigate why a number of children of school-going age do not attend schools in F and G wards inspite of the Compulsory Education Act?—We have not investigated that.

Mr. Asavle : As I am a member of the Corporation I may be permitted to speak on this point. Wherever compulsory primary education is introduced, there almost all children attend schools.

Mrs. Wagh : I learn that in F and G wards 3,000 children are not attending schools at present.

Mr. Asavle : That is because of the interference of the strike; otherwise every child who has got protection from his parents attends the school.

The witness : (*Mr. Rajab*) : Small children of mill hands in F and G wards earn 4 or 5 rupees in hotels and therefore they do not go to attend the schools.

A-4325. *Mrs. Wagh* : Besides that, do you not think that many children remain at home to look after their younger brothers and sisters when their parents go to the mills?—Yes.

A-4326. What remedy would you suggest for that?—Creches should be started.

A-4327. Do you help the expectant mothers to go to hospitals and also help them to recover their dues from the mills?—Of course, we help them.

A-4328. *Miss Cama* : Have any of your women members made any complaints to you that women in charge took bribes from them?—(*Mr. Bakhale*) : Yes.

A-4329. What did you do in the matter?—We carried the complaints to the mill authorities. We got redress in some and did not succeed in others.

A-4330. Can you tell us why you did not succeed in some of the cases?—Because of the fear on the part of women workers of losing their job if we had pursued the subject too much.

A-4331. Can nothing be done to make these women have less power over other women?—We have already said in our memorandum that the powers of the jobbers, the head jobbers and these women overseers should be very considerably reduced.

A-4332. *Miss Power* : I should like to go back to a question put to you by *Mr. Cliff* on the subject of labour exchanges. Did I understand you rightly to say that if Government labour exchanges were set up you would leave it to be permissive as to whether the millowners made use of it or not?—Yes.

A-4333. In the case of Bombay, the whole trend of your memorandum goes to show that you expect an increasing volume of unemployment as a result of both depression in

the industry and the inauguration of the new "efficiency methods." You have also had in operation for years a system of employing workers through jobbers or *naikins*. If you institute labour exchanges and leave it optional for the Millowners' Association, which employs the vast number of workers in Bombay, to use those exchanges, do you think there would be the smallest possibility of the exchanges succeeding?—In the beginning there may be some difficulty, but the workers will get themselves accustomed to the labour exchange and will seek employment only through the exchange because if they happen to go to a jobber it is very likely that in many cases they have to pay *dasturi*.

A-4334. But the experience everywhere is that the workers will get themselves accustomed to going where labour is to be secured. If the employers are still taking workers in at the mill gates, the workers will continue to go there for employment?—So long as the danger of receiving *dasturi* is there, the tendency of the people, if there is a machinery like the labour exchange, will be more towards going to the labour exchange than to the jobbers.

A-4335. Do you not think, if you were to get an exchange of this kind in Bombay, the best way to make it work would be to endeavour to get the employers' association to agree to use that exchange exclusively? It seems to me that though you might spend a lot of public funds for a very useful purpose, in a place like Bombay unless you get the agreement of the Millowners' Association, it would not have any real success?—I quite agree; therefore, the Millowners' Association should be persuaded to use this exchange.

A-4336. So you would not simply leave it permissive?—No; I would rather induce the millowners to accept the labour exchange for the purposes of recruitment.

A-4337. On the question of supervising staff you emphasize that "there is no systematic, deliberate and sustained effort made by the millowners" in the direction of training workers to occupy higher posts. There again, has the Union any concrete suggestions to make to the Millowners' Association; have they a programme, in fact, for training the subordinate workers to higher posts? I am not talking of technical training outside the mills; have you any programme for the mills themselves to adopt?—I think we have suggested to the Millowners' Association, though not officially, to give opportunity, for example, to plain loom weavers to take to fancy weaving by reserving some looms on which they could train themselves.

A-4338. Has the Union ever put a concrete scheme before the Millowners' Association?—We have not officially put before them any scheme, but in our day-to-day talks with them, I think, we have made such recommendations twice or thrice.

A-4339. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What was their answer?—The answer was that they could not possibly spare such looms.

A-4340. *Miss Power*: You feel that such suggestions as you have put forward have not been received sympathetically by the Millowners' Association?—I think so.

A-4341. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Those suggestions were not made to the Millowners' Association, I take it, but they were made only to individual mills?—Yes.

A-4342. *Miss Power*: Have you ever made any suggestions to the Millowners' Association?—No.

A-4343. In your annual report you say that you formed 20 mill committees. What I am anxious to know is whether they have been sufficiently successful as to warrant their expansion into some form of works committees such as you say are conspicuous by their absence in the mills?—There were two centres where our strength was sufficiently strong and in those centres the union mill committees were fairly successful but at other centres where we were weak they could not show sufficient progress.

A-4344. Are you continuing those union committees?—Yes, we are.

A-4345. And you think their members would ultimately form a nucleus for works committees?—Yes; in one case when we had to elect our men to one of these committees we elected them through our union mill committee.

A-4346. In your memorandum you deal with the question of sub-letting, and in another part of your memorandum you say that there are only 525 women to every 1,000 men in Bombay; I take it that the disparity may be even greater among the industrial population. The reason that you gave for sub-letting just now to another commissioner was the question of high rents; they took in lodgers to reduce the rents. Yesterday we were hearing about a number of systems of co-operative lodging houses started by the seamen in Bombay and Calcutta. Is the question of sub-letting also partially a question of the absence of similar type of lodging houses for what are called unattached mill operatives in Bombay? Are there lodging houses for mill workers or are they dependent upon being taken in by other people?—There are no lodging houses.

A-4347. Why have not the mill operatives started a scheme such as the sailors have?—How are they to start? Where is the strong organization?

A-4348. Who started the organization of the sailors? They did it themselves, did they not?—I have no knowledge, I do not know much about the sailors.

A-4349. What I am trying to get at is do people take boarders because they find their rents too high, or are they obliged, apart from the question of rents, to take boarders because these people have no other place to go to?—I think the idea underlying the practice of taking boarders is the financial difficulty of the family.

A-4350. And not the absence of accommodation for a single man?—I do not think so.

A-4351. In your memorandum you deal with the question of *nakims* and the bribery that exists under the present system of employing jobbers. Have you any solution for obtaining a better type of forewomen in the mills?—Only if you deprive these underlings of their powers they may prove themselves to be much better than they are to-day. It is only the power in their hands that is responsible for all the evils.

A-4352. Has any mill, to your knowledge, got a scheme for training a better type of forewomen?—No.

A-4353. Do you know that one of the successes of the Japanese mills is due to the extraordinarily efficient type of forewomen who have been trained during the last eight years for managing a predominantly large body of female workers?—Yes.

A-4354. You suggest it is possible to do something on similar lines in India?—It is possible.

A-4355. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In Japan there are more women in mills than in Bombay?—Yes.

A-4356. Therefore the importance of women in Bombay is not as much as in Japan?—No.

A-4357. *Miss Power*: But the problem is sufficiently pressing to justify an attempt to train the best type of forewoman in India. In your memorandum you deal with the nature of the accommodation provided by the Bombay Improvement Trust and the Bombay Development Department and the failure of the workers to make use of much of the accommodation which is available for them. When these *chawls* were constructed, was any endeavour made for the social workers, the unions, the employers and the public bodies to get together and decide what sort of accommodation was suitable to the workers, and could be built with the money available?—I do not think that any such consultation took place at that time; because in the first place there were no unions worth the name in 1919. Whether the social workers were consulted or not I do not know.

A-4358. Some of the complaints made about them are ones which could have been easily avoided had there been any sort of discussion on the lines I have suggested. Do you know whether anything of the kind took place?—No, I do not know.

A-4359. With regard to welfare work among the workers, you refer to the provision of dining sheds, bathing places and so on. Would you be in favour of compulsory welfare orders in connection with the Factories Act; or would you agree to leave the provision of such amenities to voluntary effort?—So far as such matters as bathing places and dining sheds are concerned I am in favour of compulsion.

A-4360. *Mr. Joshi*: When was your union formed?—In January 1926.

A-4361. What was the attitude of the millowners in the beginning when your union was formed? Was it very favourable?—I can best illustrate their attitude in the very first year of our existence by a small quotation from the Annual Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association for 1926. In that year we had a strike in one of the mills in Bombay. We tried to negotiate with the employers, first with the manager and then with the agents. We did not succeed. We then took the matter up with the Millowners' Association. Even then we did not get any redress. But in their Annual Report they refer to our interference in the following words:

"The operatives in the Khatav Mankanji mills went on strike on the 24th April 1926 consequent upon the reduction of rates of wages effected by the agents.... The Bombay Textile Labour Union appeared to have been rather officious before and after this labour dispute....." I think this word "officious" is enough to indicate the attitude of the millowners towards us in the very first year of our existence.

The Chairman: We hear in these days a great deal about change of heart. We need not go back in the past too much either in respect of unions or employers.

A-4362. *Mr. Joshi* : In the memorandum submitted by the Millowners' Association they say :

"The representatives of the Millowners' Association.....were prepared to negotiate with registered trade unions. This move, it was supposed, would strengthen the hands of the executive of the Bombay Textile Labour Union which was the only organized registered trade union in Bombay. This opportunity to enter into negotiations direct with the Millowners' Association, leaving alone the communist element that was attempting to capture the trade union movement, was not grasped by the Bombay Textile Labour Union." Do you think that that was a real opportunity sincerely given by the millowners to the Bombay Textile Labour Union ?—I do not think so, for the simple reason that if registration was going to be a condition precedent to negotiations between the parties concerned, anybody, any organization, could register itself in no time. You require only 7 people to register as a union.

A-4363. And you think that even the communist union could have got itself registered and thus become entitled to negotiate with the millowners ?—As a matter of fact they did that.

A-4364. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Are you in favour of having only one registered trade union to deal with ?—I cannot say that there should be only one registered trade union. But I would welcome the formation of only one union for the textile industry.

A-4365. Would you suggest that the millowners should not recognize any other unions except your own ?—I cannot say that. How could I ?

A-4366. *Mr. Joshi* : Then the Millowners' memorandum proceeds to speak of what they consider to be a mistake committed by the Bombay Textile Labour Union in making common cause with the communist trade union, i.e., the Girmi Kamgar Union. Have not the Millowners' Association themselves encouraged the communist union by their several acts ? Did not some of the millowners dismiss some jobbers who were in favour of the Bombay Textile Labour Union, in response to a demand made by the communist union ?—I remember two cases in which the agents concerned had to dismiss a few people at the dictation of the Girmi Kamgar Union. One was a jobber in the Tata Mills whose dismissal was demanded by the Girmi Kamgar Union, and he was dismissed accordingly.

A-4367. *The Chairman* : Was the jobber a member of your union ?—I do not think he was. But he seems to have obstructed their way. Whatever the cause, they demanded his dismissal and that was granted immediately.

A-4368. *Mr. Joshi* : Did the millowner admit that the jobber concerned had done any wrong ?—Mr. Saklatwala himself said several times that the jobber was a good man.

A-4369. Were there not cases in which the communist union demanded the dismissal of workers belonging to your Union and the employers dismissed them accordingly ?—Yes. One such case, I remember, happened when we were before the Fawcett Committee. There were two men ; both of them were jobbers, or one was a jobber and the other was an ordinary worker. They were working in the Crown Mills and were members of our Union. But a large majority of the workers in that mill belonged to the Girmi Kamgar Union. And this union demanded the dismissal of these two men and they were dismissed accordingly. But they were not dismissed immediately. They were suspended for some time and asked to wait at the manager's office for a number of days. They were promised their pay for some time. We protested and protested very strongly to the Agent. He proposed a joint conference between the Girmi Kamgar Union and our Union to which we agreed. Two or three appointments were made and our representatives went to the mill for the purpose of negotiating with the representatives of the said union. But they never presented themselves and the ultimate result was that these two people were sacked at the dictation of the Girmi Kamgar Union. I consider this case and the other case I cited as proof to show that the millowners as a body encouraged communism.

A-4370. *The Chairman* : Was that at the time when you were sitting at the joint strike committee with the Girmi Kamgar Union ?—Yes.

A-4371. *Mr. Joshi* : Before the last general strike do you know of any millowners who approved of the communist methods and admired some of the communists ?—I know there were some who admired some of the communists. I think Sir Victor Sassoon is one of the greatest admirer of Mr. Danga.

A-4372. The millowners blame you for co-operating with the communist union. Do not the various instances you have quoted go to show that the millowners themselves started co-operation with the communist union and went much further than your union in co-operating with them ?—Yes, that is the position.

A-4373. So much for the past. But at present we are told that the millowners are quite willing to have a good strong union for the industry. I do not know whether your Union is considered to be a good union or not. But do you find from your personal experience that the millowners sincerely want to co-operate with you?—My personal experience is this. When they found the communist trade union on the scene they preferred me and my union to some extent. But that was too late. Even now there is no encouragement of any kind from the Millowners' Association or from individual mills given to *bona fide* trade unions. On the other hand I have cases in which the millowners' firms started their own unions. One such union has been registered under the Trade Unions Act. I took this matter to the Press and I understand that further efforts have been stopped now.

A-4374. Is it your experience that when you have a union gradually growing in strength and power, cases are brought against the officials and workers of the union?—Yes. In Kurla for example, we had a strike only about two months ago. The strike failed on account of the mischievous activities of some of the officers in that mill.

A-4375. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How long did that strike last?—Only 24 hours, Sir Victor. After the strike three criminal prosecutions have been launched against the members of our Union, one of which is against me. I understand that the assistant manager of that mill is going to give evidence in that case.

A-4376. *Mr. Joshi*: Have you any reasons to believe that these prosecutions are really launched at the instigation of the management?—I have no definite information on the point. But my suspicion is that the head jobber who has sued me in a criminal court could not possibly have done that without the knowledge and connivance of the manager.

A-4377. *Mr. Clow*: What criminal acts were you doing?—Alleged defamation.

A-4378. *Mr. Joshi*: As regards the relations between rank and file and officers, you said that dismissals were one of the causes for the bad relation between the staff and rank and file. Is dismissal such an easy thing in the Bombay textile industry?—Yes, as easy as anything.

A-4379. Who is responsible for dismissals?—Anybody from jobber onwards.

A-4380. Has the man any chance of getting such orders reversed?—Yes, in some cases where the manager happens to be sympathetic and our cause just, we do get the orders reversed. But in a majority of cases dismissals continue to be dismissals notwithstanding our efforts.

A-4381. With regard to the wage-rates, do all the mills put up notices about wage-rates?—No, that is one of the causes which often leads to a strike.

A-4382. Would you like to have legislation on the lines of the English Factories Act under which such notices are made compulsory?—Yes, I do want such legislation.

A-4383. *The Chairman*: In the case of piece-rates?—Yes, in the case of piece-rates.

A-4384. *Mr. Joshi*: The Millowners complain about absenteeism of the workers. But do not the workers suffer for the fault of the millowners when they cannot supply them with work for some day and consequently do not pay them their wages?—Yes, there is the well-known "play-off" system under which workers are asked to go home for a week or a fortnight and even in some cases for a month. Even to-day that is the case in some of the mills, and consequently there is a considerable amount of under-employment. It so happens that on account of shortage of beams, people lose their wages for 4 to 8 days.

A-4385. Do the millowners give any compensation?—No, they do not give any.

The Chairman: That is common all the world over.

A-4386. *Mr. Joshi*: Mr. Rajab, in reply to Mr. Asavle you said that you suffered a loss on account of the beams not being available. Suppose at that time you had a *badli* and you are paid for only one loom, because another loom is not available. Do you pay the *badli* for one loom or for two looms?—(Mr. Rajab). We have to pay compensation for the idle loom.

A-4387. Therefore it comes to this: you pay the *badli* for two looms while you get your wages for only one loom?—Yes.

A-4388. *Mr. Clow*: Why is it that when a jobber is dismissed it not infrequently leads to a strike?—(Mr. Bakhale). Perhaps the jobber may be a good man.

A-4389. Is the jobber generally popular with the men?—Some may be good and therefore popular.

A-4390. But you stated that the jobber had no other function except to receive bribes from the men?—I have not said that. I spoke of the system as a whole. There may

be a few exceptions to the general rule. Moreover how many strikes have taken place on account of dismissal of jobbers ?

A-4391. Do you think that it is not frequent ?—No, it is getting less and less every day.

A-4392. As regards wage payment, are you in favour of reducing the period from a month ?—Yes, I am.

A-4393. To a fortnight or a week ?—I would prefer weekly payments.

A-4394. Are you giving your views or the view of your Union ?—I think the managing committee of our Union considered this question and recommended fortnightly payments.

A-4395. One of the memoranda presented to us by a millowner states that this question was considered in 1924 and it was found that the work-people were universally opposed to the change from a month to a fortnight. What have you to say to that ?—In this connection I would like you to refer to the Report of the Pearson Committee in which they have stated that there was no contact between the workers and the employers.

A-4396. If you put it to the workers now, would they be in favour of a fortnightly payment ?—If it were put to them independently without any pressure from the mill-owners, I think they would be in favour of a fortnightly system.

A-4397. *Miss Power* : Is it a question of the workers not understanding what it is ?—Yes, that is the point.

A-4398. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Do all the workers who are with you to-day agree with you ?—Yes, they are in favour of fortnightly payment.

A-4399. *The Chairman* : Would you tell us, Mr. Bakhale, why they are in favour of a fortnightly system ?—They have generally to spend their wages within a very short time after they receive it, and then get into debt and pay interest for it. If the payment were made fortnightly they would be able to save the interest charges.

A-4400. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Would they prefer weekly payments to fortnightly payments ?—No, they do not prefer weekly payments.

Sir Victor Sassoon : But surely the reasons applicable to fortnightly payments are even stronger in the case of weekly payments ?

The Chairman : We need not press that point. They declare in favour of fortnightly payments. We are told that an experiment was tried here not very long ago of fortnightly payments. When was that ?

Mr. Clow : That was 17 years ago.

The Chairman : Then we need not go into that either.

A-4401. *Mr. Clow* : What steps do you take to get fresh members for your Union ?—We generally hold our Union meetings and persuade workers to join our Union. Sometimes we hold propaganda meetings and issue leaflets.

A-4402. But do you attempt to get hold of the workers as they go home from the mills ?—We generally hold our meetings in front of the mills at about 6 o'clock in the evening when the workers go home.

A-4403. Have you anyone in your Union who devotes his whole time to Union work and has no other work to do, I mean one who is not a mill-worker ?—I practically devote a good deal of my time to the Union work.

A-4404. But besides that you have work connected with the Servants of India Society and other Unions ?—No, not other unions. We had a full-time paid organizer till about four or five months ago. Now we have Mr. Mohamed Rajab, a full-time paid worker. At our centres we have some three or four propagandists who are full-time workers.

A-4405. You have been in Bombay for some years ?—Yes.

A-4406. Would you agree with the statement that the housing conditions are not quite so bad as they were some years ago ?—There might have been some improvements so far as streets and other sanitary arrangements are concerned, but so far as housing accommodation for the workers is concerned, I do not think there has been considerable change.

A-4407. There is just as much congestion as there was before ?—Yes.

A-4408. *Miss Power* : Can you account for the decrease in mortality in the last five years ?—I cannot.

A-4409. *Mr. Clow* : I want to know from the gentleman who served in Amritsar Cawnpore and Ahmedabad why he changed so often. Why did he leave Amritsar ?—(Mr. Abdul Khan) : I fell ill at Amritsar and left it.

- A-4410. Why did you leave Cawnpore ?—Because I got more wages in Ahmedabad ?
- A-4411. Why did you leave Ahmedabad ?—I got a post as jobber in Bombay.
- A-4412. In how many mills have you served in Bombay ?—Two or three mills.
- A-4413. Mr. Rajab, in answer to a question you stated that the men had to keep changing from mill to mill and therefore they could not live in Worli *chawls*. Why do the men keep changing from one mill to another ?—(Mr. Rajab) : I have already stated that wage reductions take place.
- A-4414. But that is common to all the mills ?—But all the mills do not reduce wages at one and the same time. If the manager of the mill I am working in, reduces the rates then I am forced to leave that mill and to go to another mill.
- A-4415. The next mill may be worse ?—I can seek a better mill, as there are eighty mills in Bombay.
- A-4416. Do you think that if standardization is introduced, the men would not change ?—The men would not change mills so frequently.
- A-4417. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Are you satisfied with the progress that manufacturing industries are making in India ?—(Mr. Bakhale) : I should like it to be increased.
- A-4418. You admit that agriculture is overcrowded ?—Yes.
- A-4419. And industrial development ought to proceed much more quickly in order to provide employment for the increasing population which is now subsisting precariously on agriculture ?—Yes.
- A-4420. Do you think that industrial development is possible without genuine cooperation between capital and labour ?—It is not possible.
- A-4421. Do you know that in consequence of reduction in the cost of transport certain commodities like cotton and wheat have become commodities whose prices are governed by world prices ? Now, take the case of the textile industry. You know that that industry is established in Lancashire, Japan, China, India and America. Do you not think that the cost of labour as affecting production in these different countries is a material factor in the development of that industry ?—May be.
- A-4422. You are not satisfied that it is ?—It is very likely ; yes.
- A-4423. Bombay has to face competition from other countries and also from up-country mills. Do you not think, therefore, that the provision of the various amenities for the welfare of labour that you have suggested is largely dependent on the greater efficiency of labour ?—I am not against greater efficiency of labour at all.
- A-4424. Would you agree that the wages of labour in India should be determined by the amount of work that labour puts in in competition with labour in other countries ?—I cannot speak about the competition of other countries.
- A-4425. You have dealt with it in your memorandum ?—As regards fixing the wage rate.
- A-4426. Is it not obvious to you that if wages in relation to production are lower in a certain country than in others, then that country would be able to compete with the rest ?—In addition to wages, there may be other factors responsible for higher cost of production.
- A-4427. Will you please name some ?—Yes ; purchase of raw material, machinery sales and so on.
- A-4428. Assuming that in relation to those other factors, conditions are the same, say in Bombay and Japan, and the difference is only in the cost of labour, would you not support any efforts that may be made to increase efficiency of labour in Bombay so that the labourers in Bombay may earn more money and the industry may compete successfully with Japan ?—I cannot possibly assume that other things will remain the same in the two places.
- A-4429. You may give the answer on that assumption.—I cannot reply a hypothetical question.
- A-4430. You are advocating that the employers should be forced to provide various amenities like medical relief, housing, welfare work, compulsory insurance, unemployment insurance, etc. All these will cost money ?—Yes ; they will.
- A-4431. Do you think that the employers would be able to provide all these amenities and conveniences if their industry is not successful in consequence of inefficient labour ?—I would have considered that point if when the industry was making profits it had made provision for some of the amenities at any rate. As they did not do that, I need not consider their difficulties now.

A-4432. I am not dealing with the question of profits or loss to the industry; I am confining my question to the relative cost of production in relation to efficient and inefficient labour?—I would always prefer efficient labour.

A-4433. And therefore any steps which are taken to raise the standard of efficiency of labour would have your support?—Yes, consistently with the interests of the workers.

A-4434. Certainly it is in the interests of the workers to become more efficient and earn more wages. In your memorandum you say: "The object of the industry should, therefore, be not profits but public service and it cannot be achieved unless the industry is removed from private hands and put under public control." What do you mean by that?—I prefer nationalization of the industry.

A-4435. That is to say that the nationalization of the textile industry would help its development?—Yes.

A-4436. *The Chairman*: You would have it managed, I suppose, by the Bombay Corporation?—By the Bombay Corporation or Government.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola: Do you know what public opinion is in regard to the public management of the Development Department?

A-4437. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Railways are becoming nationalized?—I think railways are coming to be more and more state-managed.

A-4438. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Who would be the managers?—If you agree to the principle we can consider that.

A-4439. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Do you know of any country in the world which has developed this industry on the principle of Government management?

Diwan Chaman Lall: In Russia?—Yes, in Russia.

A-4440. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are conditions in the textile industry in Russia satisfactory?—Yes; wages have increased.

A-4441. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If Government management is inefficient, you want the general public as tax-payers to make up the loss which Government mismanagement may involve?—Yes, because if Government management results in better efficiency the tax-payer will certainly gain.

A-4442. *The Chairman*: You say that the object of the industry should not be profits.—What I mean to say is that the industry to be successful must be under proper control; that control does not exist at present, and therefore I feel that if it is put under public control it is likely to lead to better results.

A-4443. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: That is your faith?—That is my point.

A-4444. In your memorandum you say that it is the duty of the State to provide for the maintenance of those who remain unemployed for no fault of theirs. Do you mean by the term "unemployed" industrial unemployed or agricultural unemployed?—The whole memorandum deals with the textile workers in Bombay.

A-4445. Then you advocate that the men accepting employment in the textile industry should be dealt with differently from the rest of the industrial workers and that they should be specially treated at the expense of the tax-payer?—Yes, because I feel that periodical unemployment is one of the risks which should be met.

A-4446. As regards the textile industry, you know that people from the surrounding districts, like Ratnagiri, come here in the hope of getting employment; do they not?—I do not think so.

A-4447. I mean that people come to Bombay from the districts on the chance of getting employment?—They may come to Bombay and they may not get employment.

A-4448. But they come here on the chance of getting employment?—They may do.

A-4449. They do; if they did, would you consider them as unemployed textile workers for whom maintenance should be provided by the State?—Do you mean even though they have not worked in the industry for a single day?

A-4450. They may work as *badlis* for a day or two?—Certain conditions will have to be laid down.

A-4451. Do you think that the State should take upon itself the duty of providing maintenance for the textile workers?—I do mean it seriously.

A-4452. In your memorandum you say: "It is the considered opinion of the Union that the managing agency system is now obsolete, has outlived its existence and ought to be changed if the Bombay industry is to hold its own in the outside competition

with which it is threatened." Will you please explain that statement, particularly in regard to the reference to outside competition? Why should the managing agency system go if the industry is to hold its own against outside competition?—Because I feel that the managing agency system is responsible for a great deal of wastage in the industry. The whole question was examined by the Tariff Board. I feel that in order to enable the industry to compete successfully with foreign countries and with up-country mills this wastage must be stopped, and if the wastage is to be stopped the agency system should go.

A-4453. And you think that if the managing agency system goes, the industry will be more efficient?—I think so.

A-4454. You say: "The relations between staff and rank and file are anything but cordial or pleasant; one might almost say, they are bitter. In spite of any professions to the contrary, the working class is still looked upon and treated as a commodity, and not as human beings having the same human feelings as those of the employers. The touch of human sympathy with the workers and their legitimate aspirations is sadly lacking. There is generally a tendency to browbeat the workers, assault them and treat them as people below contempt." That is a very strong condemnation of the existing system, and I think it is desirable that you should explain in some detail why you use such strong language as regards the existing system?—I have brought these workers with me, and you may put them questions.

A-4455. I would be quite content if you gave me some idea on what you base this strong condemnation?—Since our Union came into existence, I have very rarely come across a mill management—there may be one or two exceptions—which has shown real sympathy in removing the genuine grievances of the workers. If you want instances, I can give one or two even now. In the Spring Mill there was an officer, an English officer, who assaulted a worker very seriously. The worker was a member of our Union. He came to me, and we put up a complaint to the manager. The manager agreed that the worker had been assaulted, but stated that the utmost he could do under the circumstances was to give a severe warning to the officer. Surely, when a worker was severely assaulted I could not possibly accept a mere severe warning; I wanted some definite steps to be taken against the officer. So, I tried to see the manager again, but when I went and saw him he definitely said to me: "Mr. Bakhale, this is the last time that I am going to allow you into my mill; I am not going to have any discussions with you hereafter." This is one of the cases which are responsible for making the relations between the employees and employers bitter.

A-4456. Do you base your opinion on this one case; or do you say that this is one of several such cases and that this is a common practice? Are such cases so numerous as to leave a bitterness in the minds of most of the workers?—We have received many complaints, and on the most important and fundamental grievances we have not received any encouragement but have come back disappointed.

A-4457. That is not the point. The management may not have treated you with courtesy. Do you say that the workers as a body are treated with contempt?—The workers near me will corroborate me. When the worker goes to a mill manager with a complaint he is asked to wait for some time, and to that extent he loses production and thereby wages. He is then asked to bring his jobber or head jobber. The manager or departmental head, whoever he may be, simply asks the jobber what the matter is and asks the worker to go back to his department.

A-4458. *The Chairman*: I see in your report to your own members you say that you had a total number of 474 complaints, and in dealing with these you were successful in 219 cases in getting a remedy, in 59 you were unsuccessful, 5 were compromised and 188 were dropped. So that, you failed definitely only in 59 cases out of 474 in getting some remedy. That was very good work—The work may be very good. But what happened was this. In the cases where we succeeded it was not so much the sympathetic attitude of the employers—I grant there may have been sympathetic attitude to a certain extent—but it was not so much that attitude on the part of the employers as the justice of our case. Even though the number of complaints in which we did not get redress may be small, yet that small number is quite enough to create a sort of bitterness in the minds of the operatives.

A-4459. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You stated in reply to a question that your Union was not in favour of the recent strike. Now, we have had two general strikes—one in 1928 and the other in 1929. Were all the operatives united on each of these occasions to go on strike or was there any difference of opinion among them?—Sofar as this year's strike is concerned, the facts are quite plain: the Girni Kamgar Union declared the strike, while the members of our Union were against the strike and in spite of the strike our people were working in the mills. Last year, there were people who were not in favour of the

strike in the beginning, but when the firing took place the attitude of those immediately changed and they felt that that was an occasion for them to show their sympathy with the people who were on strike, and almost on the next day the general strike became an accomplished fact.

A-4460. I am talking of the strike that was brought about by the Girni Kamgar Union. It is reported that a large number of workers were willing to continue work but that they were forced to stop work by means which cannot wholly be called persuasion. Is that a fact?—I cannot give you an answer in one sentence, because of the fact that on the 26th April 1929 exactly at one of the clock several thousands of people came out of the mills because of the resolution of the managing committee of the Girni Kamgar Union.

A-4461. Do you mean to say that every one of the workers came out of every mill?—Not out of every mill, but in a few mills most of the people came out.

A-4462. How did it then spread; can you give us any information on the point?—It spread on account of propaganda.

A-4463. Peaceful propaganda?—Propaganda by means of leaflets that were issued.

A-4464. That is peaceful. Then, the others who had not gone on strike at one of the clock because of the resolution followed after; is that so?—I cannot say that.

A-4465. *The Chairman*: We have an hour allowed for your co-operation. I am going to suggest to myself and to my colleagues that we should cease looking at the past but should look towards the future. Indeed there is a great deal of heart-burning still left about the events of the last two years, but you have had courts of inquiry and commissions till I am tired of reading them. What we want to-day is to try and look towards the future and I ask you to do the same. Is your Union prepared now, supposing the employers were willing, to arrange something like a general quarterly meeting with the employers without any programme of grievances or troubles but, to consider the state of the industry and the success and prosperity of the industry in Bombay? Yes.

A-4466. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you in a position to represent labour now?—I think the Chairman's question was if the employers make a suggestion to that effect whether we would agree.

A-4467. *The Chairman*: I am naturally asking with respect to the persons whom Mr. Bakhale represents here. We have unfortunately no other organized body in front of us to whom I can put that question. You will readily admit that your influence must depend on the number of persons whom you are able to represent. The second question is this. We cannot help noticing what a great fluctuation there is in the labour in Bombay, men going from mill to mill and in some cases elsewhere. There is only a small amount of regular stabilized employment. There may be reasons for that, but you will agree, would you not, that it is in the interest of the industry that as far as possible, without fixing the labour to an undesirable extent, there should be a stability in textile labour which does not at present exist in Bombay?—I agree that stability of labour is necessary; the workers themselves want it and they do not like to go from mill to mill.

A-4468. Then, the question is how to achieve a greater stability in the industry in the interests both of the workers and of the millowners?—By a complete change of heart on the part of the employers.

A-4469. We are hearing a great deal about change of hearts in these days, but I want to be practical. You told me that you thought that a welfare officer in the larger mills would be helpful in removing some of the day to day troubles of the workers, many of them no doubt due to misunderstanding?—That is what Mr. Rajab said. I suggested a system similar to the one which obtains at York. My point in recommending that was this. We cannot completely divorce the past from the future, and I must speak on the experience that I have gained. My own feeling is that a man who is employed by the employers and paid by them may not be able to redress all the genuine grievances of the operative.

A-4470. There, you will be acting on the troubles and suspicions of the past. Would you be willing to give a trial and judge by results?—I do not mind making an experiment for some time.

A-4471. You were asked by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola some questions about what is called efficiency here. Do you agree with him that a low wages cost is not the same thing as low wages?—Yes.

A-4472. You may have a low wages cost at the same time as high wages?—Quite possible.

A-4473. And your Union does not object to a low wages cost accompanied by higher wages to the individuals concerned?—Certainly not.

A-4474. You are willing to co-operate in putting the industry of Bombay on a basis on which it can hold its own both with foreign countries and with other up-country mills in India?—Yes.

A-4475. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: As we have to deal with Japanese competition, would you advocate that we should give the same wages as in Japan if we have the same efficiency—I assume also the same machinery?—I have no experience of Japanese conditions.

A-4476. Would you be prepared to advocate that to make our cost of production the same as in Japan we should pay the same rate of wages as in Japan and get the same efficiency?—I cannot give an answer to that, because I do not know the Japanese conditions.

A-4477. How do you propose that we should compete with Japan?—It is for you to decide, because you are the master of the industry.

A-4478. You have talked of co-operation of labour. Would you tell us how we can compete with Japan?—If you place your cards on the table and allow us to speak with you on terms of equality, I think labour will be able to give you some remedies.

A-4479. In your dealings with my mills, have you been treated on terms of inequality?—You have treated me fairly and well during the last few years. But so far as the redress of grievances is concerned, I do not think I have always succeeded.

A-4480. You said that the success you have got in getting redress in many cases was due to the justice of the case. Are you suggesting that you should have your grievances put right even though your demands were not just?—I did not say that our unjust demands should be conceded. What I said was that in a majority of those complaints in which we had not succeeded there were mistakes on both sides which should have been adjusted in a spirit of compromise and they were not so adjusted.

A-4481. Your own figures show a majority of successes.—Because we found that our cases were quite just and the millowners had no option but to concede.

A-4482. May we take it that where you did not succeed your grievances could not be proved to be just?—We tried to be reasonable; as soon as we found that a particular complaint was unjust, we dropped it.

A-4483. You have been talking a great deal about victimization. Yet, before the Pearson Committee's report a number of complaints of victimization were brought, but not one of them was proved. You will see that at page 58 of Appendix E to that Report. They state that there was no evidence before them that there was victimization or unjust dismissal of any operative.—So far as that report is concerned, I can only say this, that I was not quite satisfied with the way in which the union's case was placed before the committee, because the two principal spokesmen were in jail; they came at 11 o'clock and went back to the jail at 6 o'clock; the files were in the office; they could not collect all their materials and present a good case before the Pearson Committee.

A-4484. You admit that you represent a very small part of the workers. Therefore if the millowners joined with you in some form of joint commission, anything which you might agree with them would not necessarily be held as binding by the large body of workers?—That is possible.

A-4485. Can you think of any system by which a proper representation of the large majority of the workers could be joined with a millowners' committee so as to form a proper joint committee whose decisions would be binding on both parties?—The only remedy is a strong trade union.

A-4486. You cannot expect us to make that trade union for you?—No.

A-4487. You have admitted that I have been sympathetic to you, but you have accused me of showing partiality to the Girni Kamgar Union. At that particular time the Girni Kamgar Union had 75,000 workers in their union. Would you blame me for allowing the workers to choose their own representatives. Do you think I should have said "I will only deal with Mr. Bakhale and his friends although they represent a very small minority"?—Our Union was not in a minority when the strike was declared.

A-4488. At the time I am dealing with, the Girni Kamgar Union were in a very strong majority?—They got a good membership because of the encouragement that some of the millowners gave them at the beginning.

A-4489. The millowners would sooner have treated with you. What must they do? Must they wait until you become a stronger union before joining you in this joint council?—No other alternative seems to be possible.

A-4490. So there is no hope of any immediate joint committee?—No hope so far as I can see.

A-4491. Would you prefer that a complaint brought to the management should be brought by a member of your mill committee who was employed by the firm, or would you consider it preferable that such a complaint should be brought by an officer of the trade union who was not an employee of the firm?—I am not considering the question of whether a man is in the employment of the firm. If the man is an officer of the union he has as much right to negotiate with the employer as an ordinary worker.

A-4492. Would it not be more satisfactory that the particular officer of the union dealing with the management should not be an employee of the particular mill?—What is generally done now is this. A complaint is generally taken to the manager by one of the members of the union mill committee in the first place. Afterwards the union official writes.

A-4493. He would not be necessarily an employee of the firm? You agree it would be better, subsequently, that somebody who was not employed by the mill should deal with the management?—I do not make any such statement at all. What I say is that the employer should deal with the union.

A-4494. Do I understand you to say that when times are booming, the management should put a certain amount of money in reserve in order to pay equal wages when bad times come?—Yes.

A-4495. You are in favour of that?—Yes.

A-4496. Let us suppose that when the boom times were on, instead of paying two crores of rupees in the form of a bonus, the millowners had suggested putting this amount into a fund to keep up wages when times were bad. Would labour have agreed to that? Or let us take the future. Do you think the work-people will agree to that for the future?—If the workers were assured of stability in wages both in bad times and in good times, I think they would accept it.

A-4497. They would be prepared to agree that this money should be put under trustees. They would not ask for it to be paid out at once in the form of increased wages or bonus?—They will ask for increased wages if the industry is making good profits, irrespective of the wages equalization fund.

A-4498. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In listening to your evidence I have gathered the impression that you have a grievance against everybody. Would you say that every complaint from a union should be considered by an employer?—The point is this. Whenever a worker brings a complaint to the union, the union tries to find out whether the complaint is genuine or not. If, on the version of the worker, the union feels that the grievance is genuine, the union sends it on to the management.

A-4499. In reply to a member of the Commission you said that the Girmi Kamgar Union had dismissed two *sardars* whom you thought they should not have dismissed?—The management dismissed two *sardars* at the dictation of the Girmi Kamgar Union.

A-4500. The management listened to the union, which at that time had 50,000 members, and, on the recommendation of the Union they dismissed those *sardars*. What is your grievance against the employers?—The grievance is that they said that we were making common cause with the communists, when the millowners themselves were flirting with them.

A-4501. In reply to *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtools* you said that because the employers did not set aside money for the benefit of the work-people when they were making profits, you do not feel justified in helping them now. You do not mean that, do you? I agree with you that the Bombay millowners should have set aside a lot more money when they were making profits, but there is this difference between us. You say "because they did not do so I am not going to help them now"; but we are here to help them now, and that is what we want you to do?—My position is this. There is now the greatest labour unrest in Bombay. Wages are being cut down. Under a standardization scheme the wages of some people will go down, although in the case of others, particularly the spinning section, they will go up by a rupee or two. Now the discontent will increase to a certain extent. When there are these serious difficulties you come and ask us to help you, but when you were in a prosperous condition you never approached us. Why should I take upon myself the responsibility of helping you.

A-4502. Is it not a very un-Christianlike act to say that because the employers did wrong in the past you now refuse to assist them when everybody is in trouble?—In reply to the Chairman I did say that I am prepared to meet the employers for the purpose of bringing about better relations between the two sides, but if the employers were to tell me that in starting these schemes they have not got the money, I am not prepared to consider their financial difficulty.

A-4503. What about the report of the Indian Tariff Board. They say "Worked out on the basis of the cost per spindle per day, the percentage of labour to total costs for a mill in Bombay was 36 per cent. of the total cost of manufacture in 1914, against 49 per cent. in 1926." They go on to say that "the greatest disability from which Bombay suffers is in its high cost of labour." Further they say that "so far as costs of production are concerned, it is in labour costs that is to be found the main reason why the depression in the industry has been felt so much more acutely in Bombay than it has elsewhere." In spite of that statement, made by a Government enquiry, after hearing witnesses, you say "Because the millowners refused to do something in the past I am not going to help them now." I think you are not doing yourself justice?—I did not make that statement so categorically. In reply to the Chairman I said I am prepared to co-operate with the employers to bring about harmonious relations in the interests of the industry as a whole, provided you put all your cards on the table. I am not in a position to express any opinion as to the extent of your financial difficulties, as I do not know anything about them.

A-4504. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it true that the Millowners' Association in 1928 negotiated with Unions which had not got a very large membership of mill workers?—That is so.

A-4505. May I ask whether the union which has been referred to as the Communist union had any members at the commencement of the 1928 strike?—No. The Union was formed and registered during the period of strike.

A-4506. Is it not true that the Millowners' Association negotiated with that Union before it was representative?—Yes, they did.

A-4507. You have been asked one or two questions about efficiency. Does it strike you that it is not possible to get greater efficiency and greater skill unless the physical standard of this class of work-people is improved?—Yes, it does.

A-4508. You say that you believe that the German works councils system should be adopted. Would you apply that to the cotton industry in Bombay?—Yes, I would.

A-4509. Would that be the place where you would ask for the cards to be put on the table?—Yes.

A-4510. You say you are prepared to encourage efficiency, but is it not a necessary corollary of that that there should be an extension of the application of International Labour Conventions?—Yes.

A-4511. Has this Government already started with the application of certain Conventions?—Yes.

A-4512. Must there be any retrogression at all?—No.

A-4513. Must not you go forward if you are to improve the standard of these people?—Certainly.

A-4514. The Commission would be obliged to you if you could suggest to them any practical way in which the problem of indebtedness can be alleviated?—I think it would be considerably alleviated by the organization of co-operative societies.

A-4515. How would you suggest that the organization should be commenced? Would you like to think it over and put up a note to the Commission?—I will try to do so.

A-4516. You replied to the Chairman about welfare officers. Have you considered the appointment of a labour commissioner to discharge some of the duties which a welfare officer would discharge?—I think the Chairman referred to welfare officers in each mill.

A-4517. I am going a point beyond that. Have you considered the question of the appointment of labour commissioners?—No.

A-4518. Will you consider it and see whether there is any possibility of advancing along that line?—Yes.

A-4519. I want to ask you a question about *badlis*. I see this matter has been discussed by a committee which has made a recommendation that the required staff of *badlis* should be placed on the pay bill. Has there been any attempt on the part of any mill in Bombay to give effect to that recommendation?—Do you refer to the recommendation of the Tariff Board that there should be 10 per cent. of surplus labour?

A-4520. This industry, as I understand it, depends on *badlis*?—You do require to engage a few substitutes when the working people fall ill.

A-4521. I find that you also require to employ them when people are absent, and this works out at about 10 per cent. of the staff?—That is what the Tariff Board recommended. That point was considered by the Millowners' Association and in their statement placed before the Fawcett Committee, I think, they stated that they were not in a position to accept that recommendation.

A-4522. Has it been tried by any one mill?—The practice was in existence in a few mills in Bombay, but I do not know whether it is still in existence.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Only on the spinning side.

A-4523. *Mr. Cliff*: Can you tell us what was the result of that?—I do not know.

A-4524. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: One of the causes for the success of the 1928 strike, I take it, was your ability to get funds from abroad and from this country?—We got some funds which enabled us to continue the strike.

A-4525. Otherwise the strike might have probably failed earlier?—Just possible.

A-4526. Will the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act militate against your getting funds?—Yes.

A-4527. What is your opinion about those provisions of the Trade Disputes Act?—They ought to go.

A-4528. With regard to a Labour Commissioner, would you advise the appointment of a Minister of Labour for Bombay?—Yes, I would.

A-4529. Would you recommend the lowering of the franchise in order to enable the working classes to exercise their right?—Yes, I do.

A-4530. A question was asked with regard to the Tariff Board's remarks that the cost of labour was high in Bombay. What they were referring to was that it was higher than in up-country. Did they recommend any reduction in the wages?—No, they did not.

A-4531. They considered the question of the reduction in wages and they said that they would not recommend it. They recommended very many other things, and suggested that the millowners should undertake to put their own house in order. Has that been done?—So far as the recommendation about improvement in the conditions of workers was concerned I should like to refer you to the millowners' statement submitted to the Fawcett Committee and from that statement you will find that there are a large number of recommendations which the millowners declined to carry out.

A-4532. A question was put to you by Mr. Cliff about indebtedness. When you prepare the note would you kindly consider the question also of the manner in which the debt could be funded?—Yes.

A-4533. In your memorandum you speak of unemployment. From the statement appended therein I find that between the years 1927-28, if the men were in Bombay, for every four employed one was unemployed?—Yes.

A-4534. You have no other figures of unemployment?—No.

A-4535. You think that matter ought to be tackled?—Certainly.

A-4536. With regard to works councils, I suppose one of the reasons why you are in favour of having a compulsory system of setting up works councils on the German basis is that your grievance regarding dismissals is very serious and therefore you want to set up a machinery in order to deal with questions of dismissals?—Yes.

A-4537. In regard to the question of grievance which Sir Alexander was referring to, is it your grievance that the man who accuses is also the judge?—That is what it amounts to practically.

A-4538. You would recommend some impartial machinery for settlement of day to day grievances?—Yes.

A-4539. With regard to the playing off system, I understand] the Fawcett Committee recommended limiting the period to two days. Are you in agreement with limiting the period?—We are not in favour of this rule about playing off being incorporated in the rules.

A-4540. What would you suggest?—We told before the Fawcett Committee that this playing off existed in Lancashire and probably in other countries also where the textile industry exists.

A-4541. You are in favour of unemployment insurance?—Yes.

A-4542. You said something about the firing that took place in 1928. Is it your opinion, having been intimately in touch with the situation then, that the firing that took place was really the main cause of the general strike and of its prolongation?—Yes, it was the chief cause.

A-4543. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I think you said that you were not in India at the time?—The firing took place in April and I left for Europe early in May.

A-4544. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Did an investigation take place with regard to that firing?—I do not think my investigation took place.

A-4545. You have considered the matter yourself; what is your conclusion regarding the firing; was it justifiable?—I do not think it was justifiable.

A-4546. Would you recommend that in all such cases where firing is resorted to a judicial inquiry should take place?—Yes.

A-4547. *Colonel Russell*: In your memorandum you say: "The physique of the textile workers is extremely poor." Is that due to the fact that they cannot obtain milk and ghee?—It may be due to several causes, for instance, climate, long working hours, no proper provision for the utilization of workers' spare time, poor food, housing and so on.

A-4548. You also say: "The average of 99 lbs. for all mill operatives is below the minimum weight for police recruits." Is it not the case in all countries in the world that the average weight of the policeman is usually higher than that of the average general population?—I do not know.

A-4549. Then you say: "After an average of 8 months' continuous work in the mills there was an average decrease of 36 lbs. in weight." Do you think that was a very serious loss?—There was some loss at any rate.

A-4550. But 36 of a lb. is practically nothing?—If the man would continue to work after 8 months perhaps he might still go down.

A-4551. You have no figures to prove that?—That is a quotation taken from a book.

A-4552. Miss Power was asking you about the sex ratio. I am going to put you a straight question. Do you know whether the incidence of venereal disease among the mill industrial workers in Bombay is higher than the general population?—I do not know.

A-4553. Do you know whether that has been made the subject of study by any one?—I think there is the Vigilance Association in Bombay.

A-4554. You do not know whether they have produced any figures?—No.

A-4555. In your memorandum you say that there are only ten nurses who are qualified midwives for the whole of Bombay. Is that the case?—I have taken that from the Municipal Commissioner's report.

A-4556. The Municipality only maintains ten qualified midwives?—Yes; I have copied it from the report for 1927-28.

A-4557. But I take it you think that that is an extremely small number?—If the number is correct, it is extremely small.

A-4558. *Mr. Lullji*: Do you think that the Girni Kamgar Union have got a larger number of men on their roll than you have?—I do not think so; after the strike, the union membership has gone down.

A-4559. You will agree that we want a large sum of money for the development of our textile industry?—Yes.

A-4560. In this industry there are 50,000 shareholders and there are 1,50,000 workers. Should we not look to the interests of the shareholders also so that this industry can develop and we can raise money?—You may do whatever you like provided you look to the interests of the workers as well.

A-4561. Would you not look to the interests [of both, because, after all, the 50,000 shareholders are also human beings?—So are the workers.

A-4562. Would you not agree to some scheme for the future which would give the shareholders a fair return?—But I hope you will agree to a fair return being given to the workers as well.

A-4563. Certainly I do, but will you co-operate in producing a fair return for the shareholders?—Provided you are prepared to give a fair deal to the workers.

A-4564. Do you know that during the last strike the shareholders sent for the leaders of the union and requested them to come to some terms with them?—I do not know.

A-4565. I can tell you that I was one of those who did so ; but your Union were unfortunately unable to manage the people of the Girni Kamgar Union ?—It may be ; I do not know.

A-4566. *Mr. Asavle* : Miss Power has asked you about boarders. Do you know that these boarders occupy separate rooms ?—I think so ; they go there just for the purpose of taking their food and then they live in separate rooms. It is so particularly in Kurla.

A-4567. Complaints as to the housing conditions have been made to the Municipality and in the press ?—Yes.

A-4568. It is not a new complaint. In answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that agriculture is over-crowded. Do you know that in Ratnagiri the people have not sufficient lands to cultivate ?—I do not know.

A-4569. You said with regard to the depression of the industry that there is competition of other countries ; but are there no other causes for the depression ?—There must be many other causes.

A-4570. What are the other causes ?—I think the whole question was dealt with by the Tariff Board very thoroughly.

A-4571. Do you not think there is more scope for retrenchment in other departments than wages ?—That is what we have been saying.

A-4572. With regard to efficiency, do you not think the workers would work better if they were contented ?—Yes, that is clear.

A-4573. Do you intend to restrict unemployment relief to those who have been thrown out of employment through the introduction of the efficiency system ?—I have not said that. I have said that work or maintenance should be the guiding principle, referring to the textile industry in Bombay.

A-4574. *Mrs. Wagh* : Do you think the existence of liquor shops in the vicinity of the mills tends to spread the drink habit amongst the workers ?—(Mr. Rajab) : Of course it does.

A-4575. Have you made any representations to the Government with regard to that ?—Yes.

A-4576. With what result ?—We have made representations in connection with several liquor shops of the mill area, and in all cases we have got the reply that Government is unable to meet the demand of the workers.

A-4577. *The Chairman* : Am I to take it that you are all in favour of closing the liquor shops ?—Of course, completely.

A-4578. *Mrs. Wagh* : What steps is the Union taking to make the provisions of the Maternity Act known to the workers ?—We have issued handbills.

A-4579. *Miss Cama* : Can you say if the women in the winding and reeling departments are satisfied with the present hours of work ?—No, they are not satisfied.

A-4580. Do they want the hours increased or decreased ?—Decreased.

A-4581. Are you quite sure of that ?—Yes.

A-4582. Because some of the women were consulted and they said they were quite satisfied with the hours of work at present ; they do not work 10 hours at present ; they come in when they like, about 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning ?—There are some mills where the employers force them to come and work for 10 hours, and there are mills in which they are allowed to come when they like and go away when they like.

A-4583. Are there mills which force the women to come at 7 in the morning ?—Yes, during this last year the millowners are forcing them to work 10 hours.

A-4584. *Mr. Clow* : Women ?—All the employees.

A-4585. In how many mills ?—This system exists in nearly a dozen mills now.

A-4586. *Miss Cama* : Is it not a fact that the women object to shorter hours because they cannot make as much money if their hours are lessened ?—If their hours are shortened, they must be paid more ; otherwise they would always object. (Mr. Bakhale) : The solution is very simple ; if you approach these women who are working less than 10 hours a day and ask them whether they are willing to work 10 hours and get more wages, and they reply in the affirmative, that would be a good test of whether they want short or long hours.

A-4587. You said this morning in reply to Colonel Russell that you would employ a full-time doctor. For how many hours should he work ?—10 hours a day.

A-4588. What do you think he should be paid?—That is not for me to consider.

A-4589. Do you know whether the women prefer reeling by hand or by power?—(Mr. Rajab) : Both systems are in use ; they prefer power.

A-4590. I am told they prefer it by hand?—No.

Mr. Asavle : You must have asked in the presence of the *naikin* ?

Miss Cama : No.

A-4591. *Miss Power* : The Bombay Millowners' Association in their memorandum refer to the extent of the remittances sent back to the villages by the mill workers as being an indication that there is a certain amount of prosperity among the workers. I want to know whether the amount of remittances sent back has any relation to the amount of surplus money in the possession of the workers. Is it possible to send remittances to the villages and still be in debt?—(Mr. Bakhale) : Yes, it is possible.

A-4592. Is the extent of the remittances any fair criterion of the prosperity of the workers?—Certainly not. For instance, Dr. Mann in his book says that the financial condition of the workers by their migration to Bombay has not at all improved. The financial gain is very little, though the burden on the land is slightly decreased.

A-4593. Does the worker ever actually borrow money from a money-lender in order to send remittances home to his village?—It is just possible.

A-4594. *The Chairman* : I understand he is more or less under a promise to remit to his family who are left at home?—As soon as he gets wages I think he remits to the family, and if he is in need of more money he may be borrowing.

A-4595. *Miss Power* : I want to ascertain whether the extent of remittances bears any relation to the prosperity of the worker. You say it does not bear any relation. In your Annual Report you refer to the withholding of wages, and you say "the pernicious and unjust practice of withholding the wages of the workers, which is common to almost all the Bombay mills, is still widely prevalent." What is meant by that?—If a workman remains absent on a pay day and goes to the mill after some time, he is not paid immediately ; he is paid on the next pay day or on some such date as may be fixed by an individual mill. Then if a worker falls ill, goes to the village and takes some time to get well again, if he comes back afterwards, he is told that he has gone without giving notice and his wages are forfeited.

A-4596. When he is taken on by the mill, is he given to understand that there is any contract of service which makes it necessary for him to give so many days or weeks notice?—I do not think there is any contract as such, but the millowners say that the rules that are generally put up on the mill premises are in the nature of a contract, and one of these rules provides generally that a month's notice is necessary before leaving the service.

A-4597. *Mr. Joshi* : The Millowners' Association in their memorandum have made certain suggestions as to amendments of the Trade Unions Act ; I want to know your views on some of their suggestions. They say : "That picketing at or near a workman's houses should be made illegal." What do you think of that?—(Mr. Bakhale) : I am against it.

A-4598. They suggest : "That no person who has been found guilty of and has undergone imprisonment for an offence involving moral turpitude should be permitted to be on the executive of the union." Does that apply to any officer of the Millowners's Association?—Not that I am aware of.

A-4599. They also suggest : "That minutes of proceedings of all meetings of the Managing Committee, or any other Committee with executive powers, should be kept, and should be available for inspection by the Registrar." Are you in favour of that?—No, I am not.

A-4600. "That it should be possible for the Registrar to call for books of account of a union at any time for scrutiny." Are you in favour of that?—No.

A-4601. "That the grounds mentioned in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, for declaring an association to be illegal should entitle the Registrar to cancel registration of a union." Do you agree with that?—No.

A-4602. "That where it is clearly established that a union has brought about a strike without a genuine trade dispute, as contemplated by the Act, action may be taken against the union for cancellation of its registration." Are you in favour of that?—No.

A-4603. You have said that you are in favour of the efficiency of the workers being increased ; I take it that if the workers increase their efficiency you expect that that efficiency shall be fully paid for?—Certainly.

A-4604. With regard to wages, when times were prosperous in the past, did the mill-owners give increased wages without a strike?—In most cases there was a strike first and an increase of wages afterwards.

- A-4605. *Mr. Clow* : What are the actual hours of work in the mills ?—10 hours a day.
- A-4606. No, the actual hours of work ?—I take that as the actual.
- A-4607. When we go to the mills we see workers eating their meals, smoking, etc., outside the recognized intervals ?—Because there is no provision for them to take their morning meals.
- A-4608. Therefore that comes off the time ; the actual hours cannot correspond with the nominal hours ?—Yes, it is possible.
- A-4609. *The Chairman* : How many hours is the weaver in effect between his two looms ?—(Mr. Rajab) : The weaver generally works between 9 and 9½ hours.
- A-4610. *Mr. Clow* : Are you in favour of having two half-hour intervals instead of an hour's interval ?—(Mr. Bakhale) : No, I want a midday interval of a full hour ; I do not want to divide that.
- A-4611. Would you be in favour of having another half-hour's interval and working for half an hour extra at the end of the day ?—Personally I am in favour of another half an hour's interval so long as the working hours continue to be 10.
- A-4612. Do you consider that the present limits of hours laid down in the Factories Act are suitable ?—No, I should like the hours to be reduced. I am in favour of 8 hours a day. I am going to deal with that in my second memorandum.
- A-4613. Do you consider that labour legislation should be enacted by the Provincial Legislatures or by the Central Legislature ?—By the Central Legislature.
- A-4614. Why ?—I will deal with that later.
- A-4615. You say in your memorandum that the general impression that labour is migratory is not correct and that the bulk of the labour is actually permanent ?—Yes.
- A-4616. If that is so, how do you account for the fact that there are two men for every woman in Bombay ? You do not mean that the men are settled here with their families ?—No.
- A-4617. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In the introduction to your memorandum you say : "The Union has not endeavoured to go into the financial aspects of the many remedial measures which it has either supported or proposed in its memorandum." Do you not think finance is the crux of the question ?—Yes, it is.
- A-4618. Do you think it is possible to organize the whole of the textile labour effectively in order to create an organization which would meet the employers on a footing of equality, putting their heads together in the interests of the industry which means in the interests of the employers as well as the employees ?—It is a question of time. It is impossible to organize the whole of the textile labour.
- A-4619. Is it a fact that the majority of the workers in Bombay join a union the leaders of which make extravagant promises ?—I do not think so ; that is not so far as our Union is concerned.
- A-4620. I am not talking of your Union ; as the Chairman has pointed out, your membership is very small. I am speaking of the success of the Girni Kamgar Union ; do you think it was due to the fact that they made extravagant promises to labour ?—Yes, that may be.
- A-4621. If that is so would it be possible to organize labour on sound trade union principles so that the industry may prosper ?—If you refer to cent per cent. organization, that is difficult. Even in Lancashire you have not got cent per cent. organization.
- A-4622. I am not talking of that, but an overwhelming majority forming one union. If that were done, the union would acquire tremendous strength ?—I do not think it is impossible. We ourselves increased our membership to 10,000 but then came these strikes and other difficulties.
- A-4623. *Mr. Clow* : Does not a strike tend to increase the membership of the union ?—Some strikes increase membership and others do not.
- A-4624. *The Chairman* : I think you said that provided the 10 hours legal day is to continue you would prefer an additional break of half an hour in the morning, even if it involved staying half an hour longer to complete the 10 hours of actual work ?—No, I am not in favour of that. I meant that then automatically the working hours would be reduced to 9½.
- A-4625. I am speaking of the hours in which the machinery is running ; perhaps that is the best way to put it ? The machinery runs for 10 hours a day ?—I am not in favour of that half hour recess provided the machinery is to be kept running for the full 10 hours.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING
BOMBAY

Wednesday, 27th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

<p>Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.</p>	}	<p>Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
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<p>Mr. HOOSEINBHROY A. LALLJEE, M.L.C. Mr. R. S. ASAYLE, M.L.C.</p>	}	<p><i>Assistant Commissioners.</i></p>
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<p>Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. Mrs. K. WAGH</p>	}	<p><i>Lady Assessors.</i></p>
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<p>Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DEBDIN.</p>	}	<p><i>Joint Secretaries.</i></p>
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Dr. M. I. BALFOUR and Dr. SHAKUNTALA K. TALPODE
of the Haffkine Institute, Bombay.

A-4626. *The Chairman* : Would you tell the Commission your experience in regard to women industrial workers in Bombay ?—(Dr. Balfour) My experience has been almost entirely with regard to the maternity conditions. I wished to compare the maternity conditions of women mill-workers with those of other classes of women, and Mrs. Talpode and I kept up the examination of both for more than three years. We were only able to get the women in small numbers at the Wadia Maternity Hospital. We had altogether about 570 cases of labour, and the general conclusions we came to were that the women mill-workers did not have so much disease during pregnancy as women of other classes who were non-workers, but that they suffered a great deal from still-birth and that their babies were smaller than the babies of other classes of women; and found that to be more the case with women who went on working till almost the time; if they gave up work before the end of the seventh month they were better as regards still-birth and as regards infant weight-rate. We also found that the women had an extraordinarily poor diet; their food was extraordinarily poor, especially as regards fat and protein. We found that we did not have an opportunity to make a large enough investigation; a much larger investigation ought to be made in order to give a really dependable information about the conditions of these women and the way in which maternity benefits ought to be applied.

A-4627. You had with you in that investigation Dr. Talpode who is now with you ?—Yes.

A-4628. Dr. Talpode is an M.B. & B.S.; of what University ?—(Dr. Talpode) Bombay University.

A-4629. In one of your papers you refer to the fact that in 13 out of 93 mills in Bombay there are crèches established by the millowners of varying qualities, some very good, some moderate and some rather indifferent. Is it your view that provision ought to be made in the Factory Act that where women are employed there should be crèches in every mill ?—(Dr. Balfour) Yes; certainly.

A-4630. Your experience has been that where crèches have been established they have been of great benefit to the women ?—Yes; of great benefit to the children especially.

A-4631. With regard to the Maternity Benefit Act enacted in the Bombay Presidency, I notice that you suggest that the payment should be made to the expectant mother and it should not be delayed till after the birth has taken place?—Yes. I think it is during the last two months that the women really need better diet.

A-4632. Have you any fear that the Maternity Benefit Act is going to be adverse to the employment of women?—I should not think so—not from what I have heard.

A-4633. You think that the expense to the employers is not so large as to form a handicap to the employment of women?—I should think not; it only means an additional Rs. 2 a month to each woman who has a baby.

A-4634. That is in addition to the wages they have been earning?—Yes.

A-4635. Therefore, do you think it is to the interest of the employers as well as that of the women to make this provision?—Yes.

A-4636. *Miss Power*: We are frequently told that the factory workers are ignorant of the conditions of their service. Have any arrangements been made to acquaint the women of this Presidency with this new piece of legislation, apart from the actual posting of notices in the factories?—I do not know that any effort has been made. Of course where there are welfare workers and social workers they tell them. But so far as I know, other arrangements have not been made.

A-4637. There has been no special propaganda?—Not that I know of.

A-4638. The level of the literacy of women is notoriously lower than that of the men. What percentage of women in the factories are likely to be able to read the notice relating to maternity benefit for women in the factories?—Practically none at all. I could not say personally, but I imagine that none can.

A-4639. It is too early yet since the passing of the Act to have any statistics. But have you any idea yourself what percentage of women who could claim maternity benefits are likely to do so?—No. I can only say from our investigation that we found that nearly half of the women gave up work before the end of the seventh month; so, they would not be able to claim the benefit. That was about the same as the figure obtained by the Labour Office when they made the enquiry.

A-4640. Do you think the women would stay on later than seven months if they were told what they were entitled to under the Act?—Yes; I should think some of them would.

A-4641. Have any of the social workers' societies suggested any form of propaganda among the women employees to acquaint them with the Act?—I have not heard of it if they had. They may have done so.

A-4642. The Bombay Christian Council in their memorandum have suggested that instead of a fixed sum payable, the women should have a certain percentage of their earnings, in view of the fact that the amount given now was actually higher than the amount normally earned by the women in one of the biggest industrial towns in this Presidency thus endangering their employment. I imagine the town referred to would be Sholapur, although they do not actually say so. Do you think it is a practicable proposition that the women should have a varying sum as maternity benefit according to their earnings?—It depends upon how the money is to be used. If you gave cash benefit that might be unfair, because in India the cost of living is lower in a place like Sholapur than in Bombay. But if you are going to give partly in kind and partly in cash, the cost would be more or less the same in any town.

A-4643. I wanted to go on to that question of payment in kind which you also suggest in your memorandum. You say it is likely that "the benefit will be spent in paying debts, buying ornaments or even by the husband in gambling and drink." I suppose you realize as well as I do, that similar arguments had been brought forward in England in respect of every form of monetary benefit payable as a form of insurance to women, but that the majority were invariably of opinion that it would have an infinitely greater educative value if the workers were paid in cash rather than in kind. Do you suggest that there is anything different in the social circumstances of the Indian workers to alter that majority opinion?—Yes. I think the conditions are different in India, because the standard of education is lower and there is far less medical and public health knowledge. In England most of the working class women understand a great deal about that, owing to the many maternity and child welfare centres giving instruction to mothers. In this country there is little of that kind going on; very little is being done to educate people in that way and women of the class of mill-workers have very little knowledge indeed in matters of that kind.

A-4644. Looking at it from the practical point of view, how would you administer an Act in which benefits are payable in kind?—I think the very best plan would be to have

a central fund, and out of that to pay small maternity homes of trained nurses to attend women, to have centres where the women would go before delivery to report their pregnancy, where they would get advice and instruction, where they would be given at cost price the simple things necessary for their confinements. They would be delivered, in the maternity homes or if they preferred they would be delivered in their own homes, and they would have a little money to provide for necessaries. They would need to have about half the benefit in cash in order that they might provide themselves with what was necessary at the time of confinement, and they might have a month's rest afterwards.

A-4645. Did you or Dr. Talpode or any other person talk to these women and ever ask them what their views were in the matter?—(Dr. Balfour) No. (Dr. Talpode) No.

A-4646. We are told that there are a certain number of defects in the Act. Are there any body of social workers who have decided to make a scientific investigation of this Act in the first two years in which it will be in operation so that they can put forward concrete suggestions for its improvement later on?—No organized body has proposed to do that. I made the suggestion myself, and I have spoken about that to various people and suggested that this thing should be done now—to watch the Act very carefully for a couple of years, to watch the conditions of the women, the maternity conditions and the conditions of the babies and see what the effect of the Act really is. The good thing about the Maternity Benefit Act is that it makes it necessary for these women to report their pregnancy, and therefore instead of having only 100 or 150 cases a year, as we have been having at the Wadia Hospital, we would now have 2,900 a year if they all avail themselves of the maternity benefit.

A-4647. Your scheme involves additional money; does it not?—Yes.

A-4648. What I wanted to know was whether anybody is going to make an investigation of this Act as a piece of social service without involving additional expense?—It seems to me a very valuable investigation which could be done if anybody would be prepared to do it. It has not been done as social service in any country; it would mean having a number of workers; I suppose they have not done it in England.

A-4649. It is a small Act confined to a small area?—Yes. It would involve the employment of doctors if it is to be of any use. It would involve the employment of health visitors. If the thing is to be done thoroughly it needs a certain number of workers.

A-4650. I was thinking really of an investigation which would show you how extensively the women are making use of the Act?—At the present time a muster roll is given kept in all the mills, which gives the number of women who avail themselves of the Act. So that, that would be published annually I suppose.

A-4651. That means the number of women who actually claim but not the number of women who are entitled to claim maternity benefits?—The number of women who have claimed.

A-4652. In your memorandum you emphasize the necessity of providing light work for expectant mothers during the later months of pregnancy which women could do without standing. Would you suggest a clause in the Factory Act calling for the compulsory supply by the employers of a certain number of seats in proportion to the number of women employed?—I think one would have to know about the details of factory work. I believe it is possible to give such light work—I believe, for instance, picking of cotton would be quite good—but I could not say whether it is possible to provide that work for all the women who may be in that condition.

A-4653. Do you think in the cotton industry there is anything that women can do when they are really sitting down except waste picking?—No.

A-4654. They cannot do reeling, spinning or weaving when seated?—No.

A-4655. *The Chairman*: Do Indian women have seats?—They sit on the ground. (Dr. Talpode): Most of the women do not work after seven months. Even sitting they feel exhausted.

A-4656. *Miss Power*: Do you think that it would be an improvement to have a clause in the Act providing for compulsory provision of seats?—(Dr. Talpode). Even with seats, winding and spinning are difficult.

A-4657. You think they should do that work sitting?—They should have some other work.

A-4658. You cannot invent work in the factory for people if it does not exist, so that women could work when sitting?—There must be some kind of work like picking of cotton.

A-4659. Have you any suggestions for the improvement of clauses in the Factory Act affecting women and children ?—(Dr. Balfour) No other suggestion. (Dr. Talpode) No.

A-4660. Would you extend the Act so as to cover persons employed in places that are not at present regulated ?—(Dr. Balfour) No ; I do not think I would.

A-4661. You would not be in favour of its extension to those non-regulated places which employ considerable number of people ?—Would it be possible to supervise it, to inspect such places ?

A-4662. That is a separate issue. If you enlarge the Act, it appears to me you will have to enlarge the inspecting staff. Do you think the conditions of work in the non-regulated places are such as to necessitate the extension of the Act to cover those places ?—I do not know enough about that to give an opinion.

A-4663. Would you be in favour of employing at least one woman industrial inspector in each province ?—Yes, I certainly would.

A-4664. *Dr. Cama* : If the winders and weavers were asked to do waste-picking, do you think they would change and go to the waste-picking department ?—I do not know whether they would or not, but of course if they were sent there by the employers they would have to go.

A-4665. They may take leave ?—They may.

A-4666. They would not then get their maternity benefit ?—No ; I suppose not.

A-4667. In your memorandum you have dealt with the conditions of mill-workers during the strike. Did you find any signs of distress amongst the women ?—(Dr. Talpode). There was not much distress, but their condition was very poor during that time.

A-4668. But there were no cases of starvation ?—They had to sell off their pots, utensils and other necessary things in order to provide themselves with food, and in spite of that they had not sufficient to eat.

A-4669. Do you know if any mills set apart special rooms among their *chawls*, which can be used by women for confinement, the women would take advantage of them ?—If it was properly done they would.

A-4670. I am told that they do not take advantage of those rooms ; I am told that they have objection to go to those special places and they prefer their own homes. Have you come across cases of that kind ?—I have not.

A-4671. Do you think that the hours are too long for the winders and reelers ?—I do think so.

A-4672. Would you limit it to 8½ hours ?—I would limit it to eight hours.

A-4673. Would you not give them the option of working ten hours if they liked ?—Yes.

A-4674. Dr. Balfour, you have suggested an enquiry into the working of the Maternity Benefit Act. Do you think the factory owners would pay the cost of it considering that they have already to pay the maternity benefit ?—(Dr. Balfour) : No ; I do not think that the owners should be expected to pay the cost of the scheme. I know that it is a very difficult question. I would say that Government ought to pay for it. But I would like to make a suggestion, that it might be looked upon as an all-India matter, because the question of maternity benefits is likely to arise in other provinces and the same difficulties will be found. Although Bombay is the first one to have taken up the question of maternity benefits, I would suggest that the different provinces should be asked to contribute to the scheme for making a full investigation of the question, and in that way the expense would be negligible to the different provinces and it would stop expenditure on their part in having similar schemes.

A-4675. You suggest the employment of one Doctor, and 3 health visitors, who would finance it ?—That was what I was talking about. I suggested that the different provincial Governments might combine to finance it.

A-4676. Would it be possible for one doctor to go round all the mills and do the work satisfactorily ?—My idea was that she would have a room in different parts of the mill area, that the women who wanted to claim the benefits would go to her. As there would be only 2,900 cases, that would not mean very many in one day. And the health visitors would go round the mills and *chawls*, visiting the women and especially getting hold of those who did not claim the maternity benefit. So that, we would have three sets of statistics : one relating to those mill workers who claim maternity benefits, one relating to those who gave up work too soon to claim maternity benefits and one relating to the wives of the male mill workers not working in the mills but who were otherwise under the same conditions.

A-4677. *Mrs. Wagh*: In your memorandum you say that the year 1927-28 was an "ordinary typical" year in the mill industry. This conflicts with what has been stated in the Bombay Government's memorandum which goes to show that it was not a typical year. How do you explain your statement?—I was speaking from the point of view of the women workers. Probably what you refer to refers to the industry itself. I was speaking of the lives of the women who went through their ordinary work, working eight or nine hours a day. There was no strike.

A-4678. The Bombay Government's memorandum says that there were nine strikes?—The general strike began in Bombay about the end of April 1928. I am speaking of the year 1927-28. I suppose the strike that occurred in April 1928 would be classed under the year 1928-29. My statement is correct; I am sure as regards that.

A-4679. In your memorandum you say that wages are Rs. 30 per month, and on that basis each person would get two annas per day for food. Are you aware of the fact that the family earnings, as ascertained by the Labour Office, come to Rs. 52 per month, in which case the amount available for expenditure on food would be much more than two annas?—But a great many of the women that we had to deal with in our enquiry were getting wages of about Rs. 30. Taking that as the basis, and also the average number in the family, the average spent on food comes to about two annas.

A-4680. But they must have their families; did you enquire what their total family income was?—Yes; we did; we included the husband's income.

A-4681. Do you not think that the combined income of the family comes to more than Rs. 30?—No. In many cases it did not come to more than that.

A-4682. How many wage-earners are there in the family?—The average family is supposed to be under 4.

A-4683. It can be taken as 4.2; and how many wage earners are there?—That depends upon whether the wife is working and the husband is working.

A-4684. You state in your memorandum that the maternal death-rate among the non-industrial classes comes to 16 per thousand, but that the maternal death-rate among the mill-working classes comes to only 1.7 per thousand. How do you account for this difference?—That is a very big question to go into.

A-4685. You have given us a harrowing picture of the conditions under which the working classes live; in view of that I would like you to explain this difference?—As I have explained in the text of the paper, I think it is largely because women of the industrial classes live a simpler life; they have much more fresh air, much more exercise, they have less food and so less tendency to toxæmia in pregnancy and to anaemia. In the upper classes, the classes that generally come to the Cama Hospital which I quoted from, there are a great many Muhammadan women who live in purdah; they live secluded lives with no fresh air and very little sunlight and have a great deal more food for which owing to their habits they have absolutely no use. That accounts very largely for the extraordinary difference in the maternity conditions.

A-4686. *Col. Russell*: I have myself made an investigation into this. In fourteen municipalities we took figures of maternity mortality and so on and found the rate to be 23 per thousand, just in the ordinary population, having the conditions which you say these women workers have. How do you compare the rate which you have put, 1.7, with the one which we have found of 23, which applies to the general population?—You mean you have applied this to the industrial population? As I say in my paper, it is impossible to be dogmatic with 500 cases. My figures are not large enough; that is why I want to have a big investigation.

A-4687. You would not consider that 1.7 was a definitely proved figure?—Certainly not; but it so happened that in 570 cases there was only one death. That is looked upon as an extraordinarily favourable result.

A-4688. *Mrs. Wagh*: A few months ago you sought my assistance for the purpose of taking blood of a few factory women for the purpose of making a bacteriological examination. What was the result of that investigation?—Mrs. Talpode examined 20 women of the mill working class. She made a careful examination of their diet, finding exactly what they were in the habit of eating for a number of consecutive days and she also made a full investigation of their blood. Of course 20 cases is not a great deal to go upon; still it was very intensive work; and we found that the mill working women had on the whole a fairly good diet, about the same as the women of other classes, although it was rather wanting in animal protein. They had an extraordinarily poor diet in fat; the fat they took was nearly half what the women of other classes took. They had a very large carbo-hydrate intake and a large calory intake; that is, they had more food material than the people of other classes, but it was extraordinarily lacking

in fat. Their blood on the whole was poorer than that of the women of other classes. The examination is not completed yet; I mean we are still testing the results and comparing them with those of the other classes. But that is what we may say.

A-4688. *Mr. Joshi*: You are in favour of benefits in kind; but how would you provide for those women who go to villages for confinement?—I think that the benefits should be partly in kind and partly in cash.

A-4690. Even if it is partly in kind, how would you distribute it to those women who go to the villages?—(No reply).

A-4691. You are talking of compulsory examination by a woman doctor. Who would pay for that examination?—I do not want compulsory examination; I want to have a centre where the women would be required to go in order to ask for maternity leave, and the woman doctor would take down their names and ask them a few questions. Then the amount of examination that she makes should be left to herself. I think that if she was a person of the right kind, you would have no difficulty.

A-4692. Then you talk of the benefit depending on the mother having a full examination; it really means that you want to make the examination compulsory. I want to know who should pay?—I would rather make the examination optional. What I mean is that the woman would probably have no objection to be examined. I am sure that about 90 per cent. of the women would be willing to be examined. As regards paying for it, I have already stated that there ought to be a contributory scheme; the different provinces ought to contribute for the first few years to have an enquiry into this question.

A-4693. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What you propose is an ante-natal clinic all over India?—No. That is a secondary question. The preliminary thing is to find out what is the best way to give maternity benefits to Indian women.

A-4694. *Mr. Asavle*: You state in your memorandum that many of these women prefer to be confined in their own *chavals* or to go to their villages for confinement. What are the reasons for their preferring their own *dais* or going to the villages?—I think the people naturally like their own *dais* because they know them and are familiar with them and do not realize that training is necessary. I think it is quite natural that they should like them. I think it is natural too that they should like to go home for confinement.

A-4695. Is it not a fact that they cannot afford to get it done by highly paid lady doctors?—Yes; I know that.

A-4696. In relation to housing, you have quoted Barnes as saying that 36 persons inhabit a single room 12 feet by 15 feet. Do you believe that that statement would be correct?—It is published in a report.

A-4697. What is your opinion; can a man live in five square feet?—Of course you must remember that a good many of the 36 were children, babies no doubt. There were six families, that is to say men, women and children. These six families are described in the report as living in a room divided by bamboo *thatties*; so that it was divided into little apartments each with a little cooking place.

A-4698. *The Chairman*: You are quoting from a report with which we are all familiar; but that is an illustration of an extreme case of overcrowding?—Yes.

A-4699. *Mr. Asavale*: Have you come across any such cases in the course of your inspection?—There were 20 cases Mrs. Talpode visited. There was one case in which 16 people were living in one room, and I think it was 10 feet by 12 feet (Dr. Talpode). There were four families in each corner.

A-4700. Were they all living there, or were they only boarders?—(Dr. Talpode) They were actually living there. We put them the question whether they were all sleeping there; some of them used to sleep outside, but we excluded them. (Dr. Balfour) That case is unusual. There are usually 2, 4, 6 or 8.

A-4701. Do you not think that the employers of such labourers should provide good houses?—(Dr. Balfour) I think somebody should.

A-4702. You say in your memorandum that the average wage of women workers in Bombay cotton mills in the year 1923 was Rs. 17-5-0. Do you think that is a wage on which a woman can live in the city of Bombay?—No; I do not.

A-4703. As regards food, you state that they cannot get good food and you have given what the food of these people should be when they are pregnant. Do you think that they can afford to pay for such food?—I do not think they can afford very much; but even if they can afford it, the food is often not good. For instance milk is very expensive. They get vitamins in their food mostly in milk and *ghee*. Now, a good deal of the milk

and *ghes* they get are devoid of vitamins. It is not only a question of money ; I think the question of the diet of these people is a much more complicated question.

A-4704. You say that the women employed in the winding and reeling departments get up at 5-30 a.m. and do not go to bed till 10-30 p.m. Are they not doing heavy work ?—I think they do hard work.

A-4705. Especially when they have to do household work in addition to their work in the mills ?—Yes, they are doing very hard work. But what I meant to say was that they were not doing very heavy work such as lifting heavy weights and so on. It is very hard for them to work so long and I think a difference should be made between people who have to work at home and those who have not to work at home.

A-4706. In reply to a question from Miss Cama, Dr. Talpode said that these women could work 10 hours continuously. How is it possible for them to work 10 hours ?—(Dr. Talpode) It is quite impossible for women who have household work to do, to work continuously for ten hours.

A-4707. But even for the other women, is it possible for them to work continuously for 10 hours ?—It is possible only in rare cases. Only very few will be able to work for such a long time.

A-4708. *Col. Russell*: In your memorandum you say, "We did not hear much of gynaecological diseases ?"—No.

A-4709. Can you give us an idea of the rate of gynaecological disease ?—We did not make any definite enquiries into the incidence of this disease. Dr. Cama took me to the different dispensaries where there are women doctors and they said that they got only a few cases. There are four dispensaries staffed by women doctors.

A-4710. Would you say that the rate of gynaecological disease is less among the mill workers than among the general population ?—That was the impression I got.

A-4711. In your memorandum you give figures relating to the diet of a healthy woman and a mill worker. Did you work out these figures yourself on the basis of a family budget enquiry, or have you taken it from some other source ?—No, I took them approximately from the Labour Bureau family budgets.

A-4712. Of course I admit that the carbo-hydrate content is excessive in both cases. But do you not think that the percentage there is not quite good ?—It must be remembered that the method in which it was done by the Labour Department did not take into account the fresh food that was ordered day by day. What they did was to visit these families at the beginning of the month and enquire of them what they had ordered from the *bania* and divide that amount by the number of members in the family and the days in the month.

A-4713. Do you not think that quantities of green vegetables and fresh food should have been included ?—They should have been. But you must remember that they were not doing it with regard to the diet. They were trying to find out what the people spent on food. Since then I have made some intensive investigations and the figures for mill workers for fresh food were on an average : 50 grams of protein, 26 grams of fat, 404 grams of carbo-hydrate and 2,100 calories.

A-4714. That is a much better diet ?—Yes, that is much better, but it is extraordinarily poor in fat.

A-4715. I admit that. You say, "There is a great deficiency of protein and fat and that the calories are nearly made up by an excess of carbo-hydrates." Does that statement not apply to the whole population in India ?—Not to the better class population.

A-4716. Take the average agricultural worker. Does not this remark apply to him ?—These are the figures that I got for the women in the Cama hospital.

A-4717. But is not this deficiency of protein and fat common to the agricultural workers as a whole ?—To some extent, but not to such a great extent. The protein is practically the same, but fat is very deficient.

A-4718. You say, "If the wage is Rs. 30, this allows Rs. 15 for food." What happens to the other Rs. 15 ?—According to the Labour Office Report, half the man's wages is spent on food and the other half is spent on such things as clothing, rent and amusements.

A-4719. In your investigations did you find that only 50 per cent. of the income is spent on food among the lowest classes ?—Of course it depends on the size of the family. Where a family is small, perhaps it is not.

A-4720. In your memorandum you give a table of labour cases among industrial mothers. There are some arithmetical errors in your totals. Apart from that, do you think that the samples of cases taken in classes A and B are sufficiently adequate and reliable for the purpose of scientific conclusions?—No, certainly not. I say so in this paper. I concluded this investigation last year, because I wished to draw attention to the need for having a large investigation. But I think that these are significant facts, although they are not sufficient to draw any scientific conclusions.

A-4721. You draw various conclusions from the differences between 1927-28 and 1928-29?—I give them for what they are worth. I say at the end that the figures were too small.

A-4722. With regard to the average infant birth weight there is a difference of 0·06 lbs; one is 5·6 lbs. and the other is 5·66 lbs. in class A?—Yes.

A-4723. Can that difference not be regarded as almost equivalent to the probable errors of these figures?—Yes, it might be.

A-4724. Therefore there is no difference?—What I drew attention to in the report was the far greater number of really fine babies in the one class as compared with the other. I think it is significant. I take the average weight of an Indian baby to be about 6 lbs.

A-4725. Where did you get the figure of 6 lbs.?—From my own observation. I collected a large number in Bombay during the last few years,—many thousands.

A-4726. But that does not correspond with the statement of obstetric experts who put that between 5½ and 6 lbs.?—I think it is about 6 lbs. that is commonly taken. Of course that is full time.

A-4727. Between 5 and 6 lbs. You are talking about maternal complications and referring to still-births. Did you try to estimate the proportion of still-births which are associated with syphilis? That is a common cause of still-birth, is it not?—It is supposed to be a common cause.

A-4728. You do not admit that?—I have not investigated that with regard to the mill-workers. I have done it with a considerable number of non-mill-working cases. We began expecting to find a very high still-birth rate, but we were astonished to find that there was not a high still-birth rate. That investigation is still going on and the results have not been published yet.

A-4729. Have you any figures to show the general rate of venereal disease among the mill-workers in Bombay?—No, not among the mill-workers particularly. We examined the blood of 100 healthy women who had gone to the Wadia Hospital for delivery and found that 15 per cent. of them were positive.

A-4730. That would be syphilis. Did you make any investigation to find out the percentage of infection with gonorrhœa?—No, I know nothing about that.

A-4731. You have no positive information on that point?—No.

A-4732. Do you think that the figure of 14 per cent. is higher or lower than that for the general population?—That was the general population. They were the ordinary women who went to the Wadia hospital for delivery. We only took the healthy women who went there. They were women of the poor classes in Bombay.

A-4733. In your memorandum you say, "Among those who did the housework the incidence of still and premature births was 312 per 1,000 and among those who did not, it was only 125 per 1,000." How many cases in each group did you investigate?—59 of the one and 34 of the other.

A-4734. Here again do you think that that is a sufficient number?—Of course not; they only indicate my view as to how an investigation of this kind could be carried on.

A-4735. You ask the question: is the effect of the work done in the mills injurious to the expectant mother and her unborn child, and arrive at several conclusions from the data you have given. Do you think that the data as a whole are sufficient to warrant the conclusions?—I am giving the facts that bear on that question.

A-4736. But the figures hardly corroborate your statement. That is my point: they are not sufficiently large to corroborate your statements?—No, we certainly want more figures.

A-4737. In another place you differ from the opinion expressed by the Medical Research Council in England as to the nutrition of the mother during pregnancy and so on and conclude that "no doubt they had a reserve of strength." Have you any reason to assume that they had a reserve of strength?—I have the figures given by them. They

were taken for young married people who were temporarily unemployed. The probability is that they had a reserve of strength.

A-4738. You say that "the mill-workers had been living for many years in poverty and on a scanty and insufficient diet." For how many years had the average woman worker in Bombay whose condition you investigated, been working in mills?—I say that the millworker had been living in poverty. So they do whether they are mill-workers or not. I do not say they were mill-workers all the time. They probably came from their villages because they could not make a living there.

A-4739. So that, that is the general level of poverty, not that of the mill-workers particularly?—Yes, that is so.

A-4740. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Dr. Balfour, would you be in favour of a state-aided service which would secure to every woman such assistance as is needed to ensure for her a safe journey through pregnancy, a well-conducted labour with the minimum of danger to herself and her child, careful nursing, post-natal supervision and nourishment?—Yes. It sounds ideal.

A-4741. Would you be in favour of a scheme like that?—Yes.

A-4742. You have pointed out certain defects in the Maternity Benefits Act from your personal experience of the working of the Act?—Yes.

A-4743. But surely you do not want an enquiry into those defects you have pointed out?—No, I want an enquiry into the whole question. The Act has been passed now and the way I look upon it is that we have the opportunity now to get all the information that I have been trying to get on a large scale.

A-4744. What I was particularly referring to was the statement that the provision for the allowances is made after the registration certificates have been shown and that the allowances should be made beforehand in order to be of benefit to women workers?—Yes.

A-4745. You do not want any further enquiry for that?—No.

A-4746. If an amendment of the Act on these lines were to be moved, surely you have sufficient experience of the working of the Act and you do not think that an enquiry is necessary?—No.

A-4747. You do not think that it is necessary for that purpose that the women should be examined by a doctor in order to get the benefit before they go on leave?—It is necessary.

A-4748. You want that the allowances should be given before and not after certificate of birth is produced?—I should give half before and half after.

A-4749. Would you be in favour of a comprehensive Maternity Benefits Act for the whole of India?—Yes, if it were done wisely.

A-4750. *Mr. Ahmed*: Out of 83 mills in Bombay only 13 have crèches?—Yes, that is so.

A-4751. Unless crèches are provided for all the mills, the children of working mothers are liable to be dosed with opium?—Yes.

A-4752. Are you in favour of legislation compelling these mills to provide crèches?—I do not say that there should be legislation. But I would like to see that every mill has a crèche.

A-4753. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you had experience of the trained health workers who have been operating in Bengal in recent years?—Yes.

A-4754. Have you any opinion to express on the type of work that they do?—I think they do very good work. I saw the work being done at Titaghur when I was in Calcutta two or three years ago. I thought it was excellent.

A-4755. If the millowners could be encouraged to extend their activities in that direction, do you think it would be useful?—Yes, I think it would be excellent.

A-4756. Could you get properly trained health workers to carry on the work? Where would you get them trained?—There are schools for training health visitors in Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Nagpur. The only provincial capital of any importance that has not a school is Bombay. So that it is very difficult to get trained health visitors in Bombay. It is a serious loss to the infant welfare work that is going on here.

A-4757. Can you say why Bombay which is forward in other respects, should be backward in this respect of training health visitors?—I know it has often been suggested to them that they should have a school of health visitors in Bombay, but they have never taken it up.

A-4758. With regard to maternity benefits you suggest that payment ought to be in kind and not in cash. Have you in mind the establishment of central dispensaries or clinics instead of individual ones, where the mother and child could go for proper treatment and proper nourishment?—It would be well if it could be extended like that. Of course the scheme I propose is partly that. I proposed that there should be free health visitors, but my scheme was made as economical as possible. If there were more money available there ought to be infant welfare centres too.

A-4759. Do you think that if you talk nicely to the employers they would probably be encouraged to extend their activities in the direction which has proved so successful in Bengal?—Perhaps they might. That would be really much more serviceable than giving a lump sum down to the woman or to the husband to be used as they chose.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Dr. (Miss) J. E. MISTRI, Secretary, Mr. K. J. DUBASH, Dr. C. A. MANSHARDT, Dr. P. N. DARUWALLA, representatives of the Bombay Council of Social Workers.

A-4760. *The Chairman* : Dr. Mistri, I understand from the papers you have been good enough to send to us that your Council of Social Workers has been taking a great interest in the conditions of industrial workers in Bombay?—(Dr. Mistri) That is so.

A-4761. How long has your Council been engaged in this work?—Three years.

A-4762. Can you tell me about the active membership of your Council, how it is constituted, whether it is a co-ordination of other bodies or stands by itself?—It stands by itself. In 1924, when the All-India Social Workers' Conference was held in Bombay it was thought proper to form a body of delegates who were in Bombay at that time, and that was how the Social Workers' Council came into existence.

A-4763. During the last three years to what special purpose has your activity been directed?—To draw people towards doing social work and try to inform members by taking up certain subjects for study and invite prominent social workers to come and speak.

A-4764. I understand it has been an investigating body discussing and investigating social problems rather than doing actual pieces of work. Is that right?—Yes.

A-4765. Dr. Manshardt, I understand you have carried out some special investigations with regard to housing in Bombay?—Yes, there is a committee of which I am a member.

A-4766. How long have your investigations been carried on?—For about five months. But the members of the Committee have been interested in this subject for a good many years.

A-4767. How long have you yourself been in Bombay?—Four years.

A-4768. In your view what is most needed in the matter of housing the industrial population of Bombay?—What is most needed is the most difficult thing to obtain. First of all there must be a cleaning out of the existing houses.

A-4769. Do you want to demolish the existing *chawls*?—We have new *chawls* for the people to live in, called improved *chawls*. But when the old *chawls* are demolished, the people instead of going to improved *chawls* move into the next building. So that the next building gets more tenants, the rents go up, and the density of population in the neighbourhood is not decreased to any appreciable extent. The figures show an increase in the congested area. The only way to solve it is to tear down, because there are not enough torn down yet. It requires a wholesale cleaning out, a drastic step. The other step is propaganda to get people to move into the other *chawls*. I cannot say I favour this step, because the *chawls* are not the type of *chawls* that one could conscientiously recommend. The difficulty from our standpoint is this housing has been provided for labourers in one respect; rooms have been put up, but all the other factors in the situation have been neglected. If we want a contended population, I think we all agree that we must have something more than a room to live in; we must have decent schools, we must have some kind of recreation and transportation facilities for people to go to another section of the city once in a while. Too many of our housing schemes have been simply putting up houses and neglecting all the other factors in the situation. There must be a constructive proposal for the future. Of course it must be a distant future. When we mention housing, every one says: you have *chawls* empty in Bombay and until these *chawls* are filled, there cannot be much enthusiasm about new *chawls*. But putting that aside for a minute, the thing we want to see is not to have the

new *chawls* filled up. We want Government or some authority to say: no more factories in Bombay. Perhaps some kind of commission must be appointed consisting of representatives of Government, Municipality, Millowners, Social workers and such persons responsible for the welfare of the workers. Then some kind of regional planning must be done. We do not in the next fifty years want to see a duplication of the thing we have to-day. We want something constructive being done, so that at least in 50 or 100 years we may find ourselves in a much improved situation.

A-4770. What you are advocating is community planning?—Quite so.

A-4771. *Mr. Clow*: With regard to your last point, has not something been done by the Improvement Trust?—It has, but it has not gone far enough. The Improvement Trust *chawls* that have been occupied have been certainly planned pretty well in relation to the workers but others have been planned simply in relation to the available space. That is only one aspect of the whole situation. What I want to see is that future planning should be not only in relation to the available space but also in relation to factories and in relation to the whole group of population.

A-4772. Have they been demolishing bad *chawls* during the last few years?—They have not been demolishing to any great extent because of the lack of money, I understand.

A-4773. *Mr. Aswals*: Regarding housing, you have stated that the Development *chawls* have been vacant. You have not given the reasons why they are lying vacant; you only say that there is no lighting. Do you think that the *chawls* will be occupied by the working-classes at the rents that you have quoted?—Rent is not the only factor in the situation. I think you will agree that they are charging the same rent for the *chawls* that are occupied as they are charging for the unoccupied ones; but the difference is that the *chawls* that are occupied are near to the works and to the organized social life while the *chawls* that are unoccupied are remote from the works and from the organized social life.

A-4774. May I put it to you that the rents are not the same because the Commission when they were on inspection work the other day found that the rents of private *chawls* were below the rents charged by the Development Department?—I was speaking of the rents of those *chawls* that are occupied being the same as of those that are unoccupied.

A-4775. Is it possible for the mill workers to pay Rs. 8, 9 or 14 as rent?—I cannot say whether it is possible or not; all I can say is that they are paying that amount in certain areas.

A-4776. Dealing with social insurance you say in your memorandum that your "sub-committee is alive to the fact that the earning of money of these bread winners (that is, the workers) is below what we call a living wage." When their earning is below a living wage, will they be able to pay Rs. 9 as rent?—If you ask for my opinion, I say that the rent is too much.

A-4777. What do you mean by a living wage?—Speaking generally, it is a wage that would provide not merely the bare necessities but for some comforts as well.

A-4778. Taking a family to consist of a man, his wife and two children, what do you think should be a living wage?—My opinion on that point will not be valuable.

A-4779. As social workers, have you enquired into the home budget of a family and found out what they require?—People are existing on Rs. 25 and 30. But we do not call that a living wage.

A-4780. *Miss Power*: Dr. Manshardt, you have sent in another memorandum with regard to the activities of the Nagpada Neighbourhood House and in that you refer to the necessity of establishing public employment agencies. You say: "The Nagpada Neighbourhood House in connection with its family service has dealt with several thousand cases of unemployment. It is our conviction that the problem can only be dealt with through a system of public employment agencies." Do you think that a public employment agency would be a success in this town where you have surplus labour unless you get the agreement of the Millowners' Association to obtain their workers through that agency?—I think you require the co-operation of both the Mill-owners and public employment agencies.

A-4781. How would you suggest getting that co-operation?—I think we should approach the responsible groups and try to show them the necessity for such an agency. I believe that if there were some responsible employment agencies there would be less running away of the workers from one mill to another. Because it is very easy now for them to leave one mill and go to another they do so, but if there was some agency connected with workers where workers got themselves registered and if it could handle the employment of men in a group of mills, there would be an improvement in the efficiency, by compelling the man to know that if he left his work one day he could not pick up another job the next day.

A-4782. If in your scheme you pre-suppose the use of the agency by the Millowners' Association why do you want the agency to be under Government's direction? Would you not be content with a voluntary agency, created by the workers' union and the employers?—If the millowners would be ready to undertake that responsibility I would say that would indeed be a good thing. But I was thinking of railways and other agencies as well, besides mills.

A-4783. Can we have your views on what you have outlined to us on the subject of adult education among the workers?—(Dr. Daruwalla) In the memorandum that we have submitted to the Commission suggestions have been made, but dealing with the subject generally it appears that the success of compulsory free education will largely depend upon the awakening that is created among the adults themselves. Let me give you an illustration. If the adults themselves are illiterate and if you compel the children of that illiterate group to go to school, it is impossible for the children to be guided because there is nobody to guide them. Therefore, in the first instance, some consciousness has to be aroused in the adults themselves. In order to bring about such an awakening, adult education is absolutely necessary. Unless and until that awakening is given, and given with a certain amount of organized effort, for some definite time, not spasmodic, I think the effort to introduce free and compulsory education will not bear absolute fruit. We have compulsory education in existence for the last five or six years and the figures given in that respect may be satisfactory according to some, but I think that unless the parents who are mostly ignorant realize the importance and benefits of education, no tangible results can be achieved. That is the reason why I say that adult education must be given as much importance as free and compulsory education.

I would, at the same time, advocate mass education, because more than 90 per cent. of our population are illiterate. Therefore, in the first instance, we have to infuse interest among them. This can be done by means of cinema films, magic-lantern demonstrations on subjects in which they are mostly interested, like manual labour, carpentry, or arts or such other pursuits in which they may be interested. I feel that such a want of awakening is the cause for the backwardness of the people.

So far as the literates are concerned, who have the benefit of going to schools and colleges, more facilities should be given to them. For instance, following the model of English Universities like Cambridge and Oxford, the Universities in India can arrange for extension lectures or vacation courses.

A-4784. *Miss Cama*: If a working-class woman wants milk for her child is it possible to get it free or at a nominal cost?—(Miss Mistri): I think the Infant Welfare Society and the Bombay Municipality supply milk free or at a nominal cost.

A-4785. Are there any maternity homes run by the Municipality?—Yes; there are four in the city.

A-4786. Are they sufficient, or do you think that there ought to be more?—In my paper I have emphasized the necessity for opening more small but well-equipped, well-staffed and up-to-date maternity homes.

A-4787. Who should maintain them?—The Municipality, of course; or probably the Municipality as well as the Government.

A-4788. *Mrs. Wagh*: Dr. Manshardt, is your institution open for all classes or only for any particular section of the community?—(Dr. Manshardt): It is open for all classes of persons who are desirous of joining it.

A-4789. In your pamphlet "Nagpada Neighbourhood House meets new needs" you say that you have given 2,045 letters of employment. Will you please tell us how many of these proved to be successful?—We have no way of knowing that; the only way of knowing is when a man returns back to us, but most of them never come back to tell us whether they were successful or not. The mere fact that most of them did not come to us again shows that a great majority of them must have been successful.

A-4790. Has any work been done by the Neighbourhood House to improve the mode of living of the workers?—We are trying to tackle the problem through our public health service. We have an Infant Welfare Centre, and our nurses visit the homes of these workers very often.

A-4791. Do you think that the workers readily take advantage of the facilities provided for supplying medicines according to the European prescription?—I cannot say definitely, but I think so, because in our work we have a Parsi Lady doctor. On an average about 100 women come to her daily. I think they seem to like the medicine.

A-4792. Do you think that the Worli *chawls* are not sufficiently equipped with sanitary fittings?—They are deficient in sanitary arrangements; there are not enough

water taps and things like that; there is not enough privacy. We would emphasize that very much. They are too much like barracks. We want to see people having more privacy than they are given in these Worli *chawls*.

A-4793. But are they not sufficiently equipped with sanitary arrangements?—No, they are not. There is only one water tap perhaps for scores of people.

A-4794. According to my information, in each flat, having 20 rooms, there are 6 water-closets and four taps, and these are quite adequate according to the regulations of the Municipality, is it not?—I do not think there are four taps in a flat.

A-4795. You have recommended that up-to-date maternity and medical hospitals should be founded so that they can be of immense help to the workers. But who should bear the cost?—I think there are two ways: one way is to start them by voluntary efforts, and the other through the help of the Municipality.

A-4796. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Did you suggest to the Chairman that the Bombay housing problem ought to be tackled from a new angle of view?—Yes.

A-4797. Did you suggest that no more factories should be built in the city?—Yes.

A-4798. Is it not the case that no new cotton mills have been built in the city for some years?—Yes.

A-4799. And is it not the case that the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway Company have been removing their workshops from the city?—Yes.

A-4800. And is it not also the case that the Great Indian Peninsula Railway have been removing their workshops from the city?—Yes.

A-4801. So that this angle of view that you have discovered has already been discovered by other people?—Of course it has been discovered and is being acted upon, but I am afraid that it has not been generally discovered. What I want is that some one should definitely say to everybody that this action should be taken.

A-4802. You have given in your memorandum figures of density of population in Bombay. In view of the fact that the population of the city has increased by 50 per cent. between 1901 and 1921, do you not think that these density figures are comparatively satisfactory?—I do not think so in this respect; most of the mills are in the northern section of the city, while the most congested parts are in wards which are far removed from the mill area.

A-4803. What are those wards?—Particularly B and C.

A-4804. Take the B ward. In 1881 the congestion was 279, in 1891 it was 251; to-day it is only 208 inspite of an increase of 50 per cent. in the working population. Is not that satisfactory and shows that progress has been made?—It is satisfactory in that respect.

A-4805. Take the Improvement Trust which was organized after the plague. You tell us, as a matter of fact, that they have really demolished over 24,000 tenements and provided 21,000 new tenements instead. Speaking on the question of *chawls* you say that 8,559 of the 9,424 rooms in the Improvement Trust *Chawls* are occupied. Then again, referring to the housing facilities provided by the Development Directorate, you say that of the 16,524 rooms, 7,678 have been occupied. Are not these satisfactory? You further say "We must frankly recognize that many people will not leave their old houses." Is not that one of the reasons why the new *chawls* have not been occupied?—Yes.

A-4806. You have given very good reasons why people continue to live in the congested areas. What I want to point out is that there has been a great deal done in Bombay to improve the conditions under which the workmen live?—We would certainly agree to that.

A-4807. *Mr. Lallji*: Do you know the amount spent by Government on *chawls*?—I do not know.

A-4808. Do you know the amount that the Municipality has spent on *chawls*?—No, not the exact figure.

A-4809. Do you know the amount spent by the Improvement Trust on *chawls*?—No, not the exact figure.

A-4810. Do you know that the Improvement Trust has incurred nearly Rs. 16 crores debt?—Yes.

A-4811. Do you still expect that these public bodies should do more?—That is the thing we are up against. We have these *chawls*, and every time we suggest anything more this same point is mentioned. It is not an ideal situation. What we want is that in future such a situation should not arise, and that the matter should be considered in a more statesmanlike manner than perhaps it was considered in the past.

A-4812. Do you know of any city that has spent so many crores of rupees on housing during the last ten years?—The criterion of good housing is not the number of rupees spent but the result achieved by the amount spent.

A-4813. You admit that many of the *chawls* have been occupied and many are lying vacant and the reasons why they are not occupied are given by you in your memorandum. Do you still want public bodies to incur more expenditure before people are ready to occupy those houses which are now lying vacant?—I would personally say, yes, because I do not regard the present *chawls* as satisfactory. I am an idealist, but you can criticise me if you like.

A-4814. Have you studied the Bombay Municipal by-laws?—Yes.

A-4815. Have you found any changes made therein recently?—I cannot say as to that.

A-4816. One of the reasons you have given is that Muhammadans will not live in one locality. Do you believe that Moslems believe in untouchability?—No. But I happen to live in a Mussalman locality and I know very well that the people there will not go into a locality where their friends and neighbours and mosques are not available; they want to go where there is the sort of thing they are accustomed to.

A-4817. But is that not general with the whole population? Is it a religious matter?—It is general.

A-4818. You have given it as a religious reason?—No, it is not religious.

A-4819. *Col. Russell*: In the course of your memorandum you state that the number of still-births is atrociously high. I take it that one of the main causes of still-births is venereal disease, especially syphilis?—(Dr. Mistry) Yes.

A-4820. Can you give us any idea as to the percentage of syphilis which occurs among the workers in Bombay?—I cannot give you a definite statement because I have never tried to get the figure, but I have been connected with hospitals and have been doing a lot of private practice and I have found that a large percentage of women suffer from venereal disease.

A-4821. What do you mean by a large percentage?—If 20 patients come to me a day about 10 would be suffering from venereal disease.

A-4822. Fifty per cent.?—Roughly, Yes.

A-4823. Suffering from syphilis?—Syphilis and gonorrhoea, venereal diseases.

A-4824. Have you any criticisms to make of the Maternity Benefits Act, or any suggestions to make as to its amendment?—Yes, I would suggest that the Act be so amended as not to make it obligatory for women to continue to work until the beginning of the 9th month, but to allow them to leave work when they do not feel fit to carry on.

A-4825. When a woman does not feel fit to carry on she should be allowed to leave work?—Yes.

A-4826. Supposing she does not feel fit to carry on at the fourth month, would you allow her to draw the benefits for five months?—It is a question of her health; what is the good of thinking of the benefits and continuing to spoil her health.

A-4827. But we have got to consider the financial question as well?—It will depend upon the woman; if the woman wishes to leave work let her do so.

A-4828. At whose expense?—I do not know.

A-4829. Are there any defects to which you would like to draw attention?—Yes. It is provided that the whole payment should be made after delivery. I suggest that a part should be given before and a part after delivery so that the woman would benefit by getting more food and other necessities rather than being paid a lump sum which she may use for some other purpose.

A-4830. Can you give us any practical suggestions as to the periods at which it should be given and the proportions in which it should be given?—It is generally in proportion to her pay.

A-4831. That is not what I mean. Supposing you have a lump sum for maternity benefit, how would you divide it and when would you give the different amounts?—I would divide it into three parts; I would give one part a fortnight after she leaves work; then the second a fortnight afterwards; that would be the third or fourth day after delivery; and the rest afterwards.

A-4832. It has been suggested to-day that maternity benefits should be, at least in part, in kind. Do you agree that part of the benefit should be given in kind and not in cash?—I am rather doubtful on that point. I think it may be given in kind because generally the husband takes away the money.

A-4833. But supposing it were laid down that part of this benefit should be given in kind, how would you propose to distribute it?—That is a difficult question; I have not thought about it.

A-4834. But you have obviously thought about it because you said you would agree to give part in kind?—I have only said it may be given. I think the maternity outfit should be supplied, or some arrangement should be made to give her one meal in the day time.

A-4835. In order to distribute part of the maternity benefits in maternity outfits or in articles of diet you would have to have a large distributing staff?—That is so.

A-4836. Would not that constitute a very large financial burden on any scheme?—Yes.

A-4837. I do not want to press you on this, but do you still maintain that it would be of benefit to the women to have a part in kind?—Of course the difficulty you have suggested is present. I did not think about that. Until some definite scheme is prepared, it would be better to give it her in cash.

A-4838. *Miss Power*: The point about payment in kind is that the husband may take the money and dispose of it improperly. Why cannot the husband eat the food equally well. If you have payment in kind, if there is a general contention amongst social workers that the industrial population is underfed, what is there to prevent the husband eating the food as well as spending the money?—There is nothing to prevent the husband doing that.

A-4839. Going back to a practical point it would be very difficult to administer any form of social insurance payable partly in kind, and in view of the fact that, even if you had such an elaborate arrangement, the husband might still eat his share; do you not think it would be advisable to follow the method which has been followed in every other country: pay the money in cash and educate the recipients into the proper use of it?—Yes, if you educate the woman and educate her husband as well.

A-4840. Do you think you really educate a woman in the proper spending of money by spending that money for her? Do you not educate her better by letting her spend it herself but if necessary guiding her in that task?—Not in the present state of her social life; it is not possible for the woman to spend it on herself in spite of the education she may be given.

A-4841. But does not that woman now spend the major part of the income of the whole family and provide for them out of it? She is the national housekeeper anyhow, is she not?—Yes, she is.

A-4842. Why do you then suppose she will not be able to learn in time to spend properly a maternity benefit payable in cash?—The great difficulty in the way is that her husband wants to spend it on himself for luxury, and so on.

A-4843. But remember this is an argument which has been used all over the world with regard to the payment of any form of special benefit to a woman, but it has not subsequently been proved in any other country to have any foundation in fact. Why do you suppose that in India there is something fundamentally worse about the husband which would prevent him from behaving decently towards his wife in this matter?—Because of the illiteracy and backwardness of the working classes.

A-4844. But it does not make him necessarily a worse husband to his wife because he is illiterate?—From my personal experience of nearly 20 years in which I have worked amongst the poorest of the poor, I say it would be very difficult for the woman to utilize it on herself and not on the whole family.

A-4845. *Col. Russell*: I notice that you say that one of the suggested remedies is the establishment of centres for the supply of pure sterilized milk. How would you propose to carry that out?—It has already been carried out by the Bombay Municipality at the welfare centres and crèches.

A-4846. At what cost?—These people get the milk at 5 or 6 annas a seer. They either give it free in deserving cases or charge one anna a seer.

A-4847. Then the general rate payer pays the difference, which is about 80 to 85 per cent.?—Or the Society pays.

A-4848. You also speak of the lack of medical facilities. In what way do you consider these facilities are lacking? I notice that in the Government of Bombay memorandum it is stated that there are only 832 hospital beds in the whole of the city of Bombay. Is that the case?—I think so.

A-4849. Do you consider that the number is sufficient?—It is not sufficient. About five years ago some patients were turned out of the hospitals, and a regular investigation took place into the management of all the hospitals.

A-4850. Yes, I remember that ?—The accommodation is certainly deficient.

A-4851. I suppose that is one of the medical facilities that you meant were defective ?—Yes. But I meant generally with regard to maternity work also.

A-4852. You mentioned maternity facilities as well, but I particularly refer now to general medical facilities ?—There are those women who have to go either to private practitioners or to country *dais*, or midwives, for any treatment because they cannot afford to pay the high fees of the doctors or the hospitals are not near enough.

A-4853. Do you think there ought to be an additional staff of medical inspectors, say, under the Factories Act, or perhaps in connection with the Maternity Benefits Act ?—Yes. I think there ought to be. Unless there are more women medical inspectors I do not know how the present maternity benefit system is to be applied.

A-4854. Would you approve of the proposal that each small group of mills, say two or three mills, should have a full-time medical officer, and perhaps a maternity home ?—A full-time medical officer would be possible, but not a maternity home.

A-4855. Why not ?—I do not suppose the millowners would be prepared to go to that extent.

A-4856. But supposing that were added to what we might term maternity benefits under the Maternity Benefits Act ?—It can be done. The other arrangement that I was thinking of adding was that it should be made obligatory upon the millowner to secure better conditions during child-birth.

A-4857. But how are they going to do that if you have no medical officers and no hospitals ?—There should be a woman medical officer to examine patients and there should be health visitors too. These health visitors can go to patients' homes and confine them if they wish or the patients can go to maternity homes which already exist in the city.

A-4858. Are there sufficient maternity homes in the city ?—There are not sufficient. I have emphasized in my memorandum that there should be more maternity homes.

A-4859. You suggest there should be some legal process to prevent sub-letting and overcrowding. Have you any practical suggestion as to how that could be done ?—(Dr. Manshardt) There already is a rule with certain bodies that only so many persons can occupy each room; but the person in charge of the *chawl* never enforces it; he says it is impossible, he has to keep the goodwill of the tenants and so on. The only way that I can see of enforcing it properly would be to take it out of his hands and put it in the hands of the Health Department.

A-4860. How could the Health Department stop it ?—The only thing I can suggest is either to give a formal notice that the situation must be improved or that the premises must be vacated. It may be a very feeble way of dealing with it, but I do not see any other way.

A-4861. In my opinion it is rather feeble. Have you any other suggestion ?—Nothing else.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Miss I. WINGATE, Industrial Secretary, Young Women's Christian Association, Bombay, and Mr. BRYANT.

A-4862. *The Chairman*: You have come here in support of three memoranda which have been presented to us, one by the Bombay Representative Christian Council, one from the National Christian Council of India, and a third one which is headed: "A Report of the economic status of women workers in Sholapur Mills." The last memorandum I understand was the result of an investigation carried out to enquire into the general status of women in textile mills ?—Yes.

A-4863. In the first of these memoranda I see the National Christian Council recommends with regard to the hours under the Factory Act that there should be a normal 55 hours' week and a 10 hour day, that is, 5½ days working week. Then on the matter of maternity benefits, you appear to think that the fixing of a definite amount of benefit instead of a fixed proportion to the average wages is not a good plan; would you rather have a varying amount based on wages ?—(Miss Wingate) The reason for that statement is that the cost of living and wages vary considerably in the Presidency. The Act is to apply to the whole of the Presidency, and therefore any fixed amount will either be very much less than the wages in the higher paid places or, as it is at present, higher than the rate paid in the lowest paid area.

A-4864. I agree, but do you not think in these matters, in the beginning particularly, the simplicity of a fixed amount is a great advantage ?—The danger felt is that the women will be discharged before they become entitled to receive the benefit. That is the opinion of some one who knows Sholapur intimately and the condition of the women, and I base my opinion on that gentleman's knowledge of Sholapur and on what he felt would happen.

A-4865. One has heard fears in advance of that kind, but have you any evidence at all to show that they have materialized ?—The Act only came into force in July, and there is no evidence yet.

A-4866. There is at present no experience to support that proposition ?—No.

A-4867. *Miss Power* : You say that at Sholapur : "crèches are provided by all the mills ; they vary very much in quality ; they are well patronized, which makes the responsibility for proper management all the greater." Then you supply some interesting statistics which tend to show that of the samples of mill women in Sholapur which you took, 61 per cent. had left their children at home uncared for. You have not anywhere mentioned the question of giving opium to the children ; did you come across that in Sholapur ?—I had not the time to investigate it thoroughly and therefore did not mention it. In a general way the children are given opium.

A-4868. That still prevails ?—Yes.

A-4869. Has it not decreased ?—I could not say.

A-4870. Did you discover why so large a percentage of women did not put their children in the crèches even though every mill supplies some sort of creche, whether it is a good one or a bad one ?—There is still a considerable prejudice among a good many of the women against crèches and a large number of the women in Sholapur, among whom the investigation was carried out, are women belonging to the criminal tribe, some of the most primitive people in India ; they therefore would be the last to take to any new ideas such as crèches.

A-4871. Were any of these crèches left unsupervised ?—No, they all had some one in charge.

A-4872. They all had some sort of supervision ?—Yes.

A-4873. In your memorandum you refer to the discrepancy between the wages of men and women as being greater in the textile mills of Sholapur than in any other textile centre in the Presidency. That is also emphasized by the Sholapur Branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. Is there any reason for the greater discrepancy ; what is the history behind it ?—Speaking generally, I think perhaps the women there are less able to look after their own interests than the people in the other two large centres.

A-4874. Has it anything to do with the employment of criminal tribes ?—I do not think that would account for it because the men of the criminal tribes are also employed so that that would not account for the discrepancy.

A-4875. *The Chairman* : Is it not a fact that the sex ratio is very different in Sholapur than in Bombay ?—Yes, very different.

A-4876. Instead of being two to one, that is to say a thousand men to 500 women, it is nearly equal ?—I should say so. I have not the figure.

A-4877. It is very different from Bombay ?—Yes.

A-4878. There are far more women in proportion ; more of the workers take their wives with them than is the case in Bombay ?—Yes.

A-4879. *Miss Power* : And women are in consequence cheaper ?—Yes, I think that would enter into it.

A-4880. Have you any idea as to what is the female membership of the union at Sholapur ?—I have not the figures ; it is very small.

A-4881. In the memorandum of the Christian Council for Bombay Presidency you stress certain welfare points which have also been raised by the All-India Welfare Conference of the Bombay Women's Council. Is your Association in favour of compulsory welfare orders under the Factory Acts ?—A few, yes.

A-4882. What form of welfare do you think should be made compulsory ?—To my mind it would be advisable to begin with a few orders at first. Because if a large amount of welfare work were made compulsory at once those put in charge would not be trained people or people of any experience and the work would be likely to suffer. There is great value in the voluntary element being retained in the welfare work, and therefore I would only be in favour of the welfare orders providing as a beginning a minimum, such as, for instance, dining sheds. That is only an example.

N. G. Srinivasan Sastri.

A-4883. Do you regard dining sheds as an essential for every mill?—Yes. I know quite well there are Bombay mills in which I do not see how this is possible, but I would say yes.

A-4884. What else—crèches?—Where there are more than a certain number of women workers there should be crèches, and doctores. Where there are more than a certain number of women workers there should be a woman doctor, part-time or full-time, as the need may be.

A-4885. Are you also in favour of the compulsory appointment of trained welfare workers in the larger factories employing 500 and upward?—There again I feel that if it were made compulsory it would mean that a large number of women must be found at once to be put into those positions. There are women who would be suitable for such work and I think they would be forthcoming if they knew that there were such posts available. But they could not be found and trained immediately, so that unless the Act were going to be brought into force at the end of a considerable period I would not be in favour of compulsory welfare supervisors at present. I would rather that it should be a strong recommendation of this Commission that such people should be appointed, which would mean that there would be such workers appointed voluntarily, and then compulsion might be brought in when the value of such work had been proved. Another point is that I think compulsion with regard to welfare work is of very little value unless a certain percentage of the employers are really convinced of the value of it. You have got to have a good percentage of your good employers convinced that it is good. Therefore I would say that a recommendation which would speed up the appointment of such people on a voluntary basis would be best at first.

A-4886. In your memorandum with regard to legislation you refer to bringing work places employing more than 10 persons under the Factory Act, but you do not mention anything about power. Do you mean to imply by that that places where power is installed and where 10 persons or more are employed should come under the Act?—Yes, places where power is employed.

A-4887. What about those places employing any number of persons in which no power is installed, such as tanneries. Have you any recommendation to make about them?—At present entirely unregulated places undoubtedly do need regulation. At the beginning the number of workers employed would need to be pretty high, even as high as 50 as a start. The number could always be brought down, but one has always to consider what is practicable, with the enormous number of industries in India. There are a considerable number of places which I have seen myself in different parts of India in which 50 and even upwards of 100 people are employed which are entirely unregulated and do very much need to be regulated.

A-4888. If such places were brought under regulation it would still be possible to include by special order such places employing less than 50 if the conditions were specially laid?—Yes.

A-4889. Would you be in favour of that?—Yes.

A-4890. You deal with the question of fines, and your implication seems to be that you would be in favour of legislation on the lines of the English Truck Act; is that so?—Yes.

A-4891. Has your experience been that the power to fine has been in any way abused?—The fines do seem in a good many instances to be fairly heavy.

A-4892. What do you mean by that; could you give some specific instance?—I do not think I could. I should have to quote from memory.

A-4893. At any rate you would welcome some form of legislation on the lines of the Truck Act?—Yes. This question was constantly brought before a group of us who did a survey last year of the big industries of India, and I think there was no place we visited in which this point was not brought before us by the workers and their representatives.

A-4894. The workers regarded it as an abuse as it was operating at the time?—Yes.

A-4895. You also stress the question of women inspectors. Do you think there should be at least one woman industrial inspector in every province?—I do. It is not sufficient merely to think of the medical aspect; that is a very important aspect, but there are other aspects with regard to which some one is required who has had a different kind of training. Therefore I would be in favour of an industrial inspector being appointed in each area.

A-4896. Do you think that the right type of training would be forthcoming if the necessity arose for the appointment of women factory inspectors?—I think there are possibilities in India which could be developed the moment there was a demand, and I know from enquiry that there are bodies in England ready to co-operate if required in the training of such women.

A-4897. You say : " The law with regard to child labour should be rigidly enforced and minors in industry should be safeguarded so as to protect their future health and well-being. " As child labour in regulated factories in this Presidency is very small now, do you mean to imply that children in unregulated factories should be protected ?—This recommendation was drawn up with regard to regulated factories on the basis of a state of affairs which was found to exist in Ahmedabad at the time of the survey to which I have referred. I understand that since then things have improved considerably in Ahmedabad. " Minors in industry " refers not to children but to persons who are at present called adults ; that is, any child over 15.

A-4898. Would you be in favour of some form of Young Persons' Class such as exists under the Factory Act in England ?—There is very great need to investigate whether young children, particularly boys, are not doing work which is too heavy for them, and whether their health and future well-being are not suffering because of that. Probably it will be necessary to create such a Class in order to safeguard their health. I understand that there is a Class of Young Persons already existing in Bombay under the Childrens' Act, 1924. (Mr. Bryant) That deals with young persons between 14 and 16.

A-4899. *The Chairman* : Is that with regard to employment ?—(Miss Wingate) : My point is that there has been already recognized in Bombay the principle that a young person is different from a child.

A-4900. With relation to what ?—With relation to their moral well-being ; and I am suggesting that the same kind of differentiation is necessary in connection with their physical well-being.

A-4901. *Miss Power* : Dealing with maternity benefit, are you in favour of that benefit being paid in cash or in kind ?—It is difficult to form an opinion until there has been some further experience gained. This is the first Province in which such an Act has been passed, and there has been no opportunity to consult the women themselves as to whether they would prefer cash payment or payment in kind. I recognize the dangers of cash payment but the danger of payment in kind may be even greater.

A-4902. From an administrative point of view, do you think that payment in kind, which would mean some system of daily disbursement of food, would be a practical proposition ?—I gathered that payment in kind was to be partly payment in medical aid. That appeals to me very much more than the idea of distribution of food, as I think the administrative difficulties of that would be very great. It is at least worth investigating whether part payment by medical benefit and medical aid is a possibility.

A-4903. Is it possible for any of the social service bodies in Bombay Presidency to study carefully the working of this new piece of legislation within the next 18 months in order to be able to offer constructive criticisms as to how it could be made more successful, say in two years' time ?—I think I can promise that.

A-4904. You realize that there are many gaps in it, and very grave administrative difficulties ?—It obviously does need amending.

A-4905. Dealing with education, does the problem of the enforcement of the compulsory education in F and G wards lie primarily among the children of school-age of mill-workers who have to stay at home in order to look after their younger brothers and sisters ?—That is one reason. Another reason is the lack of any conviction that it is necessary for children to go to school, particularly girls.

A-4906. Is that reluctance to educate children particularly characteristic of mill workers ?—It is a characteristic of all illiterate people. There is a fear among the parents that their children, if educated, will not be willing to go into the kind of work which they themselves have been used to, and the parents do not see any prospect of their children getting any other kind of employment. They fear that if their children become literate they will want to become clerks and will not be able to get clerical positions and will then refuse to go into the mills, and therefore fall between two stools.

A-4907. You deal with the question of minimum wage legislation. What type of legislation does your Council think ought to be enacted ?—It was very easy to prove that a large number of the working class population are below a proper standard of life, and therefore we were very anxious that the principle of minimum wage legislation should be accepted, and that machinery should be set up whereby it could be applied through Trade Boards, and so on. But we recognized that it was impossible to consider the application of it at present to unregulated industries, and that it could only be applied to the big industries, such as the textile industry.

A-4908. *The Chairman* : You say it should be applied to the major industries and not to the minor industries ?—Yes, chiefly because it seems impossible that the first piece of legislation which should be applied to unregulated industries should be the minimum wage. We do not think that a practical proposition—not that we do not feel there is need for it.

A-4909. Do you think that is a matter for provincial legislation?—I do not think we are in a position to answer that. What we were concerned with was that the principle might be accepted; and that the people should come within the two criteria usually accepted; that is to say, (1) where there is no arrangement for effective regulation of wages, and where wages are exceptionally low; (2) where such machinery can be established in consultation with workers and employers on an equal basis. If those two criteria were accepted the manner in which the principle should be applied would be decided by people better qualified to judge than ourselves.

A-4910. *Miss Power*: The phrase you have just used is the British Trade Board phrase; but when you use the expression "exceptionally low" that in England means industries where the wage is exceptionally low as compared with the wage paid in other industries. If you used that expression here of the bigger industries saying you wished to set up trade boards because the wages paid were exceptionally low, the first question which would be asked would be "exceptionally low as compared with what?"—It is a matter of the standard of living as a whole being so low, and which must be raised.

A-4911. Mr. Bryant, I see that the Council lays stress on the need for employment agencies because of the amount of unemployment. Does the Council think that labour exchanges would solve the problem of unemployment?—(Mr. Bryant) The Council notes the fact that there is a great deal of unemployment in the city. An employment agency is needed first of all to make labour mobile, and secondly to see that the labour is not casual, going from mill to mill.

A-4912. But labour exchanges cannot create employment?—That is true, but they can find out where labour is wanted in other parts of the country. The matter is not one to be confined to Bombay city alone.

A-4913. You think the exchanges can be used to transfer labour from this city to other places?—Yes. They would have the power to place labour at the points where it was most needed. Take the Sukkur Barrage. If there was an agency in Bombay it would be possible to relieve the congestion here by sending labour to Sukkur. I am not unmindful of the conservatism of the people, but we have in mind the fact that there are in Bombay hundreds of unemployed other than labourers who are constantly going to and fro unable to find work.

A-4914. When we were in Karachi we came across a number of unemployed persons who had gone there originally in connection with the work of the Port Trust. Unsuccessful endeavours had been made to persuade those people to go to Sukkur where there is need for manual labour, but they were found to be too conservative to go there. The unemployment problem now, and in the future, in Bombay is primarily one among the textile workers—people with dexterity of fingers and not of any great muscular strength. Do you think a labour exchange would be successful in moving blocks of people with a textile tradition to the Sukkur Barrage with any hope of their being a success when they got there?—I spoke of the Sukkur Barrage to illustrate my point. Taking the textile industry, there are jobbers all over the Presidency and other places trying to get people to the mills when they need them.

A-4915. We understand that there is a sufficient flow of labourers to make it unnecessary for the jobbers to fetch labour to Bombay?—That may be true in the larger sense, but there are people going from mill to mill. There is all this casual labour, and the point is whether or not a labour exchange would be able to make that labour mobile.

A-4916. Would you try to get an agreement with the Millowners' Association to use these labour exchanges?—Yes. I do not think you can make a start unless you have the employers with you.

A-4917. Do you think the opportunity is ripe to do that, in view of the ease with which labour can be obtained at the mill gates?—I do not know.

A-4918. *Dewan Chaman Lal*: You say: "On an average each woman supports 2·4 persons. While in the case of wives, their wages may be held to be supplementary to their husbands' earnings, the figures quoted above refer also to all those women upon whom falls the burden of supporting the home. They cannot possibly be made adequate to supporting an adult and two or three children. That this is the cause of direct and very severe temptation was discovered in a very definite way during the enquiry." What do you mean by that?—I mean that if a woman cannot earn enough to live on, she has to find somebody else who will support her.

A-4919. *Mr. Clow*: You have mentioned a suggestion that there should be a Young Person's Class in factories. What ages had you in mind?—(Miss Wingate) Probably from 15 to 18.

A-4920. What protection would be given them ?—Protection would be given them for instance, in respect of night work and in dangerous trades.

A-4921. You would not restrict the hours ?—Possibly. That would depend on what hours were being worked.

A-4922. You have given us some very interesting tables of budgets of workers. How were those collected ?—(Mr. Bryant) They were collected by the workers who were engaged in welfare work amongst the particular people whose budgets you have before you.

A-4923. They are not very accurate, are they ? They are not based on detailed enquiries as to what the people spend ?—They are given to you just as we collected them.

A-4924. The food expenses of every worker, with one exception, come to an exact multiple of 5 rupees ?—What we were trying to get at was how they spent their money and to what extent they were indebted, and so on.

A-4925. They are not based on the exact expenditure over a month ? They are based simply by asking them for the total they spend on food ?—Yes. It was a questionnaire.

A-4926. The debt of the first lot of workers who are living at Dadar seems to be comparatively small, whereas when you take Love Grove the debt seems to be extremely heavy ? Can you explain the difference ?—No.

A-4927. You give an example of a man who apparently spends Rs. 100 a month on drink ?—I think that must be his total debt. The figure has got into the wrong column.

A-4928. Is it your experience that the majority of the workmen drink ?—No. I would not say the majority drink.

A-4929. The majority of which you have given us particulars show an expenditure under that column ?—Yes. I think quite a number are addicted to drink but I should not say the majority are.

A-4930. Have you any suggestions to make in regard to dealing with this question of drink ?—The filling up of their off-time by giving them other attractions has had a great deal in lessening the amount of drink taken.

A-4931. What have you done in that direction ?—We have different centres in Bombay at which we are carrying out welfare work amongst municipal employees, railway employees, and mill-workers ; and we endeavour to fill up their leisure hours with worth-while pursuits such as night schools and lectures, and games. Scouting is a very good thing for the boys.

A-4932. You attach more importance to positive measures, such as the provision of alternatives, than to negative measures, such as reducing the facilities for obtaining drink ?—Yes. The positive attempt to fill up the men's leisure hours and to give them family life amenities is producing good results. For instance the men are able to repay their debts.

A-4933. Miss Wingate has brought out the fact that in Ahmedabad the wage of a woman spinner is very nearly equal to that of a man spinner, whereas in Sholapur it is nothing like equal. Is there anything to account for that difference ?—(Miss Wingate: One reason undoubtedly is the strength of the trade union in Ahmedabad.

A-4934. *Mr. Cliff* : Have you any experience of the people who live in the Development *chawls* ?—(Mr. Bryant) : Yes ; we have a centre at the Development *chawls*.

A-4935. Is it possible for you to say whether the people who have removed into those *chawls* are paying higher rents than they were previously paying, or lower rents ?—The people that we know the most about are the employees of the B. & C. I. Railway Company. They have a special rent ; they do not pay the rent which the railway pays—it may be less or more.

A-4936. They have removed to those from private houses ; are they now paying higher rents or lower rents ?—I am not able to say.

A-4937. *Col. Russell* : Have you any experience with regard to the incidence of venereal disease among these people ?—(Mr. Bryant) : It is one of those difficult questions on which it is difficult to put your finger, and say this is the cause. That there is a great deal of venereal disease in Bombay is well-known, as the records of dispensaries and hospitals will show.

A-4938. Do you think there is more among the mill workers than among the general population ?—I think it is pretty general.

A-4939. Can you give us figures ?—I have no figures.

A-4940. Do you think that the increase of venereal disease, that you admit is present, is associated with overcrowding ?—Yes, and also the presence of brothels in Bombay.

A-4941. *Dr. Cama* : Have the women complained to you of the treatment they get in the factories ; are they treated well by the *naikins* and jobbers ?—(Miss Wingate) : Yes ; in many mills we heard complaints about ill-treatment.

A-4942. As regards school hours for the children, would you be in favour of keeping the children all the day in the school in view of the fact that their parents have to attend to their work during day-time ?—I should say that the school hours at present obtaining in Bombay are fairly adequate.

A-4943. Does it not give them time to go about the streets while their parents are working at the mills ?—It does, but I do not think you can have a school day for school children from 7 in the morning till 6 at night.

A-4944. Would you not keep them occupied all the time. We are told that at present the parents do not send their children to school, because after the school hours the children go about the streets ?—The only difference if they do not go to school will be that they will be running about the streets all day along ; if they go to school, they will be running about only for a couple of hours or so. I do not think their going to school increases that evil ; it rather lessens it. I think there is a great need for the provision of nursery schools where children below school-going age would be taken care of.

A-4945. *Mrs. Wagh* : What is your experience as regards overcrowding in Sholapur ?—(Miss Wingate) : It was not anything like the extent you have in Bombay.

A-4946. What is probably the reason of that ?—I think one reason is that the labour in Sholapur, or rather a good deal of it, is local labour, that is to say, they have come from a short distance, they are actually living in their own towns, and therefore you do not get a large number of boarders. Another reason is the difference in rent. The rent in Sholapur is much less than in Bombay.

A-4947. It is due to the economic pressure that you have overcrowding in Bombay ?—I should say that is one of the main reasons.

A-4948. Do you think that the workers in Sholapur live in their own houses ?—No.

A-4949. If the rent is high, they will sublet their rooms ?—There are other factors.

A-4950. Do you know anything about the practice of administering opium to children ?—I know that is done very generally among the industrial population.

A-4951. What remedy would you suggest ?—I think crèches and the provision of nursery schools is one suggestion. Then, educating the mothers as to the evils of it. I think the great thing is to provide some way by which the children can be taken care of. If the woman leaves the baby at home, there must be somebody to take care of it ; if she takes it to the factory, she cannot obviously keep it by her side all the time, so it is dosed with opium.

A-4952. *Mr. Asvale* : Do you not think that there should be a system of provident fund, sick pension fund for all mill workers both women or men ?—I think it would be a very good thing.

A-4953. Do you not think that the rents charged should be the same as that charged by the municipality for their servants ?—(Miss Wingate) : I suppose that private owners will have to charge an economic rent.

A-4954. I am not speaking of private owners, but employers of labour ?—I think rents must eventually bear some relation to the economic value. If rents in publicly erected buildings are much below the economic rent, the public has to bear the cost.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING
BOMBAY

Thursday, 28th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
 Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
 C.I.E.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
 Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
 Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
 (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOOSHINBHAY A. LALLJI, M.L.C.	}	<i>Assistant Commissioners.</i>
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.		
Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA.	}	<i>Lady Assessors.</i>
Mrs. K. WAGEH.		
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.	}	<i>Joint Secretaries.</i>
Mr. A. DIBDIN.		

Mr. H. P. MODY, Chairman, Sir MANMOHANDAS RAMJI
(past-Chairman), Mr. S. D. SAKLATVALA (past-Chairman), and
Mr. T. MALONEY, Secretary, representatives of the
Bombay Millowners' Association.

A-4955. *The Chairman* : Our duty here is not to attempt to review the work that others have done before us. We have a number of reports of previous enquiries with which we have become familiar, but our duty now is to look more to the future than to the past. You have come here to help us with your knowledge and experience; and we hope, when we have reviewed your opinion along with others that we have received and shall receive hereafter, to be of some help to the cotton industry in Bombay and to industries in India in general. We all recognize that the textile industry is one of the main industries in India, and we recognize also that it has difficulties to meet both in the present and in the future in the way of holding its own in competition with other countries. We recognize that the case of Bombay is peculiar in the fact that if it is to continue to exist and prosper it has to face the competition of the up-country mills. We of course cannot specially favour Bombay as against any other part of India. At the same time, we do recognize that Bombay has difficulties peculiar to itself. I wish in the first place to deal with the question which we have put in the forefront of our questionnaire, the question of recruitment. In your memorandum you refer repeatedly to the irregularity of the labour force; you make the complaint not once, but several times, in your memorandum that all the things that you would like to do are belittled because of this irregularity of your labour. In some cases it is called absenteeism, and in some cases referred to as the frequent change of the operative from mill to mill. It is evident that one of the first things in your industry is to stabilize this very changeable labour force. Would you admit that the stabilization of your labour force would be to the advantage both of the workers and of the employers?—(Mr. Mody) : Yes, certainly.

A-4956. And you would be ready to take any reasonable means to achieve that end?
 —Yes.

A-4957. I notice, for instance, from your memorandum that in dealing with the question about provision for old age or premature retirement, you tell us that some employers are doing something in that nature at present. You tell us also that "while the

difficulties in the way of inaugurating schemes of this nature which would be acceptable to the workers are undoubtedly great, the matter is receiving the attention of the Association. You also refer to the recommendation of the Fawcett Committee, with which your Association agrees, as to the grant of leave in proper form. I take it that that means that you are prepared to carry out a scheme of that kind?—Yes.

A-4958. You say there "The above rule, which has been already agreed to by this Association, will, when introduced, prove a great improvement on the existing practice for both employers and employees." You say "when introduced" is that still in abeyance?—It is in abeyance because the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee, either in respect of the standing orders or in respect of the standardization scheme, have not yet been introduced for various reasons, but it is our hope within a short time to introduce all these recommendations and suggestions that have been made.

A-4959. What do you mean by "within a short time"?—In the course of the next few months.

A-4960. That is to say, you intend to go ahead in carrying out these concrete recommendations apart from the other recommendations in the whole scheme?—We are going on with all the recommendations and suggestions, and we hope to put them into effect within a few months, as I said.

A-4961. With regard to the tendency of your workers to change from mill to mill, a matter which we have observed in other places as well as in Bombay, you would agree with me, I imagine, as a practical man, that where a worker gets used to his machinery and knows his machine he is able to produce better results from it than when he first comes to handle a different machine?—Yes; we appreciate fully the advantage of having our workers stick to their particular jobs and not move from mill to mill.

A-4962. Have you ever considered a scheme where there would be an inducement to the workers to give regularity of employment?—We must first investigate the causes of this migration from mill to mill. I imagine that when the scheme of standardized wages is put into operation there will not be such amount of migration. The workers leave their particular mills and go from mill to mill for various reasons; either the wages of the mills to which they go are more attractive, or they change their residence and want to be near their place of residence, or they absent themselves from their mills without leave and are not sure of their places being kept vacant, or they incur debts in one place and prefer to change that place. There may be various other reasons. But the standardization of wages would remove one of the causes, namely variation in wages.

A-4963. Do you not think there may be something in the fact that with the large number of people you employ in each of the mills here there is no personal contact between the head of the firm and the workmen as would be the case if the industry were on a smaller scale?—That would be so to a certain extent, but I do not know how far that can explain this particular habit of moving from mill to mill.

A-4964. In the mills with which you are concerned, how many workers are there?—I am no longer connected with any mill in particular, except as a director; I am not actively concerned with the management of any mill; I am only director of a few mills. (Mr. Saklatvala): In one of my mills, the Tata Mills, there are about 8,400 men.

A-4965. If you walked about your mill, how many of that 3,400 would you be able to address by name?—I would not be able to address them by name, except perhaps a few jobbers, but I would be able to pick out men whom I could recognize as old hands; I would be able also to pick out men whom I consider good workers and whom I consider bad workers or inefficient workers. That I would be able to do.

A-4966. But as far as human personality is concerned, they would be numbers and not individuals?—That is true. But sometimes a man even changes his name. When he is unable to pay his rent he goes to another *chawl* and he returns after a few months to the same *chawl* and assumes another name. I do not say that is a general practice, but even that happens with illiterate people. Some people have their mother's name attached to their own names; some people have their father's name, or guardian's name; some have their own names together with the short names by which they might be known by their friends.

A-4967. That all helps me to the point that I am leading to. I am trying to put before you the position of a man who comes from Ratnagiri, one of the 50,000 men that come here to work in your mills. There is no doubt a corresponding feeling that they are numbers rather than individuals. Do you not think that if in each of your mills, where there are a thousand or two thousand men and women employees, you had a labour welfare officer as an officer of the firm whose duty is to know and understand the men whom you

employ and to be a link between them and the head of the firm, that would be of great help to you in understanding the reasons which actuate them in this constant moving about and in overcoming their little troubles?—(Mr. Mody): With regard to this point, I would like to say just this: that we have certain proposals under consideration. As they have not been finally decided upon by the members of the Association I am not in a position just now to tell you what they are, but I hope to be able to send you a full statement in a month or six weeks on what is proposed to be done by us in the way of what you call closer contact with the work-people.

A-4968. I notice that many of your mills spend a large amount of money on welfare work at one time or another, some of it admirable and a good deal of it expensive. But all that has come at the initiative of the employers. Do you not think that if you had an officer of the kind I have suggested, that he would enlist co-operation of the workers themselves, so that they would feel, whether in existing welfare work or in new departures in welfare work, that it was partly their job, they were consulted in the initiation and they should help in the day to day control and management of these institutions, and that in that way by allowing them to feel at the beginning that it was partly their own work, the money that you spend would have much greater effect than is the case now?—If work is done on any scale, such an officer might prove useful; as a matter of fact, mills which are doing welfare work have some sort of organization. (Mr. Saklatvala). We were carrying on welfare work when we had money for that. Even to-day we have not stopped our activities altogether. The Swadeshi Mills are doing it even now. That mill is in a better position than the Tata Mills which had to stop a good deal of their activities. Mr. Joshi himself was conducting our welfare activities. Mr. Joshi was kind enough to supply us a man, an officer such as you yourself suggest, to go into the mills. But I did not find much difference when there was a strike or anything of that kind. We were carrying on welfare work in our Standard Mills, welfare work was going on in full swing there, and we had such an officer. In spite of that I do not think it made much difference.

A-4969. If I may say so, an employer has to do a thing because he believes it is right?—That is why they did it in spite of our experience to the contrary.

A-4970. And you feel discouraged?—Not at all; I am not against it; I was only giving you my experience. On the question of absenteeism I have a statement prepared in relation to the Tata Mills. We have 900 weavers there. The statement deals with five years 1924-29; it shows the total number of weavers employed, the average number of substitutes, which means of course that the men themselves were absent, and I find that for the first 15 days of the month there is much less absenteeism; after pay day absenteeism increases and for two, three or sometimes four days, there is much more absenteeism than at any other time. Then, again, I find that during the month of March or April, during the *Holi* holidays, even though we give holidays for two or three days more the work-people do not turn up; that also occurs during the *Divali* holidays.

A-4971. Would you put in that statement?—I should be glad to put in that statement with a note of the Manager which explains it.

A-4972. What you call absenteeism after pay day is what used to be known in England as the Monday morning feeling. That is not a complaint which is peculiar to India, but with an increased standard of living it tends to disappear. We have already had evidence in India that although that may be the fact for a time it does not always persist. You have already told us that you propose to carry into effect shortly those new provisions with regard to grant of leave. Have you ever attempted in any of your mills any system of registration which would distinguish absence from sickness, absence on account of leave and absence without leave?—We do not put down the reasons. When a man goes to the head of his department for leave he gives him a chit, and unless that man presents and delivers that chit to the time-keeper he is not allowed to go. So, we have a record of the leave given to the millhands, but very often we do not enquire into the reasons. If a man is evidently ill and comes to the head of the department he gives him leave; if he goes to the head of the department and he does not appear to be ill he is questioned and generally a funeral or a wedding is given as the reason, and leave is given, but the actual reasons are not recorded.

A-4973. What I am suggesting is this. A large proportion of your labour is migratory; the man returns to his village. Leave granted for that purpose should be recognized. I understand it is part of the general practice to allow him to go to his village?—They take leave when they want, but they do not come back when the leave granted expires. The present practice is for them to go away and return after six months or three months as they like.

A-4974. I am asking you to help me with regard to an improved method which will remove this irregularity ?—(Mr. Mody) : I certainly agree ; these new rules will certainly make that possible.

A-4975. If you are able, as you suggest in your memorandum, to introduce some system of provision for old age and premature retirement after long service, it would necessarily follow that you must have an improved system of registration of your labour ?—Yes. Two mills are at the moment paying their old work-people certain allowances either in the shape of a pension or a lump sum contribution ; but the system has not been regularized ; there is no organization at present.

A-4976. Do you not think that if it were regularized, as you suggest yourself in your memorandum, it would greatly add to the stabilization of this very fluctuating force of labour ?—It would.

A-4977. Turning now to the head " Staff Organization " is it correct to say that Agent's commission is paid on the turnover and not on profits ?—It is the other way about in Bombay ; in Bombay the practice is to pay agent's commission on profits ; the exceptions are very few indeed.

A-4978. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How many exceptions are there ?—I only know of one or two.

A-4979. *Mr. Joshi* : During the War when the profits were large, you changed the system of paying commission on production to the system of commission on profits ?—We cannot change the system so suddenly ; the agents have long contracts with the shareholders, so that they could not have changed it during the War. As a matter of fact, one of the largest groups of millowners who worked on the system of commission on turnover lost through the system during the boom period and yet did not change it ; they are still working on the old system.

A-4980. *The Chairman* : Can you supply us information through your Association as to how many mills in Bombay work on the commission on profit system and how many on commission on turnover ?—Certainly ; I have already given the answer, but I will send it on officially.

A-4981. In dealing with the question of the possibility of reduction in hours of labour, you say such a reduction would be disastrous " unless accompanied by an increase in the number of machines attended by an operative ". Do I take it rightly to mean that you are prepared to consider a reduction in the hours of labour as part of an agreement which includes the acceptance of what you call the efficiency system ?—No. If, after a course of years, we are assured of an increased efficiency on the part of labour which would make up for the undoubted loss which the industry would suffer from a reduction of hours, we are then prepared to consider it, but not until then.

A-4982. That is to say, you are not prepared to consider the two things as part of one agreement ?—The standardization scheme, if that is what you are referring to, has nothing to do with the question of reduction of hours.

The Chairman : You believe, I understand, that it is necessary, if Bombay is to hold its own both in competition within India and in competition with countries outside India, that the industry should be brought to a higher basis of efficiency ; that is to say, it is not a question of lower wages, but lower wages cost. You distinctly seem to suggest in your memorandum that it might be done under an arrangement whereby the weaver would attend to a greater number of machines.

A-4983. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do you mean if the operative attended to a greater number of machines without an increase in pay ?—Unless there is an increase in efficiency which would enable us to meet competition, a reduction of hours, so far as we are concerned, is unthinkable. That is our position.

A-4984. Dealing with the question of trade unions you say : " The urgent need of the hour is to organize labour in Bombay on genuine trade union lines, with the help, if necessary, of an expert adviser from England as is recommended by the Fawcett Committee." Would you tell the Commission what you mean by that ?—The Fawcett Committee felt that the unions did not function properly, partly for the reason that they had no technical advice, and their work would be managed much better if they had suitable advisers who would appreciate the problems of the industry and also the grievances of the work-people at their true worth. That is what we are referring to when we say " with the help of an expert adviser from England."

A-4985. Is it your suggestion that the expert adviser should be paid by Government ?—It is not our suggestion to pay him ourselves. I do not know who is going to pay him.

A-4986. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Do you think the trade unions would pay for this officer ?—(Mr. Saklatvala) That expert officer should guide the present labour leaders. The present labour leaders unfortunately are not technical men. If there was an expert officer from England they would be guided rightly.

A-4987. Do you think they would listen to him ?—If he is their own choice, and if they approve of the officer, they ought to.

A-4988. *The Chairman* : I know the point quite well. What I am trying to get at is about the practicability of the idea. Is it not a fact that the trade unions at present are not themselves in a position to pay for the services of such an expert officer ?—(Mr. Mody) I should not say that, because one trade union at least has a lot of money to spend on other objects.

A-4989. Would you think that such an adviser paid for by Government would be of assistance to the industry ?—As Sir Ibrahim pointed out just now, it would entirely depend upon the spirit in which trade unions receive the appointment of such an adviser. If they looked upon him as somebody with capitalist ideas and so on, such an adviser would be thoroughly useless ; but if the trade unions themselves realized the necessity of having some such adviser, it would certainly be an experiment worth trying. I will give an illustration. A short time after the report of the Fawcett Committee was out, we convened a joint conference between ourselves and the representatives of all the trade unions, and there we decided upon forming a small joint sub-committee to deliberate upon the standardization scheme and the amendments which had been suggested by the Fawcett Committee. The labour leaders said that they would like to have expert advice on that point. We said " By all means bring as many people as you please for the sake of advising you on the technical details of the scheme." So, if labour received such an appointment in the right way, it would certainly be an advantage.

A-4990. You say that the Millowners' Association includes 73 out of 88 mills. Does that mean that one group of mills stands out of your Association ?—That is not the case. Some mills have gone into liquidation ; a few mills are still outside us, I am afraid, because they have to reckon the question of payment of fees and probably they cannot afford to become members of the Association.

A-4991. Is the Association in a position effectively to speak for the whole of the industry in Bombay ?—Undoubtedly because we are organized, and our members control more than 90 per cent. of the spindles and looms which are actually working in Bombay.

A-4992. In your Association do you have a managing committee which is charged with the continued improvement of the position of the industry as a whole ?—Yes.

A-4993. And you are continually applying yourselves to the constructive side ; that is to say, your Association is not merely a defensive organization ?—No ; the reports of the last twenty or thirty years will bear testimony to the sort of work done by the Association.

A-4994. How far is your Association in a position to influence the mills which have made the least progress in their attention to the needs of the workers ?—Going about the city we have seen high standards, we have seen what we may call medium standards in that respect. Do you advise and assist those of your members who are lagging behind to come up to a standard in the interests of the industry as a whole ?—We do not pretend to advise our members with regard to the running of their mills. I do not know whether that is what you mean. With regard to general questions, such as medical work or general questions affecting labour, we take joint action which is accepted by every member.

A-4995. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : It has been stated that the mill industry made such enormous profits during the boom period that if they had conserved those profits they would have been in a much better position now to deal with competition and to deal with the demands of labour. Can you tell me what is the average return for, say, ten years on the capital invested actually in the block accounts allowing for depreciation ?—I think this idea of the profits made by the industry is rather exaggerated. We find on working out the figures over a period of ten years, including what are known as boom years, that the industry has made something like 6 per cent. or a little over.

A-4996. So that the net return to the investor on his investment is not more than what he would have received if he had invested it on Government paper ?—That is so. The Tariff Board themselves consider that 8 per cent. would be a reasonable return ; the return disclosed in our statement is very much below that figure.

A-4997. What amount have you paid to your labour as bonus apart from any rise in wages, which I see amounts to over 100 per cent., between 1922-23 and 1913-14 ?—We paid in the shape of bonus something over two crores of rupees.

A-4998. Supposing you did not pay that bonus but put it into a trust fund to keep up the wages when the times were bad, do you think the Labour would have agreed?—Labour certainly would have demanded something very tangible at that time.

A-4999. They would not have been satisfied?—No.

A-5000. Could you give me some figures to show how your cost of production compares with that of foreign competitors and domestic competitors?—(Mr. Saklatvala). The cost of manufacture is shown in the Fawcett Committee's report at page 273; I refer to the detailed evidence forming part of the proceedings of the Fawcett Committee. On page 113 of the Tariff Board's Report you will find that it was 40 per cent. in 1914 and 48·8 or 49 per cent. in 1926. But rather than go into mere abstracts I have here our combined balance sheets for the years 1925, 1926 and 1927. These combined balance sheets were given to the Joint Strike Committee when they asked for them before the Fawcett Committee. Not only that but also the balance sheet of the individual mills from which these were compiled were handed over to the Joint Strike Committee, because at one time they questioned the accuracy of our figures and asked us to prove them.

A-5001. Have you any figures to show the difference in the costs of production in an average Bombay mill, a Japanese Mill and an Ahmedabad Mill?—As regards Japan, China and Bombay, Mr. Sasakura who owns a mill in Bombay as well as some mills in Japan has supplied me with figures. These were the figures which we gave before the Fawcett Committee.

A-5002. Are they comparative?—Yes, they are.

A-5003. Could you put them in?—He says that in Japan a weaver minds 6 looms and the efficiency of the loom is 95 per cent. Wages paid are Rs. 2-4-0 a day. In China a weaver minds 4 looms. Efficiency is 80 per cent. Wages paid are Re. 1 per day. In Bombay a weaver minds 2 looms; efficiency is 80 per cent.; the weaver is paid Rs. 2 a day. On the basis of China and Japan our weaver deserves a wage of 10·1 annas and 8 annas, respectively. But he is overpaid by 216 and 800 per cent., if we continue the two loom system. He gives similar figures for the spinning industry. In Japan a ring sizer minds 600 spindles. Efficiency is 90 per cent., and his wages are Rs. 1-14-6. In China he minds 380 spindles; efficiency is 80 per cent., and he gets 14 annas per day. In Bombay he minds 181 spindles; efficiency is 80 per cent; he gets Re. 1 a day.

A-5004. Could you give us the final results showing how much dearer we are at the end in our cost of production?—(Mr. Mody) I should like to make a statement on this point. The cost of manufacture in the Textile Mill is shown on page 273 of the Proceedings of the Fawcett Committee, Vol. I. The figures show that excluding excise duty, agents' commission and income and super-tax, the proportion of labour cost to the total cost of manufacture in the year 1914 works out at 42 per cent. In 1927, the proportion was 57 per cent. According to the figures given on page 120 of the Tariff Board's Report on Cotton Textile Industry the proportion between wages and the total manufacturing and overhead charges is somewhat higher; it works out at 61 per cent. But it should be noted that this does not include interest or commission on cloth which would slightly reduce the proportion of cost of labour; in other words, it would more or less approximate to the figure ascertained by the Textile Mills.

We have a certain amount of information for Lancashire, which was tendered as evidence by the Workers' side before the Arbitration Board when the reduction of wages was being considered. Taking the proportion of costs of standard *dhotis*, the proportion of cost of labour to the total cost of production works out at 52 per cent. for standard shirtings (bleached). These figures are less than the figure worked out for Bombay Mills.

We have also a certain amount of information regarding Japan for the year 1928. This shows that the proportion of the cost of labour to the total cost of production in the manufacture of yarns of 14·75 counts is 40·3 per cent., and even in this 40·3 per cent., the cost of recruiting, cheap board, bonus and the cost of welfare work is included. Direct wages only represent 25·4 per cent. of the cost of manufacture, whereas in Bombay labour costs in an average of 14s yarn amount to 55 per cent. The Tariff Board also made certain enquiries about the manufacturing charges, and ascertained that in Bombay the labour charges in respect of yarns were 51 per cent. of the total manufacturing charges excluding interest, commission, etc. Is that the information that you want? (Mr. Saklatvala) Also both in the case of the Japanese Mills and the Bombay Mills there is a loom shed of 840 looms.....

A-5005. They are the same in both cases. Have you any other figures?—No. (Mr. Mody) I wanted to draw your attention to the great proportion that wages bear to the manufacturing costs here as compared with Japan and Lancashire.

A-5006. I wanted to know how much more wages you pay when compared with mills manufacturing similar cloth in Japan or Ahmedabad. Have you comparative figures for Ahmedabad?—(Mr. Saklatvala). The Tariff Board have given these figures in pages 119 and 120 of their report on Cotton Textile Industry.

A-5007. And you have nothing over that?—No.

A-5008. Mr. Saklatvala, you have said that the Japanese girls mind 6 looms. What is the average life of a Japanese girl in a mill?—I have not been in Japan and I have no personal knowledge of that.

The Chairman : It is said that their working time is 6 or 7 years.

A-5009. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is it not three years?—(Mr. Mody) It has been alleged to be three or four years in all the papers that we have come across.

A-5010. Given the same opportunities, do you see any reason why an Indian worker working for 20 or 30 years should not attain the same skill as the Japanese girl does in 3 or 4 years?—I do not see any reason why he should not acquire the same amount of skill.

A-5011. You see no reason why he should not attain the same skill and be able to look after the same amount of machinery as the Japanese girl?—None at all.

A-5012. Mr. Mody, it is stated by the representatives of the Trade Unions that the industry would be more efficient and costs reduced if it were nationalized. Would you have any objection to nationalizing the Bombay Mill Industry?—Do you mean handing over all our mills to Government?

A-5013. Yes?—I wish them joy of it. But I only hope they will make a better job of it than they did of the Backbay Scheme.

A-5014. *Divan Chaman Lall* : But from the present state of your industry you do not seem to have made a very good job of it either?—I do not say we have; but there are reasons for our present position. If we had a national government, our position would be certainly very different.

A-5015. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Assuming you had the government you wanted, would your position enable you to compete successfully with up-country mills?—Given a fair amount of protection against foreign competition, I see no reason why we should not hold our own.

A-5016. How would you hold your own against up-country mills which would receive the same protection from foreign competition, but have a lower labour cost?—We would, for the very obvious reason that protection from foreign competition would give us a wider market for our products.

A-5017. You think that there would be a sufficient demand to consume not only the up-country products, but also absorb all the products of the Bombay mill industry at a price suitable to the Bombay industry?—Considering that the country consumes 4,000,000,000 yards and that the Indian mills all together produce less than 2,000,000,000 yards, I cannot see any period in the near future when the competition of up-country mills would reduce us to the same position as foreign mills have reduced us. Besides Bombay has certain advantages over up-country mills.

A-5018. In what respect?—In the production of finer counts.

A-5019. You think that Bombay would score in the production of finer counts?—Yes.

A-5020. In the matter of housing your workers what has the industry done up till now?—I think we may claim that our industry has done a great deal more than the textile industry in any other country. We have spent something like Rs. 75,00,000 on a modest estimate in providing houses for our workers. Over and above that we have been contributing something like Rs. 10,00,000 every year, which would amount to a large sum when capitalized.

A-5021. *Divan Chaman Lall* : Do you refer to the contribution of Re. 1 per bale?—Yes, all the mills together in Bombay contribute Rs. 10,00,000 a year.

A-5022. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : With regard to your relations with trade unions, whatever their misdeeds in the past might have been, your Association is to-day prepared to co-operate with well-conducted trade unions?—Yes. We gave tangible proof of our good will this very year. When the Fawcett Committee report was published, it was found that it was not necessary to consult the trade unions to carry out many of the recommendations contained in the report, because all the points had been thoroughly threshed out before the Committee. But we still went out of our way to get together representatives of the unions including the Girni Kamgar Union to sit with us in order to see whether we could agree upon the whole scheme.

A-5023. Would you prefer to work with a moderate union like the one led by Mr. Joshi ?—Certainly.

A-5024. But why is it that such moderate unions do not command the same amount of confidence from the mill hands as the more violent ones ?—To answer this question I will have to attempt an explanation of why generally in politics, violence appeals to the masses more than moderation. Apart from that the point is this. If you want to work a trade union successfully, you require men with personality and organizing ability who could devote their whole time exclusively to this work. You require labour leaders who would devote their attention to the organization of a union for a particular industry instead of having a hundred other things to do besides.

A-5025. So that your criticism of the labour leaders is that they do not devote their whole time and energy to trade unions, but dissipate their energies over a large field ?—I do not criticise the labour leaders : I simply give reasons as to why such unions have not been a success. So far as the work-people are concerned they have no inclination to form themselves into trade unions. They have no class consciousness ; and lack of education prevents them from appreciating the advantages of a strong trade union. We have to recognize these difficulties in the way of the labour leaders.

A-5026. Would you say that lack of technical knowledge amongst labour leaders and trade union officials debar them from sifting out genuine complaints from spurious ones ?—Certainly, it is the case at the present moment. All that they do is to act as a post office and pass on the grievances laid before them by the work-people to the owners.

A-5027. So that you cannot feel that the complaints that are brought before you have been sifted and found to be genuine ?—Exactly. The best proof of that is what happened before the Court of Enquiry : they were not able to prove a single case of victimization.

A-5028. On the point of the Association working jointly with the unions, Mr. Bakhale said the other day that it was not possible to do that at the present moment, because his union was not strong enough to make its influence felt on the workers. He could not see any solution of the difficulty until his union developed to the stage of representing a large majority of the workers. That does not take us very far. Have you any method of close co-operation between the Association and the workers in the absence of a union which can deliver the goods ; or do you agree with Mr. Bakhale that no such joint action is possible until you have a strong union ?—We have some proposals under our consideration and we shall place them before you after they have been approved by the Association in a short time.

A-5029. Do they depend on the existence of a strong union at the present moment ?—No, they are independent of trade unions. I look at the matter in this way. The trade unions have their own special functions to do, i.e., to organize labour and see that they get a square deal from the millowners and fight for their rights. That is one aspect of the question. But there is another aspect so far as the employers are concerned, and that is the establishment of harmonious and closer relations with the workers. That necessarily would not need the presence of trade unions. It is independent work which the employers have themselves to conduct ; and our attention at the present moment is directed towards that aspect of the question. Very shortly I will be able to place definite proposals before the Commission.

A-5030. I am not asking you to tell us more than you can ; would these proposals be considered as being anti-trade union ?—No.

A-5031. Would they in any way interfere with the development of moderate trade unions ?—No, not in the least.

A-5032. When moderate trade unions were established on a large scale, would they at a later date be in a position to associate themselves with this scheme of yours ?—Certainly. This would not affect any of the activities of the unions, nor would it in any way double cross them.

A-5033. Would it discourage these trade unions so that they might have no chances of developing ?—No, not in the slightest degree.

A-5034. Could your industry, after the series of bad years it has had, bear any more burdens, however small, in regard to sickness benefit, unemployment insurance and so on ?—Nothing at all, I am afraid.

A-5035. What has the Government done since the publication of the report of the Court of Enquiry into the Bombay riots ?—Nothing.

A-5036. What do you consider Government should have done ?—Before the publication of the reports of the two committees, Government made public their intention

to take certain measures after the investigation was completed. Investigation was completed and the two reports commented very adversely on the activities of the two unions. Yet nothing has been done.

A-5037. What action would you like them to have taken?—The unions might have been removed from the register and declared unlawful associations.

A-5038. They could not remove them from the register legally?—That is how they view it.

A-5039. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have given a comparative statement of the wages per month during the years 1918 to 1928 showing the increases you gave at different times. You gave a 10 per cent. increase in 1917 and added to that a 5 per cent. increase in 1918?—Yes.

A-5040. Were those increases given voluntarily or after a strike?—Some of these increases were given after a strike and some were given voluntarily. I have a statement prepared showing when and how these various increases were given. I have not that statement here at the present moment.

A-5041. In 1919 you gave an increase of 20 per cent. over 1918. Was that given after a strike?—Yes.

A-5042. In 1920 you gave an increase of another 20 per cent. over 1919?—Yes.

A-5043. Was that also after a strike?—Yes.

A-5044. Later on in 1920 you gave another increase of wages. In 1921 you neither increased nor reduced wages. I want to know how many of these increases were given voluntarily and how many after strikes?—I have the statement prepared and I shall let you have it later on.

A-5045. Again there was another strike in 1924 when you refused to give the bonus. There was yet another strike in 1925?—That was when we wanted to reduce the wages.

A-5046. Then some one on your behalf promised to Government that you would not cut the wages and the strike came to an end?—With reference to this I would like to say that that wage cut of 11½ per cent. was based on what we regarded as sound economic grounds. That had nothing whatever to do with the removal of the cotton excise duty, which was merely the righting of an undoubted wrong. But when the excise duty was removed, we gave up the idea of the cut in wages.

A-5047. But the fact remains that the workers went on strike against your proposed cut in wages and were able to return to work without having their wages cut?—Yes.

A-5048. In view of the fact that every increase conceded to the workers in all these years has been after a strike, would you be surprised if they wanted to go on strike whenever they wanted anything in particular?—I would not be surprised. But I should say that your premise is not entirely correct. For instance, on the question of bonus, they got nothing after the strike.

A-5049. Quite true?—It may be that in some years, the millhands were legitimately allowed to think that they could perhaps get what they wanted by means of a strike.

A-5050. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You gave an increase in 1920. Was that not due to an increase in the cost of living? Yes it was.

A-5051. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You gave the increase in 1920 of your own accord?—Yes.

A-5052. In spite of that increase in 1920 there was a strike?—Yes.

A-5053. There was a strike notwithstanding the increase given voluntarily?—Yes.

A-5054. *Sir Alexander Murray*: From the statement given by you I have formed the impression that in 75 per cent. of the cases the workers got what they wanted as a result of a strike. Is that not so?—Only in certain cases.

A-5055. We have been wondering why the communists and other agitators jumped in to take advantage of this state of affairs and excite the workers more in Bombay than in other parts of India. I want to ask whether it is due to the fact that the workers here in Bombay have been led to believe that they have only to strike in order to get something. Or is it the case, as the Trade Union people say, that there are 80,000 to 40,000 people in Bombay who are idle and always ready to join any trouble?—I want the Commission to clearly differentiate between the strikes which took place in the past and strikes which took place in the last two years since communism came in. In the old days when the workers went on strike with notice or without notice, there was some tangible grievance in question. For instance, there was the cut in wages in 1925 and the question of bonus in 1924. Previous to that there was the question of increases in dear food allowance. The fact is there was a definite grievance; whether that was formulated before the strike

or not, we need not discuss at the present moment. But the position has been entirely different since 1928 and 1929. No grievances were formulated; no grievances as a matter of fact existed when communism came in and completely demoralized the workers and the industry.

A-5056. In other words the communists and other agitators have come in between you and the workers quite recently in a way they have never come in before?—Surely.

A-5057. We have all that in the report. But what is your Association, as an association, doing actually in the recent years to counteract the influence of these people who have come in between you and your workers?—This year we have done considerable work in the way of trying to educate the workers and make them appreciate the realities of the situation. We used to meet every day sometimes twice a day. We issued printed leaflets and exhibited posters bringing home to the workers the real issues at stake. We got together representatives of commercial and trading interests in Bombay, and by writing articles in the papers and other means we did every mortal thing to break the baneful influence of communists. You have seen the results already.

A-5058. That is very satisfactory. I take it there are three parties in connection with this matter. There are the millowners, the mill workers and the public. Government acting on behalf of the public have appointed numerous committees of enquiry, including the Tariff Board. You are tired of these committees?—Do you want me to express my opinion? I think we can do with less number of committees.

A-5059. On your side, as far as I can see from these figures, you have, since 1914, given over 100 per cent. increases in wages. According to the figures before us, the cost of living has gone up only by 47 per cent. You told Sir Victor Sassoon that you have spent about Rs. 75 lakhs on housing and that the industry is contributing 10 lakhs annually; you have also been spending on welfare work. In spite of all that there has been unrest. Is it not possible to do something to bring the workers and the employers closer together?—It is quite possible.

A-5060. I rather gathered from your reply to Sir Victor Sassoon that you were not sure whether the trade union as at present constituted in Bombay would be able to bring you and the workers closer?—The point of view from which we are looking at this problem has nothing to do with the organization or want of organization of a trade union. I say that we want both the things—the sort of work that we are going to do as well as a strong trade union.

A-5061. My own feeling is that unless you have close contact with a properly organized trade union you will not be able to avoid trouble in future?—It is our hope that we shall be in a position to get at the right trade union's spirit, and so far as we are concerned we are prepared to do everything in our power to show in a tangible way our spirit of co-operation with the trade union.

A-5062. You have had experience of what are called mill committees. I notice that they appointed in each mill committees of various descriptions. That has been an unfortunate experience?—Very unfortunate.

A-5063. Has that prejudiced you against the possibility of trade union officers acting on behalf of workers in connection with troubles in the mills?—We have never objected to trade union officers representing the grievances of the work-people. The mill committees of which we have an unfortunate experience was something very different—one man working in a mill, going about from department to department and representing the grievances of any and everybody whom he could lay hold of.

A-5064. You object to that?—Yes.

A-5065. Tell us to what extent you will agree. Will you agree to a trade union official representing the case of a worker to the foreman or manager in the mill itself?—We have no objection to a trade union official representing the grievances of the work-people either in the mill itself or in any other place.

A-5066. You have no objection to a trade union official dealing with individual cases, apart from general questions affecting the body of workers?—None whatever. In this connection I might refer you to the report of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. In that a table is published which shows what individual grievances were represented by the union to the mills concerned and what redress they got.

A-5067. One of the main difficulties of the unions, as I understand, not the workers, has been the fear of victimization and reduction of staff as a result of the introduction of standardization and efficiency measures. As I read these returns, I find your workers have actually been reduced in Bombay before 1928. According to the figures I have here, in 1922 you had 151,000 workers in Bombay, while in 1927 you had only 145,000

workers; that is to say, the number of your employees has dwindled down by 6,000 before the actual standardization and efficiency schemes have come into play?—Due to spindles and looms being stopped on account of the depression in trade, certain reductions had to be made.

A-5068. On the other hand, take Ahmedabad. In 1922 they had only 54,000 workers, but in 1927 they had 60,000 workers, which means that the 6,000 workers that you were short of had gone over to them. Were they not equally suffering from depression in trade in Ahmedabad?—No; for various reasons Ahmedabad has not suffered from the depression anything like what we have suffered.

A-5069. *Mr. Ahmed*: What are the main objects of your Association?—They are all outlined in our reports. They are to promote the interests of the industry and the interests of the members of the Association.

A-5070. With regard to the reduction of hours of work, we have evidence before us that the production was not affected to any appreciable extent?—The weaving section suffered to a slight extent, but in the spinning section there was a considerable drop in the production; in other words, something was made up in the weaving, which is piece-work.

A-5071. You said that you are paying now about 100 per cent. more wages than what you were paying before 1914, and you also said that during the boom period your net return from the mills was not more than the Government paper?—During the last ten years, which included the period of boom, our yield was a little over 5 per cent.

A-5072. What is the period you consider to be the boom period?—1918, 1919, 1920 and partly 1921.

A-5073. During those four years you certainly made profits more than the Government paper?—Yes.

A-5074. We have got on record that during the boom period you made 100 to 200 per cent. profits?—I do not know how that has been calculated.

A-5075. You are concerned with 78 mills in Bombay. Will you tell us what are the percentages of net profits of these mills during the boom period?—(Mr. Saklatvala) The highest percentage of profit on the paid-up capital during the boom period was 40·1. I will give you the figures from 1917 onwards; they are given in Appendix V of the report of the Indian Tariff Board. In 1917 it was 22·2; then 28·7, 40·1, 35·2, 30·0, 16·4, 4·9, 8·2 and 2·2. (Mr. Mody) That does not give a fair picture at all.

A-5076. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What is the percentage on the block?—(Mr. Saklatvala) In 1917 it was 9·4, then 9·8, 18—that was the highest—, 17·8, 14, 8·8, 2, 1·8 and ·9.

A-5077. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you mean to say that none of the mills here, during the boom period, made a profit of more than 40 per cent.?—Individual mills may have, but that was the figure for the combined industry in Bombay.

A-5078. The rise in the cost of living has also gone up since 1914 by more than 100 per cent.?—No. These are the figures: In 1921, 78, then 64, 54, 57, 55, 54, 44 and 45 up to the end of September 1929.

A-5079. Are you prepared to tender your balance-sheets so that we can verify your statement?—As I said, all the balance-sheets of individual mills as well as the combined mills for the past three years were given to the Joint Strike Committee.

A-5080. But you have no objection to tender them to the Commission?—It will be difficult to get the balance-sheets of individual mills. (Mr. Mody) If you refer to the combined balance-sheets, yes. We tendered them before the Strike Committee, and if you want, we have no objection to tender them again to you.

A-5081. You said that you will have more closer relationship between the employers and the labour if a welfare officer was appointed?—What I said was that where there is welfare work going on in any mill on any considerable scale, an officer like that might prove useful; but where welfare work is not carried on on a considerable scale, I do not see what a welfare officer can do. I will certainly confine him to welfare work.

A-5082. I suppose you have a record kept of those men who do not attend work on account of sickness?—No. We only know that he absented himself; whether he was ill or whether he was away to attend to his private errand we do not know, because the workers do not ask for sick leave. If they ask for sick leave they always get it.

A-5083. How can he ask for sick leave if he is ill and is not looked after?—We are so indulgent that even when we know that there is not the slightest proof that a man has been ill, we take him in if there is a vacancy at the time of his return; if he produces a medical certificate he is always taken in.

A-5084. Suppose he is ill and takes leave with your permission, what arrangements do you make to look after him?—He can always take advantage of our mill dispensaries; in certain mills where they have whole-time doctors, there is the practice of the doctor going to the man in his house. But as a rule they prefer to be attended in their homes by their own doctors.

A-5085. You do not pay anything to the man during his sickness?—Yes.

A-5086. *Mr. Cliff*: Does your Millowners' Association represent the Sassoon group and the Finlay group?—Yes.

A-5087. Do you represent the shareholders of the cotton mills?—We represent the shareholders in the sense that the mills represent the shareholders and all the members of our Association are shareholders themselves.

A-5088. We have received a memorandum from the Bombay Shareholders' Association. What I am trying to find out is whether you associate yourself with that memorandum?—No.

A-5089. You do not represent certain shareholders then?—We do not represent the Shareholders' Association; we represent the shareholders in the sense that our members are shareholders.

A-5090. I find from the memorandum of the Shareholders' Association that apparently some shareholders differ from you?—That is possible.

A-5091. Are you represented on the Bombay European Textile Association?—Some of our members are members of the European Textile Association.

A-5092. No; what I want to know is whether the Millowners' Association has a right to send its representatives to the European Textile Association?—No.

A-5093. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: The Millowners' Association represents the owners of mills while the Textile Association represents the technical staff employed by the mills.

A-5094. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you represented on the Indian Merchants' Chamber?—No.

A-5095. Are you represented on the Bombay Chamber of Commerce?—No.

A-5096. With regard to labour legislation, do you welcome the creation of the International Labour Office?—Yes, up to a point; if you want a very frank answer, except where they try to force western standards upon the east which is industrially backward, we certainly welcome an organization like that.

A-5097. Does it mean that you have got special problems in the east?—Special conditions in the east, certainly.

A-5098. Would you favour a conference of eastern countries to examine those special problems?—We have not the least objection to any conference examining any problems; we are open to argument and discussion on general points of interest.

A-5099. Do you believe in the international regulation of the hours of labour?—Yes, if it is done to suit our conditions. For instance, in the Washington Convention, a special exception was made in respect of eastern countries; the hours of work were put on a different basis from that for western countries. As a matter of fact, so far as the textile industry in India is concerned, we have been actually working to that standard long before the regulation came into force.

A-5100. I wondered, after a lapse of ten years, whether that might not be a reason for examination of the problem in the East and I wanted to know whether your Association had considered that?—If it were to be an examination of the problem from every point of view, namely, the efficiency of the worker, the conditions of the industry in which he is employed, the special conditions of his work and also the hours of work, I will have no objection. As a matter of fact, very many mills have already taken steps on these and other cognate subjects.

A-5101. I understand your Association will be competent in putting down the conditions which you suggest are required for a conference?—I hope so.

A-5102. May I ask you whether you agree that for the workers employed in the industry here in Bombay there should be special provision made for times of sickness?—That depends upon the capacity of the industry to bear this burden; the thing may be very desirable from every point of view and yet the industry may be absolutely unable to adopt it.

A-5103. The Bombay Government have said to the Government of India that if the Commission find it desirable and practicable they will give it their support. May I ask whether the Millowners' Association associate themselves with the Bombay

Government's declaration?—We will associate ourselves with the declaration provided we are allowed to put our own interpretation on what is practicable and desirable. (Sir Munmohandas Ramji) But any scheme must be All-India one.

A-5104. I will come to that in a minute. Do you want to take up this attitude as an Association that you are the only body that can determine whether it is practicable and desirable?—(Mr. Mody) No, we are far from thinking like that. As a matter of fact, we have submitted our case times without number to any committee or individual that wanted to investigate this question. If we are convinced that the measures are practicable we will certainly act up to them.

A-5105. That is to say, you are willing to put up the case to the arbitrament of reason?—We are willing, but it depends on what proposals are put before us.

A-5106. We agree there. With regard to labour legislation, does your Association consider that labour legislation should cover the whole of India?—What we wish to say is that at any rate the textile industry should not be singled out as it seems to have been singled out on very many occasions.

A-5107. Would you say that the provinces should pass this legislation or would you say that the Central Government should pass this legislation?—The Central Government. I personally think that the time has come when the Indian States also ought to be brought into line with conditions in British India.

A-5108. I was going to ask you that question. Have you any observations to make on that point?—As I told you, I certainly think that the time has come when conditions of labour in Indian States ought to be brought into line with those in British India.

A-5109. Why do you say that?—I do not see any reason why conditions which have been held to be unfair in British India should be regarded as fair in non-British India.

A-5110. Is it your view that after the Commission on Labour has examined this question in British India it must take the question of States into account?—I should say certainly. If your terms of reference allow it, I would strongly suggest your making up your minds on that aspect of the question.

A-5111. We have been met in one or two places with the statement that certain factory owners have moved into Indian States because of the labour legislation enacted in British India. I want to ask you whether there are any members of the Bombay Millowners' Association who have moved into Indian States?—Some of our members have mills in Indian States, for instance, in places like Indore or in Nizam's dominions, but I cannot say that they have moved into those places.

A-5112. They have invested capital in concerns in Indian States?—Yes; they have mills in Indian States.

A-5113. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What you really mean is that they have not moved their mills from outside into inside although they may have developed the State by starting mills in the State?—That is so.

A-5114. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the Factories Act, have you any proposals, as an Association, for the amendment of that Act?—I think the Factories Act is on the whole working all right.

A-5115. Is that the view of your Association?—Yes, more or less.

A-5116. Have you any proposals to make for amendment of the Act with regard to the provision relating to women and children?—I do not think so.

A-5117. As far as your Association is concerned, the Factory Act is working all right?—Yes.

A-5118. What do you say about the Workmen's Compensation Act?—That is working all right. Certain amendments have been suggested and we have sent up representations with regard to those.

A-5119. Has your own Association made any proposals for amendment?—No.

A-5120. Are you in favour of the extension of the Factory Act to other industries which are not at the moment included therein?—I should not like to answer that without knowing what industries are referred to. There may be special conditions connected with some industries which would make the operation of the Act difficult with regard to them.

A-5121. You have said that amongst the work-people employed in the mills there is no class consciousness; that they are uneducated. You also admit that labour requires a strong trade union to see that it gets a square deal?—And that the millowners also shall get a square deal.

A-5122. Faced with the difficulty that there is no class consciousness on the side of the worker, while apparently there is on the side of the employer, you will admit, will you not, that your labour does require the protection which a strong trade union can offer?—Yes.

A-5123. Therefore in the absence of the protection of a strong trade union some other protection is needed?—Yes. You may legitimately infer that that is so.

A-5124. You have given some figures with regard to the money which has been spent on housing, but you have not told us the period which that covers. Is it possible for you to state the period which it covers, and what it represents per head of your working population?—We have put up 6,000 rooms, the majority of which have been erected during the last ten years.

A-5125. What is the comparison between the amounts which the millowners charge for their *chawls* and the rents charged for the Development *chawls*?—The rents which the millowners charge range from Rs. 3 to 5 per room. The rent charged for the Development *chawls* range from Rs. 5 to 9.

A-5126. How many people have you housed at rents ranging from Rs. 3 to 5?—6,000 rooms would house about 25,000 operatives.

A-5127. Do you think you would be able to persuade any of the operatives who now pay from Rs. 3 to 5 rent to go and occupy Development *chawls*?—That I submit is the work of social agencies like the Social Service League and trade unions.

A-5128. Will you ally yourself for a moment with the trade union and the social agencies with the object of persuading a man paying from Rs. 3 to 5 rent to go and occupy a Development *chawl* at Rs. 9 rent? Do you think it would be possible?—At present the *chawls* at Worli can be had for Rs. 4-8-0.

A-5129. They told me the rent was Rs. 9. With regard to the figures you give in relation to absenteeism, when I was at a mill the other day the register at the gate recorded the absentees, but I found that a very large proportion of the absentees were played off. The register recorded the total complement which was required, the number of absentees and the number of *baddis* employed; and in certain cases there had been set off 44 *baddis* as against 144 absentees?—(Mr. Saklatvala) Was the mill working to its full capacity? On our registers we always have about 5 or 10 per cent. more than the number actually required, and if a man turns up and he is not wanted he has to go away again.

A-5130. The register to which I am referring showed the complement required for different grades of labour. It then recorded the number of absentees, and in certain cases, under the column headed "*baddis* employed" in cases where there were absentees no *baddi* was employed. In other cases there were variations of 100 between the *baddi* column and the absentee roll. When I asked the reason for the difference it was said "Oh, these were men played off." If timekeeping registers are kept like that can we get an accurate record of absenteeism. Surely you do not call a man played off an absentee?—(Mr. Mody) Certain records have been compiled by the Labour Office. How far they are absolutely accurate I do not know.

A-5131. I am taking the opportunity of putting to you what I saw the other day in one of the mills, which does not seem to me to give a correct record of absenteeism?—It does not, as you state it. If you will give us the name of the mill we will make enquiries.

Mr. Cliff: I will get the Secretaries to send you a note.

A-5132. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: With regard to the return of absenteeism which you have handed in, Mr. Saklatvala, does that allow for looms and spindles which are not working for lack of orders?—(Mr. Saklatvala) At present we are working to our full capacity.

A-5133. So that this return shows the true absenteeism?—Yes.

A-5134. *Mr. Cliff*: Did I understand you to say that it is proposed to put into operation in a few months' time the out-of-work or the donation fund recommendations of the Fawcett Committee?—(Mr. Mody) If the condition laid down by the Fawcett Committee, namely, that there shall be a contribution on the part of the work-people is accepted, although we have come to no decision in the matter, my committee will be glad to give the matter its best consideration.

A-5135. You have been telling us that there is no particular union to negotiate with at the moment. Is that an insuperable obstacle to the scheme being put into operation?—It will depend upon the course of events in the future. The absence of a trade union strongly accentuates the difficulties of the situation, although I would not regard that as an absolute bar.

A-5136. It is stated in the Government of Bombay memorandum that you were approached by the Governor of Bombay and that your Association originally agreed with His Excellency on the point that wages should be paid on a fortnightly basis. Apparently a sub-committee of your Association met the Government, but when it came to your full committee your Association turned down the proposal, although your representatives who met the Government apparently agreed to a fortnightly period?—(Mr. Saklatvala) I happened to be the Chairman of the Association at that time, and His Excellency wrote to me privately saying that Lord Olivier was very keen on this matter and His Excellency was desirous of knowing whether we could institute fortnightly wages. I replied that personally I was in favour of such a system and that I would put the matter before my committee. This was in the month of May when some of our important members were away. We had a full meeting of the committee, who said, "In principle we agree. Whether it is a feasible and practical step to take is another matter, and we shall have to consult all our members." In all such matters concerted action has to be taken; there has to be a majority of 85 per cent. Then I wrote to His Excellency to the effect that we had a meeting and that the Association was prepared to accept the principle. Later we had a fuller meeting when our members had returned when it was found that some of the members had actually carried out the experiment and that the labour itself had opposed it. We decided then to make further enquiries through our jobbers and it was found that the majority of the men were not in favour of it. The statement made to me by my own jobber at the mill was to the effect that those persons who were of frugal habits and who saved their moneys said "It will be difficult for us to remit money to our villages if we get paid fortnightly. After all we are only human beings, and out of our first fortnightly pay we shall not have to pay rent or to pay for any other thing, because the whole economic life of the city is based on monthly payments. Therefore it is quite likely that we might spend the surplus, and when at the end of the next fortnight we get our money we shall have to make all our payments and have nothing left to send to our relatives in the villages." Then as regards those who were in the habit of spending all their money and as regards those (and there are a few) who are addicted to drink, they said if they got their money twice in a month they would spend it as soon as they got it. Therefore we dropped the idea. Another point was that we thought the textile industry should not be singled out again; that if the Government wanted to make a start in this direction they should make it in connection with their own department, and that then perhaps we should follow suit.

A-5187. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You make a statement in your memorandum regarding the prevalence of the habit amongst the workers of moving about from mill to mill. What method do you adopt when you want to dismiss or discharge an employee? Can he be dismissed on the spot?—(Mr. Mody) He can be in certain circumstances—for bad work or lack of discipline.

A-5138. I take it, therefore, that there is no security of tenure as far as the mill workers are concerned?—Security of tenure is good and efficient work.

A-5139. Suppose you introduced a system of provident fund for the workers: would that be an inducement for the workers to remain at the mill?—Several mills have provident funds.

A-5140. Do you find that that is an inducement to the workers to remain on?—I do not think the provident funds are taken advantage of by the work-people to anything like the extent they should be. If provident funds existed in all mills, and they were taken full advantage of by the workers, I think it would help materially.

A-5141. *The Chairman*: You think that the existence of a good provident fund would tend to stabilize labour?—It would. (Mr. Saklatvala) We have a provident fund at our Swadeshi mills, and about 147 of the workers have taken advantage of it.

A-5142. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the lowest wage of a person taking advantage of that scheme?—I could not say; but a number of the workers in the card room are taking advantage of it and they cannot be getting more than Rs. 30 a month.

A-5143. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have you any regular system in the mills for promotion of your workers?—Yes. In the Spinning Department a boy comes in as a doffer boy. After he has gained experience he is promoted to a sider.

A-5144. Is that promotion automatic or does it depend upon the whim of the jobber or of the management?—Neither. I can point out to you people in our own mills who have risen from doffer boys to jobbers.

A-5145. If you had a regular systematic method of promotion for the workers, according to the period of their service, efficiency, and so on, do you think that would help to stabilize labour?—Yes, it would. (Mr. Mody) There are so many different occupations that I think a regular system would be exceedingly difficult to apply.

A-5146. Suppose you had a regular system of giving higher pay for better work and long service, do you think that would help?—That is a very large question.

A-5147. You made a statement regarding a national Government; that if a national Government had existed you would have done certain things?—When I said "national Government" I meant a Government with a national outlook.

A-5148. Let us take it at that. If a system of Government like that existed, would you be in favour of allowing certain amenities for the workers which I am going to detail one by one. Would you be in favour, in order to increase the efficiency of your workers, of grouping your mills and providing, say, two hospitals for the workers in those mills, and their families?—Individual members of our Association have done a great deal in that direction. One firm has given 40 lakhs of rupees for the purpose of providing up-to-date hospitals, of which the fullest advantage is being taken by the work-people.

A-5149. Is there free treatment, free medicine and free nourishment?—Yes. I would like the Commission to visit those hospitals. Then there is a maternity hospital. These are the instances to show what is being done in the way of providing the most up-to-date treatment to the lowest paid of the working classes.

A-5150. Have you any system of relief committees to aid distressed workers?—No.

A-5151. Have you any system of sickness insurance?—No.

A-5152. When a worker falls ill and absents himself, on his return to work in a weak state of health do you take his condition into consideration and give him any sort of relief? For instance, do you allow him to work a few hours less a day at the same rate of wage?—We certainly take that into consideration.

A-5153. Is there any regular system?—No, there is not.

A-5154. Is there any pre-natal and post-natal attendance for the care of women workers?—Not as a regular system, but there are so many maternity homes provided by the Municipality in the working class areas that I do not see why it should be our duty to provide any more.

A-5155. Do you allow any loans to your workers if they need them at nominal rates of interest?—A good many mills give loans.

A-5156. There is no regular system?—No.

A-5157. Is there any regular system of welfare workers, overseers or home visitors, who keep in contact with the workers on behalf of the mills?—No. In answering all these questions I am not talking of what individual members are doing. I am talking of the industry as a whole.

A-5158. Is there any system, when you want to take disciplinary action against your workers, whereby a charge against the man can be investigated by a committee and then put up to the management?—No. But there are the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee which give the worker ample protection.

A-5159. I understood you to say that there is no personal contact?—Very little.

A-5160. Suppose you were face to face with a Government with a national outlook you would appreciate, would you not, the need for all these things, which I have detailed?—Yes.

A-5161. In regard to technical education, is there any regular system utilized by your Association for the training of these operatives?—There is a technical institute to which we make donations. There are night schools, and there is the social service league.

A-5162. Apart from the Victoria Jubilee Institute, there is no regular method whereby men who come into your mills are given training in any particular department?—Suppose a spinner wants to be trained as a weaver?—He finds no difficulty at all in getting that training.

A-5163. Is there any systematic method laid down?—No.

A-5164. You state that there are special problems in the East and that therefore there must be some sort of differentiation made. Do I take it that sickness is one of the special problems in the East?—No. I had primarily in mind the backwardness of Eastern countries in industrial development.

A-5165. As far as special conditions are concerned you take them into consideration where the interests of the millowners are concerned. Do you also take them into consideration where the interests of the workers are concerned?—Yes.

A-5166. You state that you would welcome various schemes for the amelioration of the workers provided it did not place a burden on the industry?—Yes, and provided that the industry is able to bear the burden.

A-5167. You are quite willing to demand certain ameliorative measures for the industry, even if they mean a burden on the consumer, but you are not prepared to place a burden on your industry for the amelioration of the operatives?—You forget that it is now a question of our very existence.

A-5168. Take a mill with a complement of 1,000: if you were asked, in any scheme of sickness insurance, to pay your quota of, say, 8 annas per head, would you consider the sum of Rs. 500 a month to be an excessive burden on your industry?—Certainly.

A-5169. Is there a single managing agent of any mill in Bombay who draws less than Rs. 500?—I hope not.

A-5170. What is the minimum remuneration drawn by a managing agent?—In some cases it is Rs. 12,000 and in other cases it is Rs. 25,000.

A-5171. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is that minimum taken advantage of while the mill is working at a loss?—No.

A-5172. *Diwan Uhaman Lall*: Would those managing agents who are taking advantage of it be prepared to release the amount they are taking for the purposes of social insurance?—The managing agent puts in his time and labour and capabilities, and we do not propose to deprive any man of the fruits of his labour. In addition, he puts in a very considerable part of his financial resources.

A-5173. Is it correct to say that many managing agents take a commission on store purchases?—I do not know of any.

A-5174. Do any managing agents take a commission on insurance?—Those who are agents of any insurance companies might get commission.

A-5175. All these charges are a burden on the industry, are they not?—You might as well argue that the maintenance of a staff is a burden on the industry. They are not a burden on the industry.

A-5176. If a mill agent insures his mill with the particular insurance company of which he himself is the managing agent, and he takes his commission on that, what particular service is he performing for which he gets remuneration?—(Mr. Saklatvala): Our firm happens to be agents of insurance companies as well as agents of mill companies. It is true that the insurance companies give a certain commission to our firm. That commission is given to us to obtain business for the insurance companies. It is not only the mill business. There is other business also which we place with the insurance company. For that we have to incur certain expenditure. What we earn from the insurance company is not what we earn in our capacity as agents of the mill, but for services rendered to the insurance company. Our firm also supplies hydro-electric power, and as agents of the hydro-electric company we get remuneration. Because we happen to be agents of mill companies it does not follow that we have no right to get remuneration for the other work we do.

A-5177. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: The Tariff Board in their report state: "The fluctuations in the price of raw material in recent years must be regarded as one of the main causes of the condition in which the industry finds itself." Have you any constructive proposals to make in regard to these fluctuations in the prices of raw materials?—(Mr. Mody): These prices are beyond our control.

A-5178. You have recently withdrawn your recognition from the Girmi Kamgar Union. Does that show a desire on your part to encourage trade unionism?—Yes. It is the best proof of our desire to co-operate with the right sort of trade union.

A-5179. Are you putting yourself in the position of judges as to what is the right sort and wrong sort of trade union?—No. We have left that to the public and to independent committees.

A-5180. When the Girmi Kamgar Union was a powerful body, with about 64,000 members, you were very anxious to deal with it, but now when it is not a powerful union you take this opportunity of breaking off relations with it?—It is precisely the other way round. In spite of the fact that that Union had tendencies which we deprecated and which I think all people deprecated, because they were a registered trade union we co-operated with it. What did we get in return? It is only after months and months of this sort of thing that we have come to the opinion to break relations. We gave them a considerable time in which to mend their ways, but they have not done so.

A-5181. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it the case that other trade unions have complained to you about giving recognition to this red flag union?—These complaints have been received by us.

A-5182. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You state that in your Association there is a committee which looks after the management of the industry as a whole. Is there a special committee of your Association which looks after the labour problems of the industry ?—Yes.

A-5183. Does that special committee come into constant contact with the Union ?—Whenever there is an occasion.

A-5184. Would you be in favour of setting up a joint machinery for the purpose of keeping in constant contact in each mill ?—Personally I would be very strongly in favour of that.

A-5185. Would you have any objection to the existing union, or any union which is formed, being officially represented on that joint committee ?—We have not considered that, but I am not prepared to say that we would not welcome unions which are functioning on the right lines.

A-5186. A question was asked you about increase in wages. You know that the cost of living index is not really correct. In the report of the Tariff Board it is stated : "The report of the committee on Prices in 1912 shows that there is reason to believe that wages in the cotton mill industry of Bombay in the period immediately preceding the war had not adjusted themselves to the general rise in prices throughout the country." Do you agree with that ?—The Tariff Board said that there was a general lag of wages behind prices, both on the upward curve and on the downward curve.

A-5187. I am not taking a definite period. It says : "The pre-war rate of wages had not adjusted itself to the prices then prevailing" ?—I am not prepared to admit that.

A-5188. In spite of the finding of the Tariff Board ?—What were the materials on which they formed that conclusion ?

Diwan Chaman Lall : Materials were placed before the Committee on Prices in 1912.

Sir Alexander Murray : It shows that in 1910 spinners were getting Rs 100, and in 1928 they were getting 229. So that since 1910 the wages have increased 129 per cent.

A-5189. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : The point is this. They say the wages in the cotton mill industry immediately preceding the war had not adjusted themselves to the general rise in prices throughout the country ?—That applies not only to that period but to all periods. This table clearly brings out that wages throughout have lagged behind prices.

A-5190. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimloola* : In your memorandum you have emphasized in a number of places the question of the high wages paid in Bombay. I believe you are referring to high wages both as regards money and as applying to the cost of production ?—(Mr. Mody) : Exactly, relatively to the cost of production.

A-5191. You have to compete with up-country mills and with foreign countries and with mills situated in Indian States ?—Yes.

A-5192. You pay more rupees in wages than these up-country mills pay ?—Yes.

A-5193. And though foreign manufacturers pay more in money, the production is so high that the cost of production is low ?—Though in comparison with foreign countries it may be the wages are low, they are high compared to the production.

A-5194. Why are your wages in money higher in Bombay than they are in other parts of British India and in Indian States ?—One thing is that Bombay is a highly progressive city and in these days we have to pay for the privilege of being highly progressive. Taxes are laid on year after year regardless of the weakening backs of the poor taxpayers ; the Municipality lays it on, the Government lays it on and all sorts of people lay it on. The cost of everything being high, that is why our wages have to be proportionately high.

A-5195. Is it your contention that relatively speaking Municipal, Imperial, Provincial and other taxation is much higher in the City of Bombay than it is in up-country stations and Indian States ?—That is my contention.

A-5196. I can quite understand Municipal taxation being on a higher scale, because that is local taxation, but how can you justify your contention that Imperial and Provincial taxation which is levied on the whole Province or the whole country is higher in Bombay than in other parts ?—We are regarded more or less as the milch cow, and there are certain heads of revenue under which Bombay makes larger contributions than practically any other part of India ; for instance, income tax, stamp revenue, excise revenue. I think our Provincial services are more expensive than those of any other Presidency.

A-5197. But that taxation would affect up-country mills as well. We were told that the Bombay mills with few exceptions have been unable to pay dividends to their shareholders and 6 or 7 mills have now stopped working after the strike, while in Ahmedabad they are building 7 new mills and have been paying fair dividends to their shareholders. How do you explain the position?—It has been dealt with by the Tariff Board (p. 116 of their Report) who found that Bombay enjoyed certain climatic and other advantages, and other advantages were enjoyed by the up-country mills.

A-5198. Do you think rents are increased by reason of the sanitary measures adopted by the Bombay Municipality?—Everything here is on a higher scale and we have to pay for these civilized amenities.

A-5199. Then the Bombay mill industry cannot for those reasons stand competition with the up-country mills?—No, I would not say that. I think our labour is slightly more efficient than the labour of Ahmedabad and certainly more efficient than the labour of other places.

A-5200. But there is nothing inherently superior in the labour of Bombay as compared with other places?—I think for the better type of work we are more favourably situated, for instance, for finer counts.

A-5201. Are your finer counts woven from Indian cotton?—A good deal of it is. We have already commenced to diversify our production and are going in for finer counts.

A-5202. Then am I to take it that the solution of your difficulty in Bombay is to go in for finer counts?—To a certain extent. As compared with up-country mills we are at a disadvantage in certain respects; they are closer to the cotton centres and the consuming centres.

A-5203. The Textile Labour Union in their evidence said the relations between the staff and the management and the rank and file are anything but cordial at present, one might almost say they are bitter; in spite of many professions to the contrary, the working class is still looked upon and treated as a commodity and not as human beings having the same human feelings as those of the employers; the touch of human sympathy with the workers and their legitimate aspirations is steadily lacking; there is generally a tendency to browbeat the workers, assault them and treat them as people below contempt. This is a very wholesale condemnation if true. Is there any foundation for this?—It is a very lurid and distorted picture.

A-5204. Do the partners of the firms of managing agents try to come into direct touch with labour?—There are many agents who make it their business to try and understand first hand what the operatives are doing; there are others who do not; but at the same time I stoutly dispute the proposition that there is no human touch; we may not shake hands with our work-people the first thing in the morning, but I think we treat them fairly as human beings.

A-5205. Do members of the firms of managing agents visit their factories?—Yes, the large majority of them do. I think a great many of them visit the factories every day and go through the departments.

A-5206. How much time do they spend at the factories?—Mr. Saklatvala probably spends 2 to 3 hours, other people may spend an hour and a half. (Sir M. Ramji): I spend 3 hours at the mill.

A-5207. Do some of them confine their visits to the manager's office examining vouchers?—(Mr. Mody): It may be so in a few cases but I would not admit it as a general proposition by any means.

A-5208. Does your Association keep any record of these personal visits and contact with labour?—No.

A-5209. Mr. Saklatvala, do you go to see your mills every day?—(Mr. Saklatvala): Yes, I do.

A-5210. How many mills have you?—Two mills, the Swadeshi mills and the Tata mills.

A-5211. How often do you visit your mills in Bombay?—Every day.

A-5212. How long do you spend there?—It depends. If there are important questions to discuss it may take about 2½ hours; generally I spend about 1½ to 2 hours at the mills.

A-5213. Do you watch the workmen at work?—Certainly.

A-5214. Do you ever make an effort to speak to them personally?—I go through every department, and whenever there is any complaint, especially against the staff, the men come to me; not only that, but the men come to me in my office.

A-5215. While you are inspecting, do you ever speak to any men?—I do.

A-5216. That is to say, you try to keep in touch with the workmen while they are at work?—Yes.

A-5217. Do you think that is generally the case with all millowners?—I cannot say that. (Mr. Mody): Of course the manager is there on the spot; why should he be disassociated from the managing agents?

A-5218. Mr. Joshi: You say your industry has to compete with Japan and there are conditions which favour Japan in that competition. Would not a useful purpose be served by a thorough enquiry into the competitive conditions in Japan, China and India: by a committee representative of workers, millowners and Government?—If you can get at facts by such a representative committee, I certainly say yes; but what would be the object of such a committee?

A-5219. To get agreement between workers, employers and Government as to the conditions that exist in those countries?—But if labour in India finds that labour in those countries is much more efficient, will labour agree to endeavour to make itself more efficient in India?

A-5220. Certainly they will consider that. Would your Association also favour the idea of a conference which should be held under the auspices of the International Labour Office and which should consist of representatives of Governments, employers and workers in India, China and Japan?—If there is fair representation of every point of view, if all the differential conditions that exist in different countries and different industries are examined carefully, if due allowance is made for all differences, and if the recommendations are enforced—if all those things are done, of course we should be happy. I am certainly not opposed to such a conference.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Would labour agree to the results of the conference?

Mr. Joshi: I am prepared to say this, that if all the parties agree, labour will agree.

Sir Victor Sassoon: But can you bind labour?

Mr. Joshi: Can you bind all the employers in India?

Sir Victor Sassoon: We can bind the Millowners' Association of Bombay.

A-5221. Mr. Joshi: Have you made any effort to get into touch with employers in the Indian States with a view to securing approximation of the labour conditions?—We as an employers' association have no control over conditions in the Indian States; that is a matter for the Government of India. We know the conditions that obtain in Indian States; I will not say that we have gone beyond that.

A-5222. Have you asked the Government of India to call a conference of the employers in British India and the Indian States?—No. We made a representation I think once, but I cannot exactly recall in what connection it was. There might be some good in a joint effort in that direction on the part of Government, the employers and labour, but I do not see why we should go to all this trouble when all that is required is the simple enforcement of the Factories Act in the Indian States.

A-5223. Do you desire to establish joint mill committees under the auspices of the millowners?—We are prepared to investigate that.

A-5224. Have you considered what kinds of subjects would be discussed by these joint committees? For instance, would they discuss wages?—No, because that, I think, would be the function of the trade union and the employers' association. That is where works committees are likely to go astray: not confining themselves to their proper functions.

A-5225. Will you define the functions of works committees?—Smoothing the way all along. There are so many things which require to be dealt with in the course of the day-to-day administration of a mill.

A-5226. The Chairman: Things which are peculiar to the mills in which they spend their time but which are not peculiar to the industry as a whole?—Yes.

A-5227. Mr. Joshi: In the event of a rise of wages being required owing to an increase in the cost of living, these committees would be of no use?—No.

A-5228. In that case you will depend upon the union?—The union putting up a case.

A-5229. Will you have a sort of super council of these joint committees to consider certain problems common to all the mills?—But why should that be necessary if there is a proper trade union functioning.

A-5230. Supposing a man is dismissed from one of the mills, will the mill committee consider that question?—I think a different procedure will be provided for dealing with such matters. I maintain that larger questions which affect labour should be handled by the trade union and not by the committees.

A-5231. Has your Millowners' Association considered the question of public employment exchanges?—We do not think it is at all necessary. This subject was threshed out by the Tariff Board. The mills start at 7 o'clock and we must have men at that time; we cannot ring up the exchange to know whether there are weavers or carders available and wait till they get to the mill.

A-5232. But suppose you want some more spinners?—That question does not trouble us at the moment, because with the exception of certain periods of the year labour is available. From the point of view of labour, this system will not work for the next 25 years unless labour is educated, because labour will simply want to go to the mill gate to which it finds it most convenient to go.

A-5233. In Bombay do the spinning and weaving masters go to the mills at the time of starting?—(Mr. Saklatvala) As far as my information goes, although in one of our mills our spinning and weaving masters are there from the start, but in most mills they come in an hour later, at 8.

A-5234. We have been told that labourers are employed by jobbers, but you generally state that they are employed by the heads of departments. I was wondering how the heads of departments can employ workers if they are not there?—The assistant masters are all there and for the purpose of recruiting labour they are as good as the masters.

A-5235. Have you made the experiment which the Fawcett Committee recommended of reducing hours by half an hour a day?—(Mr. Mody): No. I personally would be most reluctant to make an experiment of that kind because it would establish the practice. We have not considered that point, but it is a question which affects hours and it has to be handled very carefully.

A-5236. Is welfare work done as a business proposition or on humanitarian grounds?—On humanitarian grounds.

A-5237. If you spend Ra. 30,000 a year on welfare work, for say 1,000 workers it amounts to 4 annas per worker per month. Do you anticipate that that will cause strikes to cease?—(Mr. Saklatvala): I never said that welfare work would stop strikes. (Mr. Mody): We should expect a responsible trade union to be a factor in preventing strikes.

A-5238. I suppose you would get some financial advantage from your standardization scheme?—Very little. If labour is willing to stand by the understanding expressed in the Fawcett Committee's recommendation, namely, that it will co-operate with us in putting the standardization scheme into operation, we are prepared to give up the 7½ per cent. cut.

A-5239. I do not want to go into the past too much, but by saying you would deal only with a registered trade union, you were showing your desire to assist the Bombay Textile Labour Union. Were you not giving the Bombay Textile Labour Union a very flimsy advantage, because any trade union can easily get itself registered, and you soon found you were dealing also with two or three other unions besides the Bombay Textile Labour Union?—(Mr. Saklatvala): When we made that statement the Bombay Textile Labour Union was the only registered trade union and we hoped it would have the courage to come forward irrespective of the communists who were trying to capture the trade union movement.

A-5240. The Bombay Textile Labour Union might have thought that if they went into conference to-day, to-morrow they might find in the same conference three other unions, and therefore they were perhaps wise in not agreeing to your conditions?—(Mr. Mody): Is that why the Textile Labour Union joined hands with a lot of avowed communists? I think the psychological moment was missed, when the Bombay Textile Labour Union could have established itself.

A-5241. You expected the Bombay Textile Labour Union to refuse to co-operate with the Girni Kamgar Union or the communists, but were you not after a few days yourselves willing to co-operate with the Girni Kamgar Union?—Because they got themselves registered.

A-5242. You were willing to co-operate with the communists when they had got themselves registered but you expected the Bombay Textile Labour Union to refuse to cooperate?—You see we had no option. After all the Bombay Textile Labour Union got together with the communists and formed a joint strike committee.

A-5243. *Mr. Clow*: You have established a mutual organization for dealing with workmen's compensation claims?—Yes.

A-5244. Is it working satisfactorily?—Quite.

A-5245. How do you find that the rates compare with those charged to the general public?—Our rates compare very favourably with those quoted to us by the insurance company when we had not the mutual organization.

A-5246. Do you contest many cases?—No. Our object is not to contest cases.

A-5247. Have you any experience as to how the workers or their dependents spend the money paid to them?—No.

A-5248. Then you cannot say whether the payment of lump sums is preferable to recurring payments or payment by instalments?—I understand that we have sent in a representation recently stating that we have no objection to a lump sum payment provided the Commissioner is given discretion to pay it out in such instalments as he thinks necessary.

A-5249. I understand that operatives enjoy informal intervals during the employer's time?—I am afraid that is so.

A-5250. During the 10 hours how long is the worker actually working?—It is difficult to arrive at an exact estimate, but I am afraid the work-people do not work for more than 8 to 8½ hours; that is our general estimate.

A-5251. While the worker is out of the factory I suppose his comrade has no difficulty in looking after his work or his machine?—I am afraid he looks after it very inadequately.

A-5252. Would it not be possible to regularize those intervals and to secure the same work by reducing hours?—That is why we raised the question of half an hour's interval years and years ago. I remember I had an informal discussion with Mr. Bakhale. There is an organization of weaving and spinning masters, which also consulted Mr. Joshi's Union at that time and they were all against it.

A-5253. Your proposal as you have explained it to us would have the effect of getting more work out of the worker because instead of enjoying half an hour's interval in your time he would be taking it in his own time?—We are not prepared to accept the principle of anything less than a ten-hour day.

A-5254. You admit you are only getting an eight hours' day as it is?—That is hardly an argument. If they loiter about for an hour and half, why should it be said "Let them have an 8-hour day and keep them in."

A-5255. In this climate do you think it is possible for the operatives to work for ten hours' real work?—I do not say the worker can put in five hours at a stretch on a machine, they occasionally go out.

A-5256. A small group which has just joined your Association did work for some time on two 8-hour shifts?—Yes.

A-5257. You say in your memorandum that attempts have been made in the past to introduce the fortnightly system of payment. Since an attempt was made at the Sassoon Mills in 1912 has any endeavour been made in that direction?—As recently as last month an attempt was made by one mill to find out whether the system of fortnightly payments would be acceptable to the work-people. An attempt was made in 1925 to introduce the system.

A-5258. That was not merely an enquiry?—No. It was an attempt to introduce it.

A-5259. We have been assured by the Bombay Textile Union that the workers favour fortnightly payments?—Let them come definitely and officially before us and we will consider it, provided we are satisfied that there is a general demand from labour, and that labour will appreciate the benefit of fortnightly payments.

A-5260. *Divan Chaman Lall*: You have so far only consulted the jobbers and not the actual workers?—We consulted the workers through the jobbers.

A-5261. *Mr. Clow*: The great bulk of the operatives in the mills are Marathi-speaking?—Yes.

A-5262. Do any of the millowners talk Marathi as their mother-tongue?—Hardly any, but most of us have a smattering of Marathi.

A-5263. The millowners are all Parsis, Europeans or Gujeratis?—Yes.

A-5264. Do any of the managers speak Marathi as their mother-tongue?—Yes, but not many.

A-5266. Do you think it is possible for a worker in Bombay to work continuously throughout the year without a break?—I do not think it would be desirable, and he never does.

A-5268. Have you ever considered the question of giving short holidays with pay?—No. I think it is a little unfair to ask us to do these things which would make it even more difficult for us. There seems to be a tendency to think that the employers in India should do a great many things which are not thought of in any other part of the world.

A-5267. I understand your operations are hampered to some extent by the fact that a large number of your operatives want to go away at certain times of the year?—Yes, for harvest operations and marriages.

A-5268. Is it possible that if holidays were allowed you would get a more regular supply of labour throughout the year?—No, because they will all want to be going away at a set period.

A-5269. *Miss Power*: Is your Association definitely in favour of curtailing the powers of the jobber in respect of recruitment?—Certainly.

A-5270. In your memorandum you quote an extract from a letter of the 10th January 1928, which deals with this question. We have had a lot of evidence submitted to us from the unions, from Government and from independent sources implying that the power of the jobber has not decreased, but is as strong as ever?—I do not agree. I say it is impossible that it can be the same now that labour has been awakened.

A-5271. You tell us in your memorandum that 71 mills out of a total of 88 mills in Bombay are members of your Association and that in matters of general policy the decisions of the Association are respected by mills which are not members. That means to say that if the Association adopts a certain policy you are practically certain of being able generally to enforce it?—That is so.

A-5272. We understand the difficulty of dealing with the jobbers but have your Association adopted any concrete suggestions for curtailing the power of the jobber?—The matter has been left to individual mills, but the standardization schema would certainly mean a considerable curtailment of such powers as the jobber enjoys.

A-5273. That is not yet put into force and in the two years' interval since the letter quoted in your memorandum, has your Association done anything to try to curtail the power of the jobber?—No concerted action has been taken, but I think most mills are alive to the fact that the powers of the jobber have to be curtailed.

A-5274. Could the power of the jobber be curtailed if you took concerted action?—There is also the fact that the labour is less and less recruited by the jobbers.

A-5275. Why is there such a heavy consensus of opinion in all our memoranda indicating that the power of the jobber has not decreased?—All I can say is that prejudices die hard.

A-5276. Where does the truth lie between these two?—The truth would lie somewhere in the middle.

A-5277. The jobber has still 50 per cent. of the powers?—I would not say 50 per cent. or 40 per cent., but he has got certain powers still over labour, but the owners are trying to remove those powers more and more.

A-5278. But your Association is not doing anything concrete to hasten the dethronement of the jobber as an oppressor of labour?—As soon as the standardization scheme is put through, I think the powers of the jobber will be considerably curtailed.

A-5279. Your Association does not feel that there is much bribery. We have had evidence on this, for instance the Senior Lady Investigator of the Labour Office in her evidence gave us definite scales of bribery that she found in force both in respect of obtaining a job and in retaining it; that is, definite payments made at stated intervals?—I am afraid it is a case of giving a dog a bad name and hanging him. There is a lot of loose talk.

A-5280. This is not loose talk; it is the result of detailed investigations made by a Government department?—Let me give you something to rebut that presumption. After all it will be very difficult for anybody to prove cases of bribery. One would have thought that the Bombay Textile Labour Union was a sufficiently live body and certainly knew its job. I find in their report for the last year that during the whole year three cases of bribery were brought to their notice. If bribery was going on such a large scale in the industry this representative body of labour should have had more than three cases in a whole year.

A-5281. That may be for a good reason, that during periods of shortage of work, people are afraid of making such complaints?—There was nothing to deter them from going to their own union and at least reporting the cases. So much was sought to be established before the Court of Enquiry against the millowners. Was there a single case of bribery proved?—I do not deny the possibility of bribery, knowing human nature as I do, but I cannot subscribe to a statement that bribery is being practised wholesale, no matter what people in a position to investigate may say, unless I have the facts.

A-5282. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How do the millowners stop bribery?—They can only handle cases which are brought to notice, by disciplinary action, which they always do; they dismiss the jobber; they cannot deal with a set of cases which are nebulous.

A-5283. *The Chairman*: Are there many cases of dismissal of jobbers?—Not many.

A-5284. *Miss Power*: Speaking about the question of an employment exchange you stated that the workers would not use it. Workers of course will use it only to the same extent as employers. If they can get work only through the exchange, then they will learn that they must go to the exchange to get work?—I do not know that. The present arrangement is quite workable in my opinion. The worker goes to the locality where he finds work would be most useful to him. If he is to get work through a labour exchange, the exchange may be situated two or three miles away, and he will have to walk up to it. Now he gets work within a few yards or a quarter of a mile.

A-5285. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would he accept work in any mill?—Not necessarily.

A-5286. *Miss Power*: You state that the amount of money orders sent out to the villages is an indication of the prosperity of the mill workers, and you suggest that the Commission might obtain information of the extent of remittances by money order sent to villages from the post offices in the mill area. But on the question of indebtedness you say that your Association has no information on the subject. I take it that you would agree that the amount of indebtedness cannot be separated from the question of remittances; they may send remittances, even though they get into debt?—The extent of remittances would certainly be an indication of their prosperity. It is very largely a presumption to say that all these money orders are made from borrowed money. I am personally of opinion that those money orders are sent from definite savings.

A-5287. You do not suggest that we should make an enquiry into the one and not into the other. Do you think that one investigation without the other would be of any benefit?—No we think both investigations may be made.

A-5288. *Mr. Lalji*: It has been stated that most of the mills have non-technical persons as directors; is it because the mills have to appoint debenture holders and representatives of banks on the directorate in order to get loans?—That depends on their usefulness. Many mills would appoint non-technical men if they found it of some advantage; others may not.

A-5289. Is it not a fact that most of the mills have to appoint debenture holders on the directorate?—Financial interests also count in the appointment of directors.

A-5290. The mill industry has been suffering from depression since 1921. Is it a fact that most of the mills or a large number of mills have issued debentures?—Many mills have gone into liquidation and many mills have had to write down their capital.

A-5291. I want to know whether it is a fact that a large number of mills have issued debentures?—Debentures also have to be issued.

A-5292. What is the rate of interest?—Anything over 7 per cent; seven to eight per cent.

A-5293. And the brokerage over that?—It depends.

A-5294. You have given us figures of profits from 1917 to 1927. Can you give us some idea as to what the position of the industry was between 1910 and 1914, i. e., for five years before the War?—The industry was in a fairly healthy condition.

A-5295. There has been some complaint about the administration of the mill agents. Will you kindly tell us what are the salaries of the Manager, the Weaving Master, the Carder and the Spinner in a first class concern?—The Manager gets Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000; the Weaving Master from Rs. 800 to Rs. 1,200; the Carder and Spinner anything between Rs. 600 and Rs. 800.

A-5296. *Mr. Clow*: Does the Manager get commission?—No.

A-5297. I am told he gets some commission.—Sometimes the managing agents get something less than the Manager.

A-5293. Have you received any complaints from the labourers that the millowners in Bombay use cotton inferior to the required standard for spinning a certain count?—We have heard no responsible men making that complaint.

A-5299. That point was never brought as one of the causes of strike at any time?—Not that I know of.

A-5300. Was any complaint made that figures are manipulated to show less than is due to the labourers on their production, I mean complaints that labourers are given less wages than are due to them?—Vague grievances about wages are very often made.

A-5301. But there is no general complaint that the millowners pay less than is actually due?—No.

A-5302. Have you made any representation to Government that arrangement should be made to get pure cotton from the districts into Bombay?—The Cotton Marketing Act is a step in the right direction.

A-5303. On the question of absenteeism after the pay days, have you tried to find out how much money is spent on liquor?—We do not know how much is spent, but a good deal is spent on liquor.

A-5304. Is it a fact that Government have asked the millowners to have a fixed pay day for all the mills, so that they can close the liquor shops on that day?—We would not mind if such a thing were done, but I do not think Government would exactly like it.

A-5305. There used to be schools run by the millowners, but I understand that they have been closed since the introduction by the Municipality of compulsory education?—Besides half-timers have been reduced to a considerable extent now, and there is hardly any object to be served by having these schools.

A-5306. Formerly the Municipality used to spend 8 to 9 lakhs but now they are spending 30 lakhs on education. The Municipality wants to extend compulsory education to all the wards, if Government give them help?—Yes. Considering that the millowners are contributing a very substantial portion of the municipal rates, we may be said to be paying for all these things.

A-5307. In your memorandum you state that there used to be shops to supply grain at cheap rates to the millhands. Why have they been discontinued now?—Because, I think, there is not the same necessity. Those shops were opened when high prices were ruling; prices have come down now. Besides it was found that those shops were not taken advantage of sufficiently. One reason for that may be that the operatives preferred to get their supply of grain from somebody who would give them long credit.

A-5308. With respect to the practice of giving advances to workmen, has that practice also been discontinued?—I think that still prevails; if at all it is slightly on the increase.

A-5309. With regard to the Maternity Benefits Act, one of the reasons for your objection, as voiced by your representative in the Council, was that it should not be confined to Bombay but that there should be an All-India Act. Is it because you wish that you should not be handicapped in your competition with mills in Indian States and other provinces?—On the general ground that there is no reason why Bombay should be singled out for these things and the rest of India left alone.

A-5310. Are workers free to work as long as they like?—No, I cannot say that. They certainly work for less than 10 hours.

A-5311. With regard to the managing agency, do the mills get advances from the banks without the security of the managing agents?—No.

A-5312. Why is that so?—Because that is the Indian banking system. I have hardly known of a case in which the banks have lent money without the security of the managing agents.

A-5313. What is the rate charged by the banks for advances given to the mills?—1 per cent. above the bank rate.

A-5314. Is it not 2 per cent. above the bank rate in some cases?—Some unfortunate people have to pay that rate.

A-5315. And the bank rate is 5 per cent.?—It has been higher sometimes. Very recently it was nearly 6 per cent. The average rate has been 7 per cent. for us.

A-5316. Do the millowners therefore have to borrow money at 7 and 8 per cent. to finance their concerns?—Yes, it is not less than 7 per cent. for the best of them.

A-5317. *Miss Cama* : Do you know of any mill where the jobbers and *naskins* have been deprived of their power of engaging and discharging labour? What have been the results of such a system?—I do not know of any specific instance.

A-5318. I am told there is a mill in Bombay which directly engages and discharges labour, and that as a result the rate of constant change of hands has gone down considerably? Do you know anything about that?—It may be. I have not sufficient information to dispute it.

A-5319. During the last strike your Association took a great part in making the labourers realize that it would be to their advantage if they came back to the mills?—Yes.

A-5320. If you took the same interest in their welfare now and told them that it would be to their advantage if they increased their efficiency, would they not do so?—We have made several attempts in the past and we hope to make more attempts in the future. We have to see whether they will increase their efficiency or not; we hope they will.

A-5321. *Mrs. Wagh* : Have you made any attempts to replace these jobbers and *naskins* by taking up educated men and women and training them for a few months?—We could do that if we could get the right type of men. We are attempting to replace the jobbers and *naskins* with better type of men.

A-5322. Dealing with the average duration of employment you say in your memorandum: "The Association has no definite information on this subject." As this is an important matter is it not possible for your Association to collect statistical information on the subject?—During the last two strikes conditions have changed so greatly and labour has changed over so much, that it is very difficult to get any reliable information.

A-5323. But will statistical information on this point be collected in future?—We have not made any attempt in this direction; but if Government or other agency undertakes the task we are prepared to co-operate with them.

A-5324. Dealing with sub-letting you say: "Although sub-letting in its strict sense is not common in the *chawls* erected by employers, the greatest difficulty is experienced in preventing overcrowding resulting from the system of 'paying guests.'" Do they take paying guests because their income is so low and they want to add to that?—I should say that their standard of life has remained very low inspite of the appreciation of their monetary position. They do not as a rule want to spend anything more on housing than they can possibly help. That is why inspite of the rents being low, they try to reduce, them still further by taking paying guests.

A-5325. Is it the case that persons in search of employment are taken as paying guests because there are no public employment agencies and they have to be assisted with board and lodging while they are on the look-out for employment?—I would not say that.

A-5326. Is it due to high rents?—No. Though our rents are low, we have great difficulty in keeping out the lodgers and paying guests.

A-5327. Dealing with the physique of the workers, you say: "the physique of workers is notably poor in Indian industries generally," and you give as one of the reasons, "the absence of proteins and other necessary vitamins from their normal dietary." Has the poor quality of the food consumed anything to do with the wages received?—No, I could not say that.

A-5328. Do not the Bombay working classes consume less food than the convicts in jail?—I presume the convicts in jail do not get as much money as our labourers do. If our labourers want, they can certainly buy more food with the money they have.

A-5329. But is it not true that at present the labourers consume less food than the convicts in jail?—I do not know whether to be sorry for the convicts or the labourers. I cannot say anything about that.

A-5330. Dealing with voluntary sickness benefit, you say that "it might be possible to attain a greater degree of satisfaction from such schemes if the State contributed towards the cost." What proportion of the cost would you be prepared to bear and what proportion would you want the State to bear?—Personally, I think, it is the business of the State to shoulder the whole burden. I do not see any reason why a depressed industry like the cotton textile industry should be asked to shoulder this burden.

A-5331. You stated this morning that the workers preferred to be treated in their own homes by their own doctors. What could be the reason for that? Did you mean to suggest that the poor workers could afford to have a doctor and pay him his fees and conveyance charges?—It is our common experience that the lower classes have a greater

faith in the indigenous systems of medicine than in the English system. For instance, when our own servants fall ill we have seen, that in spite of our attempts to give them the best English medical aid, they prefer their own *Ayurvedic* treatment.

A-5332. So that they do not take advantage of the European prescription?—That is so when they are in their own homes surrounded by their own people who persuade them to take to the indigenous system. But in the mill hospitals they do not shew any such reluctance.

A-5333. Do they then take advantage of the medical facilities in the mills?—Yes, they do.

A-5334. *Mr. Asavle*: With regard to the depreciation fund, how is that used?—The fund is intended for replacement of machinery and other repairs.

A-5335. How much have you spent for repairs and replacements?—I have not the exact figures here. But I may say we have spent considerable sums of money on renewal of machinery, not so much on renewal of buildings.

A-5336. I want to know whether you are utilizing this depreciation fund which is taken from the profits in the renewal of machinery?—They are continually being utilized in that respect.

A-5337. In reply to a question from Sir Ibrahim, you said you wanted to reduce the cost of production. How could you reduce the cost of production unless you change the present system of management?—Certainly. But why should the present system be changed?

A-5338. Because that is the cause of this high cost?—I do not think so.

A-5339. As regards labour turn-over, is it not a fact that workers generally like to stick to a particular mill and do not want to leave it unless they are dismissed or threatened with a wage cut?—I have given the reasons for the migration of workers from mill to mill. If you asked me a general question whether a worker liked to stick to one mill, I would say, yes. But I do not subscribe to the other view.

A-5340. But is that not the general cause of workers migrating from mill to mill?—Just as a worker wants to stick to one particular mill, so also the employer wants to retain a particular set of men. He is not going to cut their wages and drive them away and replace them with other men.

A-5341. With regard to the efficiency of the workers, do you expect to get efficiency from discontented workers?—As a hypothetical question I would answer it in the negative.

A-5342. What is the percentage of such workers here?—That depends on the union to which the worker belongs and the labour leaders he is led by. The proportion will depend on that.

A-5343. With regard to absenteeism, do you grant leave to a worker unless he brings a substitute to look after his work? Is it not the case that sometimes he has to pay more for his substitute than he himself earns?—No, the men get leave without these things.

A-5344. *The Chairman*: A man wants to go back to his village, he calls in the *badli* and the *badli* works for six weeks or two months. Do you pay the wages to the *badli*?—(*Mr. Saklatvala*): So far as spinning is concerned, when the man goes, he puts in no *badli*. As regards weaving, the system that obtains is that when a man absents himself for three, four or five days he sends in his own substitute who is employed.

A-5345. Does he receive the wages?—The weaver who brings in the substitute is responsible for his payment. In some mills the rule is that for four or five days that man is looked upon as a substitute for which period of course the weaver is responsible for payment, but after that period that man is brought on to the permanent register if his work is satisfactory and if the permanent man does not return, and then the mill authorities are responsible for his payment.

A-5346. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: That means that if the permanent weaver does not turn up within 4 or 5 days he loses his job?—Yes.

A-5347. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: He does not lose his job if he goes on leave?—No. It is only in cases where he does not take leave that the procedure that I just now enumerated is followed.

A-5348. *The Chairman*: I understand that the proposal which you have set out in your memorandum and which you say will shortly be put into operation will give the people a proper channel for applying for recognized leave, and they will not be thrown out of work unless they overstay their leave?—(*Mr. Mody*): Without this scheme it is

open even now for the operatives to ask for leave which is never refused; the trouble is that they do not ask for leave.

A-5349. It is far better to get it standardized?—I quite agree. Many mills keep regular books with counter-foils for giving leave which is hardly availed of.

A-5350. *Mr. Asari*: In reply to a question put by Sir Alexander Murray you stated that there was no cause at the time of the strike in 1928; is that true?—Two or three weeks after the strike certain causes were, of course, manufactured, but at the time of the strike there did not seem to be any; as a matter of fact you will find that in the Fawcett Committee's report.

A-5351. Is it not a fact that some mills had begun to cut the wages indirectly?—No.

A-5352. Was not that proved before the Fawcett Committee?—(*Mr. Saklatvala*): What was proved before the Fawcett Committee was that the union had come into existence quite recently and there were no technical men in the union. They asked the men if they had any grievances to which they replied that in certain cases the rates were cut. For instance, they cited my own mill, the Tata Mill, saying that in two cases the rates had been reduced. It was proved before the Fawcett Committee that it was by no means a reduction. Sometimes adjustments in rates are made; when a new stuff is being manufactured we cannot put the rates straight off, because the worker will try to produce in the first month as little as possible knowing that if a high rate is put up he will be benefited and so on. Very often we have to adjust these rates; these adjustments have always been going on but the unions were not aware of this fact and they took them up as definite cuts in wages. In our own case it was proved later on that whereas we had reduced the rate in one case we had also put up rates in several cases where we found, after a trial of one month, that the rates were really low.

A-5353. One witness stated before the Commission that payments are made in sealed covers. Is that so?—Yes, in some mills.

A-5354. You have not stated that in your memorandum. You only say that "direct payment is made"?—(*Mr. Mody*): It is always a direct payment. In one case money is counted out, in another case an envelope is handed out.

A-5355. In how many mills does the practice of paying wages in sealed covers exist?—Not in many mills.

A-5356. In reply to one of the questions you stated that you have accommodated 25,000 labourers. Is it not a fact that only about 12 to 15 per cent. of the textile labourers have been housed in Bombay?—I never said 25,000 labourers; I said 25,000 people in about 6,000 rooms.

A-5357. Are all these tenements given to the employees of the mills only?—At least we try to ensure that; but if our workmen keep somebody else we cannot always get at it. Several mills have special *chawls* inspectors to look after the *chawls*.

A-5358. You have stated that there are Worli *chawls* for the use of textile labourers. Are they not far away from the mills and there is no police protection in that section?—These complaints were there to start with, but I do not think that they apply any longer. As regards police protection, I think there is enough population in the locality at present; there is a market provided; I think there is a school there and various amenities. As regards the location of the mills they are within easy reach of the *chawls*.

A-5359. How much time will be required for a man to go on foot?—Not more than ten minutes.

A-5360. I would like the Commission to see whether the *chawls* are not far away from the mills and whether it will not take more than five minutes for going to the mills from the *chawls* even when a motor-car is used. My point is that these *chawls* cannot be occupied because they are far away from the mills. As regards giving up claims, is it not a fact that Government, the Improvement Trust and also some of the private landlords had to suffer in regard to arrears of rents and had to give up their claims as you have done?—Might have been.

A-5361. Is it not a fact that because of the low wage level coupled with the high cost of living and heavy indebtedness some workers may be keeping paying guests?—That may be so in individual cases, but as a rule it is because they do not want to spend on house rents and things like that owing to their low standard of living anything more than they can possibly help.

A-5362. Is not malaria a standing menace to the mill workers in the mill locality?—It is, I am afraid, a standing menace to everybody.

A-5363. And owing to malarial sickness they have to be absent very often from work?—Absenting themselves from the mills is due to a variety of causes and malaria may be one of them.

A-5364. Have you posted copies of translations of the Maternity Benefit Bill, which came into force from 1st July, in your mills?—(Mr. Maloney): They are not posted because the vernacular texts are not ready.

A-5365. How long do you require to get it translated?—It is not the function of the millowners to do that. We came to an arrangement with the Government whereby we would be supplied with the official vernacular texts. These will be posted as soon as they are received from Government.

A-5366. As regards education, is it not true that illiteracy is the most dangerous menace to progress and is undermining the national growth in every direction?—(Mr. Mody): I quite agree.

A-5367. Is it not true that the capitalist element always opposes in the Municipality whenever questions like compulsory primary education come up in the Municipality?—As one who has got to do something with the Municipality I can say that they are a progressive section which you denounce.

A-5368. *The Chairman*: Arising from what has been already said to-day, first of all, with regard to the competition of cotton mills in other areas, we are well aware of the fact that some mills in Bombay are being closed while at the same time new mills are being put up in another part of the same Presidency. Would you attribute that in part at any rate to the fact that they have an arbitration agreement which makes them practically free from general strikes similar to the ones you had here in recent years?—I would like to put it that it was due, at any rate in part as you say, to more settled labour conditions.

A-5369. Therefore I take it from that that you would welcome an opportunity in Bombay of having a system something like they have in Ahmedabad whereby there was an agreed form of tribunal to deal with trade disputes?—So far as we have been able to ascertain the views of labour leaders, I think they would be against arbitration.

A-5370. I am asking not the views of labour leaders but your views?—So far as we are concerned, we have these mediation rules which provide for settlement of labour disputes, and we are most anxious to bring them into operation.

A-5371. Therefore you do agree that one reason why capital in the textile industry has tended to flow to Ahmedabad instead of to Bombay has been the immunity from these disastrous general strikes of recent years?—Yes; partly at any rate.

A-5372. My second point is this: You were asked one or two questions about liquor shops in the neighbourhood of the mills, and you suggested—and we have also heard it elsewhere—that a certain amount of wages on pay day goes to the liquor shop instead of reaching the homes. Are you in favour of closing these liquor shops near the mill gates?—We would be, I think.

A-5373. Has the Municipality power to do that, or only the Government has the power?—The Municipality has no power.

A-5374. Would you favour the Municipality having power in the mill area to close liquor shops?—I think the Municipality had asked for that more than once.

A-5375. And it was refused by Government?—Yes.

Mr. Lallji: That was the reason why seven members of the Advisory Committee of the Municipality resigned their seats.

A-5376. *The Chairman*: Relating to the question with which I opened to-day, namely, the irregularity or instability of the labour on which you have to depend. About half of your flow of labour comes from Ratnagiri district?—Yes.

A-5377. We have had supplied to us some very interesting life histories of a number of these workers, taken by chance, who come from that district, and they show us, perhaps more than any other documents do, from the labourers' point of view, how and why they move from one mill to another. And for that reason I ask you the question as to what you are doing, or are prepared to do, to get more stability, and of course along with that it follows a greater comfort and contentment of the labour and also improvement in the quality of the workers?—The standardization scheme to a certain extent would remove one of the causes. If wages are standardised and stabilized, the present tendency on the part of the labour to shift from one mill to another because of higher wages offered in some mills will disappear. To that extent the standardization scheme will do something.

A-5378. Those little documents do not seem to show to me that it is so much a question of a little here or there in cash as it is of the general management of this difficult kind of

labour within the mills?—If you were to tell me what it is that they precisely show I would be willing to answer you.

A-5379. I should be glad if you had a copy of these little documents. It may not be news to you as it is to me, but it does reveal in a very human way what the trials and troubles of these people are?—We are too anxious to look into the things and set them right if there is any case made out for doing anything.

A-5380. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are jobbers members of unions?—They were, I think, members of the Girmi Kamgar Union.

A-5381. Has the dismissal of a jobber ever led to a strike?—It has sometimes in the past.

A-5382. Therefore you have to be very careful in dealing with your jobbers, otherwise you may have a strike?—Yes.

A-5383. Taking the cost of living into consideration, would you say that labour in Bombay got as good if not better real wages than they get in other parts of India?—Yes.

A-5384. Even in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-5385. The real wages in Bombay are considered better than the real wages in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-5386. As regards fine counts, would you say that you spend more on this than they do in Ahmedabad?—I think it must be said that Ahmedabad started it a little earlier than ourselves, but I think our statistics will show that at the present moment we are spending more than what they are spending in Ahmedabad. (*Mr. Saklatvala*): We spin greater quantities of fine counts than Ahmedabad, but on the other hand in Ahmedabad there are small weaving sheds which use imported yarn and they use fine counts anything from 60s. to 110s.

A-5387. But Ahmedabad also spins 100s.; I do not think Bombay does?—No.

A-5388. Supposing there were no managing agents, could you expect that the members of the board of directors would control and visit the mills daily?—(*Mr. Mody*): No.

A-5389. The present system of having managing agents permits of better control and more visits to the mills than it would if it were left to the board of directors?—Certainly; the managing agents have more live contact with the administration than the board of directors have.

A-5390. *Diwan Chaman Lal* referred to a large number of very desirable facilities that are to be provided for workmen. Can you tell me whether any of those advantages are provided either in Lancashire or in other parts of the world by millowners for their work-people?—No.

A-5391. Would you say that the millowners in Bombay have provided more facilities for their work-people than in Europe or in Lancashire?—We may have our shortcomings, but even when there is depression we are doing more for our work-people than is being done, according to my knowledge of things, in Lancashire or in other places.

A-5392. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have the memorandum of the Bombay Textile Labour Union in front of us and we find therein that they have made a grievance that because you recognized the Red Flag Union their activities were to a great extent curbed. *Mr. Joshi* raised the same point this afternoon. What are the actual facts of the case, can you tell us very shortly?—The actual facts are that after the strike took place in 1928 *Mr. Joshi's* union was the only recognized union and we were dealing with them. At the same time a number of new labour leaders sprung up and they wanted to negotiate with us. We held out that we would be prepared to do that only if they got their trade union registered. In between, *Mr. Joshi* made a pact with these people and formed a joint strike committee, and we had to recognize that joint strike committee. If you will refer to the first few pages of the *Fawcett Committee's* report you will find that it is all set out there.

A-5393. You were dealing only with the Bombay Textile Labour union, but another union having been formed you felt that you were in duty bound to try that union also?—In response to certain enquiries from Government, we had expressed our intention that we would recognize registered trade unions; we had made that declaration.

A-5394. It was after you made that declaration that the Red Flag Union was registered, and you proceeded to recognize that?—So long as the Trade Unions Act was there it was impossible for the Association to take up the position that it would not recognize even registered trade unions. Whether Government would register a trade union or not was another matter, but once a union was registered we were bound to recognize that.

A-5395. You felt that in the circumstances you had no option but to recognize the trade union that was properly constituted and registered?—The position was like this: The millowners had no option but to recognize the Girmi Kamgar Union once it got itself duly registered; but Mr. Joshi's union had the option of not collaborating with them but breaking away from them and standing on their own legs; but they let slip that opportunity.

A-5396. That union is still a registered union, yet I read in yesterday's paper that you refuse to recognize it any longer?—There is a very clear reason for that.

The Chairman: It is because of the official report.

The witness (Mr. Mody): and also because of what happened since the union was formed; the union has never functioned as a real trade union. But to start with we cannot say to a registered union "we suspect you and so we will not recognize you".

A-5397. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have stated in your memorandum that you have the practice of granting holidays to your workers, and if a holiday falls on any working day the workers are made to work on Sundays. But at the same time you have also quoted the Indian Factories Act under which Sunday should not be a working day. How do you reconcile your practice with the provisions of the Factories Act?—Our practice is absolutely on all fours with the Factories Act. Even if we wanted to, we cannot possibly get away from the Factories Act. The Factories Act permits working on Sundays under certain circumstances which are set out in Section 22.

A-5398. How many holidays do you give in a year?—57 or 58 including Sundays.

A-5399. Excluding Sundays how many days will it come to?—If you are anxious I can send you a copy of the official list of holidays.

A-5400. I am told that workers are not paid wages for holidays?—Monthly wage-earners get their regular wages.

A-5401. *The Chairman*: Do they get pay for Sunday?—The monthly wage-earners get for Sunday because they are paid so much a month, but the piece-worker does not get it.

A-5402. Because a person is paid monthly it does not mean that he is paid for Sunday?—I did not mean to say that. What happens is this; He is paid for the working days; if he absents himself on a working day so much is cut from his wages, but if he absents himself on a Sunday or a holiday no cut is made.

A-5403. *Mr. Ahmed*: A worker has to put in 10 hours' work a day or 60 hours a week, and unless he puts in this work you proportionately cut down his wages; in other words, it means that you do not allow any holidays with pay?—The worker can absent himself for 57 or 58 days in a year without having any cut made in his wages.

A-5404. I understand you to say that the *chawls* which have been provided are not in good condition. Is that so?—I have said that whatever their defects may be, from the point of view of the workers they are an immeasurable improvement on anything which the workers themselves have in the horrible slums in which a large number of them live.

A-5405. You stated that 13 mills out of 73 provide crèches for babies. Is your Association prepared to recommend that those mills which do not provide crèches should do so?—If they could afford to do so we would recommend them to provide crèches.

A-5406. You said that there was something lacking on the part of labour leaders? and that they are not whole-time men?—What I meant to say was that if a few people concentrated on textile labour alone they would probably do much better in the way of organizing trade unions than they have done hitherto.

A-5407. *Mr. Joshi*: Do you say that labour leaders are not qualified for their job?—I am not prepared to discuss the qualifications of labour leaders.

A-5408. You have said that they lack technical knowledge?—That is so—not all of them. I know of several who have the requisite technical knowledge because they have risen from the ranks. We would like to see more of those men in control of trade unions.

A-5409. *Mr. Cluff*: Have you generally adopted the system which the Tariff Board said was desirable with regard to spare men?—No, we have not.

A-5410. Does your Association propose to accept it?—No.

A-5411. Do you think it a desirable system?—No.

A-5412. The industry seems to depend on these spare men at present?—Some mills have adopted the system, which would seem to argue that there was something to be said for it, but as a general rule we do not approve of it.

A-5413. You have said there have been a number of courts and enquiries. I am trying to find out whether you have put into operation any of those recommendations?—We have submitted a statement showing exactly what we have done.

A-5414. In visiting some of your mills this week I found that probably 50 men have been engaged and 50 spare men turned away. It seems to me that your system, as carried on at present, depends upon a reserve supply of labour?—We get that supply.

A-5415. I agree; but simply because you do not like the recommendation of the Tariff Board that does not mean that necessarily you are right. Why should you not pay a reserve staff of labour as recommended by the Tariff Board?—(Mr. Saklatvala): The Tariff Board's recommendation was that the mills should employ 10 per cent. more men than they actually required because 10 per cent. is the figure of absenteeism. Our contention is that that does not get at the root of the matter, and that, if anything, it encourages absenteeism; it does not do away with the causes of absenteeism. What we want to prevent is absenteeism. In Ahmedabad it is about 3 per cent. Why should it be 10 and 15 per cent. in Bombay? Simply because there is 10 per cent. absenteeism therefore each mill should be bound to employ 10 or 15 per cent. more labour is not the right remedy.

A-5416. You qualify that by saying "to the extent of 10 per cent.", and then in the memoranda you submitted you do not record whether your opinion is actually borne out by experience in the mills which adopted the system?—Our investigations showed that the mills which did adopt that system did so under special considerations; and there is every reason to think that they are giving it up.

A-5417. There is reason to think they are giving it up because the supply of labour is much more abundant. Is there any practical objection on the part of your Association to the Association itself establishing an employment bureau?—There is no objection, but we do not see the necessity for it.

A-5418. Is there any practical objection from the point of view of the Millowners' Association?—We have not considered it. I do not say we have any objection, but we have not considered the matter of a bureau because up to now no necessity has arisen for considering it.

A-5419. No necessity from the point of view of the millowners, I agree.—Or from the point of view of the labourers as well, because everything goes to show that the present system has not worked badly.

A-5420. You say that a large number of mills have a system under which advances are made against wages. Is any interest charged on those loans?—Not actually interest, but something is charged in order to cover the expenses of the establishment, which is a very small one.

A-5421. What do the work-people borrow the money for?—If you are raising the question of fortnightly wages, we are prepared to examine the question, provided a decided demand is set up on the part of the labour.

A-5422. Have you any proposals to put before the Commission with a view to assist work-people against indebtedness?—A system of co-operative banks would, I think, be useful. Whatever facilities in this direction are provided must come from those people who are leading labour. If trade unions or social agencies operate co-operative banks we are prepared to see in what directions we can help them. I had a discussion about this matter with a labour leader only a month ago and he did not seem to attach any importance to it; he thought it was another way of trying to cripple the trade union. I said to him "Let us work out a scheme of co-operative banks," and he replied "If you think that by doing these little things you can get at labour and cut away the power of the trade unions you are mistaken."

A-5423. Will you give the Commission the benefit of a note of your suggestions on a co-operative bank scheme?—I have not thought out the details at all.

A-5424. Does your Association, as an association, take an active interest in the operation of the "Efficiency" system?—(Mr. Saklatvala): When we were formulating a standardization scheme we adopted one or two things from the efficiency scheme. That shows that to a certain extent we are in favour of it; but conditions in the Bombay mills are not such that the efficiency scheme can be made applicable generally.

A-5425. The adoption of the efficiency scheme in certain mills would mean an entire re-construction, would it?—Yes.

A-5426. Has your Association reached the point where it subsidizes experiments in new machinery?—No, but individual mills carry out experiments and they pass the information on.

A-5427. *Mr. Clow* : The effect of paying wages monthly is that a man who works for any fraction of a month is not legally entitled to any wages for that period. Is not that so?—(*Mr. Mody*) : As a matter of fact the Small Causes Court, where these cases are generally heard compel the employer in almost all cases to pay for that period, but the legal position is as you have stated it.

A-5428. Then do the Small Causes Courts ignore the law?—It depends upon the personal predilections of the judges. Some judges do not allow wages for a broken period and other judges do.

A-5429. Do you ordinarily pay wages for a broken period?—In most cases we do. Under our new rules we have reduced the period of notice to 14 days.

A-5430. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You say that the real wages, taking into consideration the cost of living in Bombay, are higher in Bombay than in Ahmedabad. Can you give us the data on which you base that opinion?—I have only a comparison of the wages between Bombay and Ahmedabad, from which I find that we in Bombay are paying higher wages.

A-5431. Have you worked it out in detail?—We have worked it out on the statistics we have obtained.

A-5432. What is the average wage in Ahmedabad for a weaver and what is the average wage in Bombay for a weaver?—It depends on the finer sorts which may be woven, but, class for class, I say that we are paying higher wages in Bombay.

A-5433. If labour in Bombay is so better off in point of the actual receipts which they get for their work as compared with Ahmedabad, how do you account for the fact that there are always labour troubles and a demand for higher wages in Bombay?—The labour troubles of the period prior to 1928 must be looked at from an entirely different point of view from the labour troubles which overtook us in 1928 and 1929, and which are so apt to colour one's view of the whole situation. One would imagine that Bombay was doing nothing else but strike; but these strikes in 1928 and 1929 were the cause of certain manifestations which had taken place. My point is this. Labour in Bombay is not so discontented or is not always clamouring for more wages as people would imagine from what happened in the last year or two. Wages did not enter at all into the consideration of the 1929 strikes. That strike did not take place because of any grievances on the part of the work-people, but it took place from a variety of other reasons. Nobody has even suggested that the strike of 1929 took place because of any grievances with regard to wages, and yet it lasted several months. I wish the Commission to note that during the strike there were hardly ten or twelve days during which at least 50,000 people were not at work. From the very commencement of the strike thousands and thousands of people were regularly at work.

A-5434. If you can substantiate your statement that the monthly wages of the Bombay workmen in the textile industry are higher in spite of the increased cost of living in Bombay, as compared with Ahmedabad, it would be of material help. Can you do so?—If strikes have occurred it has not been because of economic grievances to any appreciable extent. The truth of this statement is borne out by the fact that the Fawcett Committee was specially appointed to go exhaustively into the grievances of the work-people, and after an enquiry lasting for six months that Committee came to the conclusion that a cut of 7½ per cent. was justified. That is a conclusive argument that it is not the wages that are responsible for labour troubles in Bombay.

Mr. Cliff : That is not the full and complete quotation of the Fawcett Committee's report. The reduction was put into operation without consultation with the workers. There was a strike. The strike had gone on for some time when the Fawcett Committee was constituted.

A-5435. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : At one time there was a number of half-timers working in the textile industry. What is the reason for their practical elimination from the industry at present?—I think the Factories Act and increased facilities for education are responsible for the elimination of half-timers.

A-5436. *The Chairman* : In fact you found it more convenient to employ adults than half-timers?—Yes, as a result of the Factories Act.

A-5437. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In view of the emphasis laid by Sir Victor Sassoon on the point that the managing agency system is peculiar to India alone, may I ask whether it exists in any other country?—There are very sound reasons for that system here.

A-5438. *Mr. Asaule* : When a jobber dismisses a worker, sometimes a strike takes place. But sometimes do not the workers demand the dismissal of a jobber and threaten to go on strike if their demand is not satisfied?—Yes. Things became topsy turvy last year when the workers wanted some jobbers to be dismissed.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING
BOMBAY

Friday, 29th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

<p>Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.</p>	<p>Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
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Mr. HOOSERNBHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
 Mr. R. S. ASAYLE, M.L.C.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA } *Lady Assessors.*
 Mrs. K. WAGH

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
 Mr. A. DEBDIN

**Mr. R. BLACKWELL, Honorary Secretary of the Bombay European
 Textile Association, Mr. J. PARKER, President, and
 Mr. J. B. GREEN.**

A-5439. *The Chairman* : Will you tell the Commission what your Association comprises in the way of membership ?—(Mr. Blackwell) : Our membership is about 200, comprising managers, spinning masters, weaving masters, carding masters and engineers. The objects of the Association are as follows :—“ The Bombay European Textile Association is an Association of Europeans employed in the organization and management of the textile industry of Bombay, having for its objects the protection of the mutual interests of its members and the advancement of the industry generally.” I will hand in this booklet which contains the constitution and rules of our Association.

A-5440. All your members, I suppose, have had previous experience in European textile factories ?—Yes.

A-5441. You have come out here for a period of years to take charge of the different processes in the textile mills in Bombay ?—That is so.

A-5442. May I know, in regard to both of you gentlemen, how long you have served in Bombay ?—I have served with my present firm in Bombay for nine years. (Mr. Parker) : I have served in Bombay for 14 years.

A-5443. You have a very considerable experience of the work in the Bombay textile factories ?—(Mr. Blackwell) : Yes.

A-5444. With regard to the efficiency of the Indian workers in the textile mills, can you tell me, in any broad way, what is the turn-over of your Indian workers on the average in any mills with which you are concerned ? Does the whole personnel change frequently ? I am speaking of the ordinary workmen and not of the jobbers ?—The turn-over is 50 per cent. per year.

A-5445. That means that in two years the whole personnel changes ?—Yes.

A-5446. Comparing that with your previous experience in Lancashire, I suppose it would be fair to say that 10 per cent. in a year would be a large amount of change in a Lancashire factory ?—Quite so.

A-5447. Here you are confronted with a change of 50 per cent. at least per year. Does not that make it very difficult for you to attain a high grade of efficiency?—It does.

A-5448. Have you any views to put before the Commission as to the causes of that extreme turn-over? We are aware of the migratory character of the labour, of which a large amount comes from the villages and returns, some of it, once each year and some of it once in two or three years. What I would like to get from you is your opinion as to why the labour stays so short a time in one mill and changes about so much from mill to mill. Is it anything to do with the system of jobbers?—(Mr. Parker): If a jobber moves from a mill he will take the labour with him. He will call for his own caste people. If there are two jobbers in a mill, one a *Ghatsi* and one a *Marathi*, if one of them leaves for some reason, such as for the purpose of bettering himself, he will take the labour with him.

A-5449. Does he take the labour with him because of their affection for him or because of bonds of other kinds?—(Mr. Blackwell): Bonds of other kinds, I suppose; there is no affection about it.

A-5450. Then, it is not affection for the jobber, but because they are more or less tied to him?—He looks after them generally and they look after him.

A-5451. In the mills of which you have experience, is there any difference between mill and mill as to the power of the jobbers over the labour that is employed?—No; I think they are more or less the same.

A-5452. You cannot point us to any mill where labour has been engaged more directly by the management and where the jobber takes the place of an overlooker or an under-overlooker as in an English mill?—Not one. (Mr. Parker): It has been tried in the Spring Mill of the Wadia group. They tried to do without head jobbers and put in highly paid assistants, and they relied on the line jobber only. And it was just the same thing; instead of the head jobber bringing in the labourers the line jobbers brought them in.

A-5453. The same difficulty arose?—Yes; just the same.

A-5454. Did they persist with the system?—I think that system is still in vogue to-day.

A-5455. But as far as you are aware there has been no improvement in the matter of the dependence of labour on the jobber?—No; it is all recruited by jobbers.

A-5456. Have you any suggestions to put before the Commission as to how the difficulty could be overcome?—(Mr. Blackwell): By Government employment bureaux?

A-5457. Government employment bureaux covering other industries besides the textile?—No; I speak only for the textile industry.

A-5458. You suggest that Government should establish a bureau for one industry alone or that the employers should do it?—Not the employers. If Government established a bureau, they would probably take on all industries. The employers of labour would be able to pick out the good hands from the bad hands.

A-5459. Then, to make a system of that kind a success, would it not be necessary to compel the employers not to take on any labour except through the bureau?—No; I do not think so. (Mr. Parker): I do not think that system could be made workable; employers should not be compelled not to take any labour without the sanction of the labour bureau.

A-5460. That is exactly the point. If you had the two systems in existence at the same time competing with one another, the bureau and the taking on of the hands through the jobber, it is not clear to me how much work the bureau could do?—One would supersede the other.

A-5461. One would supersede the other without compulsion?—(Mr. Blackwell): Yes. The good man would never be out of employment; the good man would not lose his job. Only the riff-raff, the less efficient workmen would apply to the bureau.

A-5462. Then, at least you would require a determination on the part of the employers or on the part of managers that they would only recruit labour through this exchange?—That is so.

A-5463. Do you think the employers would all agree to use that system and stop the jobber from bringing in labour?—That is a very hard question to answer.

A-5464. You are not aware of any case, in England for instance, where it has been compulsory to engage labour through the exchange?—No. (Mr. Parker): No. I would agree that labour should be engaged as at present, but if they cannot find employment they should go to the labour bureau.

A-5465. They should be engaged directly at the mills, and not through the labour bureau?—First of all they should be engaged directly at the mills; then, after that, if a man cannot find employment they should go to the labour bureau.

A-5466. Although you have been nine and fourteen years in Bombay, is it reasonable to expect that you can talk with the labour you employ in their own language?—We can just make them understand.

A-5467. Are you quite sure that you can understand them?—(Mr. Blackwell): Certainly.

A-5468. *Mr. Clow*: All your members?—No; I am speaking personally.

A-5469. *The Chairman*: Does the individual workman come to you as manager with his difficulties; or must he always go through the jobber?—In my own case, in the City of Bombay Mill, he comes direct to me. (Mr. Parker): That is the case with me also. As I go round the departments every workman is allowed to speak to me if he has a complaint.

A-5470. Do they freely approach you in the matter of complaints?—(Mr. Parker): Yes. (Mr. Blackwell): We are trying a new system of what is called the complaint box; if the man has no opportunity to come to the manager, he can put his complaint in the complaint box.

A-5471. Has he also any opportunity of seeing you out of work hours?—I do not encourage it.

A-5472. You have told us that it would help very much in the efficiency of the mills if the labour was more regular. Let me take a particular case. Have you any mule spinning in your mill?—No. (Mr. Parker): At present it is only waste.

A-5473. The question of the building of the cop in the mules is a very individual thing. Is that done in your mills by the actual mule spinner, or is it left entirely to the jobber? With regard to other machines, with regard to the day to day adjustment that they require, does the workman who stays such a short time in the mill take any real personal interest in his own machine and his work?—(Mr. Parker): It is very seldom that we change a mule jobber. I was in the Swan Mill, and there was a mule jobber there who had been there for thirty years.

A-5474. He looked after the adjustment, and not the individual spinner?—The mule jobber and his assistants, and not the actual workers.

A-5475. You cannot in such a short time expect much personal knowledge of a machine from the actual workmen?—(Mr. Blackwell): The average man has not the practical experience.

A-5476. Personally I have been impressed with the shrewdness and capability of the man; however illiterate he may be said to be, he does not seem to have a lack of native shrewdness?—Call it cunning.

A-5477. Cunning in some cases is another name for art. You, I gather, would welcome anything which would lead to a more stable class of workers in your factory?—Yes.

A-5478. And you feel that that would add considerably to your power to obtain firstly quality and secondly quantity in your work, and would so far enable you better to compete both with the other mills in India and with your foreign competitors?—Yes; decidedly.

A-5479. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If you compare the wages of the worker in the ordinary Bombay weaving shed, where the worker looks after two looms, with the wages of a Japanese girl on the same number of looms, you get Rs. 1·97 per day for the Indian worker and Rs. 1·9 for the Japanese girl; but the cost of wages per hundred looms is very different, in Japan it is only Rs. 39·78, in Bombay it is Rs. 109·56. Do you think there is any reason why the Indian weaver should not be able to become as efficient as the Japanese girl?—(Mr. Parker): Yes; for this reason, that the Japanese has been brought up right from the very beginning and drilled by numbers.

A-5480. *The Chairman*: Disciplined?—Yes; that is the chief reason.

A-5481. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do know that the Japanese girl does not stop in a mill much more than three years; so that you would imagine than an Indian workman stopping there all his life would get more efficient. Do you think that is because he cannot; or do you think that is because he will not?—(Mr. Blackwell): If the amount of pay that he earns is sufficient he stops working.

A-5482. Your point is that he is earning too much?—When a weaver has earned enough he stops and sends in a *badli*.

A-5483. Your idea is that he gets more than he needs to maintain his average standard of living and therefore he is not interested in earning any more?—He is not interested in earning more than Rs. 45 a month.

A-5484. *The Chairman* : Would you apply that to the whole body of weavers or only to sections?—That applies to all departments.

A-5485. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : A great deal is said about the amount of bribery that goes on chiefly among the jobbers. Do you deny that there is a great deal of bribery?—Bribery does go on.

A-5486. On a large scale?—It is sufficiently large.

A-5487. Would you say that bribery is not confined to jobbers, and that there are cases where a head jobber gives part of his bribes to the European officers?—I do not know anything about that.

A-5488. How would you stop bribery?—By establishing Government employment bureaux.

A-5489. But I understand that you want to deal directly with labour and that you would go to the labour bureau only to supply any deficiency. You cannot stop bribery then. Have you noticed that a man working in your mills would only change to mills in the vicinity?—No. They go to distant mills.

A-5490. Would your men be prepared to have papers like discharge certificates?—That is a point which our Association is trying to push forward. We suggest that a system of identification certificate, bearing the photo, thumb impression or signature of workman should be introduced. We have not considered it from the men's point of view.

A-5491. Do you say that it would not be necessary to consider it from the men's point of view?—I do not think it is necessary.

A-5492. Have you ever tried to get them to carry badges like the Japanese?—We give them passes.

A-5493. I mean badges which they will wear on their body; you have never tried that?—No. (Mr. Parker) : It might have been tried in the Toyo Potdar Mill, which is a Japanese mill.

A-5494. The Japanese are doing it successfully; but the other mills are not able to get the men to agree.

A-5495. *The Chairman* : Do you think that if a system of identification carried with it some reward in the way of pension or lump sum payment on retirement at the end of a number of years' service, that would overcome the reluctance of the worker and they would give more regular and steady work?—(Mr. Blackwell) : It would.

A-5496. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : I am told that in the Spring Mill a number of its old hands have come back under new names. That would not be possible under a system of identification. Do you think the men would agree to such a system which would prevent their changing names and going back to their old mills?—(Mr. Parker) : They would not agree.

A-5497. If you tried to enforce it, there would be a strike?—(Mr. Blackwell) : You are referring, I think, to the portion of migratory workmen who are not really good workmen. The better labour would, I think, accept it.

A-5498. The majority of labour would not?—Yes; the majority would not.

A-5499. Because it will interfere with their custom?—(Mr. Parker) : Yes; with their present custom.

A-5500. Do you think this might be a good time to put it in, when there is a certain amount of unemployment?—(Mr. Blackwell) : I do.

A-5501. *The Chairman* : Provided it carried some distinct advantage to the worker, it would be to the good of both the employers and the workers?—Yes.

A-5502. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : It would be to the good of the good workman and it would not be to the good of the bad workman?—We do not want bad workers.

A-5503. You cannot think of any real way of stopping bribery unless you have a system of identification of the man's record, so that you as the mill executive can get those papers and engage the man without listening to the jobber?—Yes.

A-5504. That would reduce bribery?—Yes.

A-5505. *Mr. Clow* : In regard to "Periods of wage payment," you state that the present system is the only one by which you can control labour to any reasonable extent. I take it that your meaning is that the power to hold back wages for fifteen days will give you a hold on labour?—Yes.

A-5506. Do you think it is fair?—(Mr. Parker): It is the custom of the country—monthly settlements. (Mr. Blackwell): I am sure they like it.

A-5507. Would you seriously tell me that the millhands would object if you pay them on the 1st or 3rd of each month?—(Mr. Blackwell): When a man wants to resign, he resigns soon after he gets his pay, and in the next month he gets fifteen days' pay. This he likes very much indeed.

A-5508. Suppose he resigns on the 13th of the month, what happens?—He would be able to draw his previous month's salary, plus 13 days' salary of the current month.

A-5509. He does not have to wait in a genuine case of distress?—No, because the jobbers pay him.

A-5510. Is it a fact that there have been cases of strikes due to delay in payment of wages?—(Mr. Parker): No.

A-5511. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has there been a strike where payment of wages has been delayed for six weeks or two months?—(Mr. Blackwell): There have not been any delays to my knowledge.

A-5512. *Mr. Cliff*: Did they use to have longer pay periods in England than a week?—Not to my knowledge.

A-5513. Have you been to Japar, either of you?—No.

A-5514. Have you studied the Japanese educational system?—A little.

A-5515. Does it help towards efficiency of labour?—The Japanese Masters, or Managers of various departments, give lectures to the work-people every week; they take batches of ten, twenty or thirty children and teach them to do the correct thing and teach them the little details, details which count in the efficiency of the mill.

A-5516. Would you tell us about the organization of the mill with which you are concerned; have you an assistant manager?—I have no assistant manager; I have one spinning master, one weaving master and one engineer.

A-5517. Who comes under the weaving master?—The weaving head jobbers and the line jobbers.

A-5518. Has there been any attempt in your mill to train any of the weavers in the weaving shed with regard to the handling of the machinery?—(Mr. Parker): You get a boy; when he comes to the mill he works with an old weaver and learns which way to do it.

A-5519. I noticed in one of the mills we went round a person bringing food to the millhands actually taking an opportunity of learning weaving from an old weaver. Do you permit that in your mill?—That is permitted in all the mills.

A-5520. Is that the way they learn the trade?—Yes; that is the custom of the country.

A-5521. Is that the way to get efficiency?—That is the custom of the country. (Mr. Blackwell): They learn from one another casually.

A-5522. Is that the way to get efficiency?—(Mr. Parker): One would not think so.

A-5523. Taking the mills generally in Bombay, in what way are the mill managers seeking to train labour?—I do not know of any mill in Bombay that trains its own weavers.

A-5524. Do they train any other class of labour?—Not to my knowledge.

A-5525. You want efficiency; but apparently, there is no attempt made to obtain it.—There is an attempt to obtain it.

A-5526. What is that attempt?—When they come to take jobs as weavers, they are put under an expert weaver.

A-5527. In your own mill how many expert weavers have you got?—In the Shapurji Broacha Mill out of 543 weavers, we have 200 weavers who give 80 per cent. efficiency.

A-5528. If a man comes to the job in the weaving shed he goes to one of the 200; is that it?—Yes.

A-5529. Does he depend absolutely for his training and supervision on the weaver?—Yes.

A-5530. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would not the jobber help?—The jobber would.

A-5531. *Mr. Cliff*: Does he help?—It is his job; he is paid for it.

A-5532. We are told you have a large proportion of inefficient weavers, spinners and other labourers. Is it correct to say that the training of new entrants is left to these

inefficient people?—Would you call a man who gives 80 per cent. efficiency an inefficient man?

A-5533. Would you call him inefficient?—No.

A-5534. *The Chairman*: When you talk of 80 per cent. efficiency, I take it that is 80 per cent. of the theoretical output if they work the whole of the ten hours all the looms in that speed?—Yes; eight hours' work out of ten.

A-5535. *Mr. Cliff*: Is that standard very efficient?—Yes.

A-5536. It is quantitative efficiency and not qualitative efficiency?

The Chairman: It must go with a certain amount of quality?—We do not get quality if we do not get quantity.

A-5537. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What you mean by 80 or 85 per cent. efficiency is that he cannot get anything more out of his loom?—He cannot get anything more.

A-5538. *The Chairman*: In a Lancashire weaving shed what efficiency do you get?—(Mr. Parker): In Lancashire in the best mill I worked in, we used to get 90 per cent. on the same basis.

A-5539. *Mr. Cliff*: Is there any definite proposals which your Association are putting to the Commission for training labour?—No. (Mr. Blackwell): I gave you that illustration of Japan for that reason, to show that we have not got it here.

A-5540. Assuming for a moment that the Millowners' Association established an employment exchange, is there any practical difficulty from your point of view as a manager in operating an exchange of that character?—(Mr. Parker): Yes. We have two mills in different areas; suppose one of those mills has an excess of 50 weavers while the other mill has a shortage of 50 weavers, those 50 weavers will not come to the other mill.

A-5541. You know the number of absentees, cannot that number be supplied by the labour exchange?—Yes.

A-5542. Would it not be possible to deal with new entrants in the same way? The mill manager would have the right of selection from the candidates sent from the labour exchange. Is there any practical objection?—(Mr. Blackwell): No; I should not take my labour from the mill gate in that case; I should take it from the labour exchange; I should send my man down for it.

A-5543. Would not that tend to prevent bribery in connection with employment?—The manager cannot stand at the gate and employ every man; he must leave it to the jobbers and masters.

A-5544. May we assume that weaving and spinning masters are above suspicion?—In my case, yes; I do not say that is true of other mills.

A-5545. Could not they employ labour?—No, because in my case they are both Parsis and the Parsi has not control over the labour from that point of view; he cannot bring in the hands.

A-5546. That is a defect of organization?—Yes, but it is counteracted by other good points.

A-5547. I am speaking now of whether it is possible to provide an officer in your mill to select the labour to be employed?—(Mr. Parker): It is possible.

A-5548. Do you know of any other objection that might be urged against an employment bureau?—Yes, the distance work-people might have to travel to it.

A-5549. That might be covered by sub-offices?—(Mr. Blackwell): I have nothing against the labour bureaux whatever.

A-5550. In your mills is it customary to make advances against wages?—No; we have unofficially a money-lender; he is not recognized by the agents but he is allowed to go into the mill and advance money on wages earned.

A-5551. You have a money-lender who comes into the mill *sub rosa*, is that it?—Yes, but if any bad debts accrue we are not responsible, that is his own fault.

A-5552. How does he recover the loans?—On pay day he sits besides the pay clerk and when a certain ticket is given in he tallies that ticket in his book, so many rupees come to him and he gets that money before the workman handles the cash at all; he gets it *plus* his interest.

A-5553. If some people characterized that as being official, they would not be far wrong, would they?—It is not official in my case, because I have had several cases of bad debts with the money-lender and I have never helped him once.

A-5554. But you countenance him sitting at the pay table?—He gets up when he sees me coming. You have to close your eyes to these things.

A-5555. I have been told that in several of these mills it is possible for the money-lender to come at the time on pay day and receive a facility of the character which you describe; that is, to recover his money at the pay desk?—Yes.

A-5556. Do you think that is a good system?—I do not.

A-5557. What is your practical difficulty in stopping it?—I should lose my labour at once. If any man wants to get Rs. 5 he has the *pedhiwallah* in the mill handy and convenient.

A-5558. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If you did not allow him in the mill premises would you lose your labour?—Yes.

A-5559. *Mr. Cliff*: How many work-people have you got in your mill?—1,600.

A-5560. I gather this problem is connected with the instability of your labour force?—Yes.

A-5561. In view of the fact that this money-lender sits at your pay table, can you tell us what is the amount of interest he charges?—I think it is 1 anna per rupee.

A-5562. You say a man might borrow Rs. 5 from this man in the compound; that is rather borrowing against the security of his wages?—Yes, it is.

A-5563. I assume the man might spend that on drink?—Yes.

A-5564. He might spend it on food or on articles of clothing?—Yes.

A-5565. You say wages are excessive. Could you tell me what is your definition of "excessive"?—*Mr. Parker* has dealt with that point. If a workman works 15 days in the month he is quite content because he has got sufficient money.

A-5566. You said a worker would be content with Rs. 45 a month, so that if a weaver gets more than Rs. 45 you say it is excessive?—(*Mr. Parker*): No, I say that weavers are content with Rs. 45.

A-5567. You want to help them: do you propose to reduce their wages to Rs. 45?—No, I do not propose to reduce any wages.

A-5568. Are the workers who get less than Rs. 45 to have their wages increased to Rs. 45?—No, not if they cannot earn it.

A-5569. Can you tell us of any agreements in the mill industry which were negotiated between labour and the management?—Not through the ordinary workmen, no.

A-5570. There is not a negotiated agreement?—No.

A-5571. Do you speak for other industries?—Nothing but textile.

A-5572. You say legislation for fining is imperative?—Yes.

A-5573. What is the maximum fine you have imposed in your mill?—2 per cent. of a man's monthly salary, that is all.

A-5574. Does that cover damaged cloth?—It does not.

A-5575. Would you tell me approximately the maximum amount you charge for damaged cloth?—In my own case if he spoils a piece of cloth, either a *dhoti* or long cloth, he is given the option of either buying the piece or resigning.

A-5576. Will you give us one or two examples?—I have not one example to give you; they have all gone off and left the spoiled cloth on my hands.

A-5577. What did you want them to pay?—A nominal charge for a *dhoti*.

A-5578. How much would it be?—It depends on the quality of the cloth.

A-5579. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you not charge him the wholesale price?—Less than the wholesale price. For example, there was a *dhoti* valued at about Rs. 2-8-0; I wanted to charge him for the cloth Rs. 1-4-0, half of it.

A-5580. And he left your employment?—Yes.

A-5581. You say there is a possibility of a jobber taking his men away. Have you dismissed a jobber in your experience?—Yes.

A-5582. Did he take his men away?—Yes.

A-5583. How many did he take?—40 men. If one jobber takes 40 men away, another will bring 40 men in; he does not bring them all in one day, he takes three or four days to bring them in. But lately, during this last two years I have found I can get the hands without the jobbers; I have found that if one jobber goes away, he cannot take away as many hands as he used to do.

A-5584. How do you account for that?—I suppose they are tired of paying bribes.

A-5585. It might be due to the communistic influence in the trade unions?—Yes, that is right; that upset it; it took the labour out of the hands of the jobber.

A-5586. Then it did some good for the employees?—In that way it did.

A-5587. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Before there was this communism did you not find the jobbers' power was diminishing and that he could not take his men away ?—(Mr. Blackwell) : No, in my own case I have only found it so during the last two years. (Mr. Parker) In a mill I was at we were arranging a system to do without the jobbers.

A-5588. *Miss Cama* : There have been some cinema shows and health exhibitions ; what do you think of them ?—(Mr. Blackwell) I think they were a huge success from every point of view.

A-5589. How many people attended ?—1,200 to 1,500.

A-5590. Did they appreciate them ?—Very much.

A-5591. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Supposing you had an employment agency now at work in Bombay ; there are thousands of workers seeking employment ; what is your idea of the type of man who would be handling the workers at the employment exchange ?—A man sufficiently well paid to be above corruption, and preferably a Parsi. It is not so much a question of the type of man as of what his pay is ; if his pay lifts him above bribery any man will do.

A-5592. If you have hundreds of workers at an employment agency seeking employment, how are you going to be sure that these workers will not bribe somebody to ensure being put on the first, second or third lot sent out to the mills ?—I assume they would be taken by rotation.

A-5593. How are you to know whether they are good, bad or indifferent workers, if you take them by rotation ?—That we should have to find out, but when a man has been through the exchange many times we should begin to know he is a bad workman.

A-5594. What is the difference between the weaving master or the jobber at the mill gate recruiting the men and somebody at the employment agency taking the men and passing them on. I have been to the shipping office here and watched the system of rotation for seamen. Have you any experience of that ?—Not in India.

A-5595. You say take them in rotation ; but when they get to the mill they have to be selected by somebody ; somebody has to vet them and see that they are the right type of men. Who is to do the vetting ?—The master.

A-5596. Precisely the same man who is doing it to-day ?—No, there is a difference ; the master does not employ the labour.

A-5597. Who would select the men who are suitable to be employed by you ?—The head jobbers and the line jobbers. There would be no question of the jobber saying : " You are fit," or " You are unfit ". We will take them all in and find out in a few days which are the good men and weed out those we do not want.

A-5598. Is that a practical suggestion ?—Yes.

A-5599. If they are a lot of inefficient workers, your production will fall ?—We have got to risk that ; the same thing happens now.

A-5600. An inefficient man might bribe the jobber not to report his inefficiency ?—(Mr. Parker) : That cannot be done because the production is checked daily ; an inefficient man will have to go.

A-5601. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : But if the jobber helps an inefficient man who has bribed him, you will not notice that that man is inefficient ?—No.

A-5602. *Miss Power* : You say 60 per cent. of earnings are sent to villages ; earlier you said you could not give the actual figure but your impression was that a high percentage of wages was sent to the villages. On what do you base your conclusion ?—(Mr. Parker). That is based on loans on wages when they want to send money to the villages.

A-5603. But you do not suggest they send anything like as much as half their wages to the villages ?—Yes, and more in some cases.

A-5604. Regularly ?—Yes.

A-5605. *The Chairman* : That is when their families are left behind ?—Yes, and that is 95 per cent.

A-5606. *Mr. Ahmed* : There are, of course, many causes of strikes, but do you think delay in payment of wages is one cause of strikes ?—(Mr. Parker) : No, not in our knowledge ; we do not know of any strike being caused by non-payment of wages.

A-5607. If a man does not get his wages in one or two months, he naturally objects ?—(Mr. Blackwell) If a man does not get his wages within one or two months, it is his own fault entirely, not the company's.

A-5608. Can the workmen do better work in a cool atmosphere with plenty of ventilation ?—Yes, most decidedly.

A-5609. If housing conditions are better and they can live in contentment, can they do better work?—What do you call better housing? Where can they have better housing than in those Government *chawls* at Worli and yet they will not live in them.

A-5610. If the workers have better housing near the mills, can they become more efficient?—Yes.

A-5611. If, in view of the cost of living of a man, his wife and say two children, the workers get good wages, can they do their work more efficiently?—Yes.

A-5612. Because there is contentment in their lives?—Quite right.

A-5613. But the cost of living of a man, his wife and two children is much higher than the wages he earns?—No. (Mr. Parker) The trouble is that they are getting too much wages.

A-5614. Is not Rs. 45 the utmost a weaver can get?—(Mr. Blackwell) No, he can get Rs. 75; the average weaver gets about Rs. 50 to Rs. 55 a month. (Mr. Parker) In my mill a weaver can earn up to Rs. 90, but he is content if he earns Rs. 45.

A-5615. The cost of living of a worker, his wife and two children will be more than Rs. 45?—(Mr. Blackwell) No, nothing like it.

A-5616. *The Chairman*: You told us you thought that in the case of a man whose family was left in the village, more than half his wages were remitted to the village?—(Mr. Parker) Yes.

A-5617. We have figures in front of us taken from a report on family budgets in Bombay made a few years ago, in which the figure is given as 26·2 per cent. That is the percentage of income remitted by a single man which I take to mean a man who has left his family in the village. So that your estimate is more than double the figure we have here?—Take a weaver; he will earn up to, say, Rs. 60 a month. Seven days after he has had his pay he comes for a loan on his wages; it may be two-thirds of the wages he has earned, and he sends that amount to his native place.

A-5618. He, of course, is not typical of the average; he would be in a good position compared with the average?—All weavers on the present scale of wages can earn between Rs. 50 and Rs. 60.

A-5619. It may be that accounts for the difference between your figure and this which is based on a general average?—(Mr. Green) That probably includes the coolie; we are referring to the skilled labourer like a weaver.

A-5620. *Mrs. Wagh*: With regard to the extent to which housing is provided by employers, you say "Not successful." Do you mean to say that the workers are not taking advantage of the available accommodation?—(Mr. Parker) It is not taken advantage of as it ought to be.

A-5621. Do you know how many houses have been provided by the millowners and how many are unoccupied?—(Mr. Blackwell) My own mill has not provided any housing accommodation.

A-5622. With regard to the *chawls* built by the Bombay Improvement Trust, do you know how many of them are occupied and how many are unoccupied?—(Mr. Green) Not to the extent of more than ten per cent. in Worli.

A-5623. I am not speaking of the Worli *chawls*; I am speaking of the *chawls* provided by the Bombay Improvement Trust?—We do not know.

A-5624. I might state for the information of the Commission that about 9,424 quarters have been provided by the Bombay Improvement Trust of which 3,559 are at present occupied. With regard to the extent to which housing is provided by workers themselves, you say they are successful. Are there any *chawls* provided by the Workers' Association in Bombay for the use of the workers?—They build their own huts.

A-5625. Are there such huts in Bombay?—There are plenty, and that is the reason why *chawls* which are in healthy places are not occupied.

A-5626. How much rent do they pay for the huts?—Nothing.

A-5627. You know there are about 150,000 workers. How many of them are living in huts provided by themselves?—There are very few who live outside; they do not want to go to *chawls* that have been built in healthy and sanitary places because they have to pay Rs. 1-8-0 per head per month. My view is that these huts are so bad and insanitary that they should be burnt; it is a disgrace to the city of Bombay to have such dirty huts.

A-5628. *Mr. Aswale*: With regard to unemployment you say: "No necessity in Bombay Textile Industry". What do you mean by that?—(Mr. Parker) It means that there is employment for everybody.

A-5629. Do you know the number of unemployed people in the textile industry in Bombay?—(Mr. Blackwell) It is more than 12,000. (Mr. Green) We know that

three mills have been closed as a result of which 6,000 people must have been thrown out of employment.

A-5630. We were informed by the Millowners' Association that seven mills have been closed down?—That must be of recent date.

A-5631. If seven mills have been closed, what do you think the number of unemployed would be?—14,000—2,000 on an average for each mill.

A-5632. Is it not a fact that more than 35,000 workers are unemployed?—I do not know.

A-5633. With regard to housing provided by the employers you have said that they are not successful. Is it not a fact that almost all the *chawls* which have been built by the millowners are occupied by the mill workers?—It is not successful in this way that men live there for 12 months and leave it without paying rent. From their point of view it may be successful, but we do not consider it successful because the workers want to live for nothing.

A-5634. Is it not a fact that on account of the recent strikes they are not in a position to pay rents?—Certainly they are in a position to pay Rs. 1-8-0 a month, if they want to.

A-5635. Do you know how many mills have provided crèches?—(Mr. Blackwell) Our mill group have. (Mr. Parker) There is a scheme to provide crèches in all the mills.

A-5636. Do you know that only about 10 or 12 mills out of 80 mills in Bombay have provided crèches?—(Mr. Green) As the Commission must have seen, seven mills under the agency of Currimbhoy have provided crèches.

Mr. Asale: I admit that your mills have provided crèches; I was referring to the mills in general.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. T. W. JOHNSTONE, M.B.E., Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay.

A-5637. Mr. Cliff: In your memorandum you speak of the payment to the people employed in seasonal factories. Are they all paid weekly?—It varies; in the case of temporary staff they are usually paid weekly, but in the case of permanent staff, like the engine staff, they are usually paid monthly.

A-5638. Did you notice any objection on the part of those people who are being paid weekly?—The conditions are very different.

A-5639. I am not concerned at the moment about the conditions; I am only concerned with the class of people that are paid weekly?—As a matter of fact, I think the weekly payment is certainly preferable because it coincides with the weekly bazaar day.

A-5640. Where the system of weekly payment is in operation—it may be due to special circumstances—is there any objection on the part of the work-people at all?—I have not heard of any. As a matter of fact, I think in the ginning factories the weekly system of payment is the best.

A-5641. You say: "If Government could acquire land in anticipation of industrial development, assistance might be given either to employers, Municipalities or other organizations interested in the provision of housing for the workers". Do I understand by that that if there is to be any further industrial development, there ought to be what might be called town planning?—I think Government should anticipate, to some extent, developments in certain areas.

A-5642. In order to prevent the kind of thing that has occurred in Bombay?—Yes; and possibly in Ahmedabad at the present time.

A-5643. In the memorandum of the Government of Bombay it is stated: "There is practically no spreadover in the industries in the Bombay Presidency". Now, apart from industries, take services like tramways and power supply. Is there spreadover?—I have not specially examined this; I should imagine there would be some.

A-5644. You cannot give any definite information?—No.

A-5645. There is a reference in the Government memorandum to meal intervals. I would like to ask your opinion whether a meal interval ought to be provided in the early part of the day?—Yes; I think it would be advantageous both from the point of the millowner and also of the employee; I think that it would tend to greater efficiency.

A-5646. With regard to the control of temperature in textile factories, it seemed to me that in some of the rooms particularly the temperature was not quite comfortable even now in this cold season?—As a matter of fact, the temperature in some of the rooms is

probably lower than what you get in certain factories in England; the people here are more acclimatized to a higher temperature.

A-5647. In summer it must be more than what it is now?—In the hot weather the ventilation systems are more efficient than at the present time.

A-5648. Not in all mills?—No, but most of the mills usually aim at a temperature of about 85° or 87°.

A-5649. Can you tell what effective control you have got over temperature?—We have got definite rules on humidification. We propose to introduce a law that no live steam should be admitted after a temperature of 85° is reached.

A-5650. Is it proposed to introduce a law for that purpose?—Yes; I believe in some Provinces they have introduced it as a Rule, but we took legal opinion in Bombay and it was decided that we could not legally enforce that under the Act as it stands at present. We circularized all the associations with regard to this matter and we found that it is in effective operation; but there may be a few mills that do not observe it.

A-5651. Is it possible to take more effective steps to control the temperature?—If every mill went in for a very expensive and elaborate ventilating plant, the temperature would automatically come down.

A-5652. Let us deal with the mills as they are at the moment; all the mills cannot go in for an expensive plant?—In many cases it might be done relatively cheaply.

A-5653. Have you power to give instructions for that to be done?—We have no definite power for doing that.

A-5654. Is it your experience that it is necessary that there should be some power?—I think it is certainly necessary.

A-5655. What kind of power would you be inclined to ask for?—I think if there were a section in the Factories Act giving the inspector power to order reasonable measures for temperature reduction, subject to appeal, that would meet the case.

A-5656. I believe you were sitting in the room while the last witnesses were asked a question about the advances made by the money-lender to workers in mills and the money-lender being present at the money table?—Yes.

A-5657. Do you find that in every mill?—I think that in several mills they do advance at very unreasonable rates of interest because there is no risk involved in the transaction; I think that ought to be stopped.

A-5658. What do you think to be a reasonable rate of interest?—Certainly not one anna per rupee; I think probably somewhere about 20 per cent. would certainly not be unreasonable.

A-5659. Have you noted cases where a higher rate of interest than one anna was charged?—I think I had a case in Ahmedabad some years ago where they were charging a little more; I am not absolutely certain what the exact rate was, but I do think that one anna per rupee is really an excessive rate, considering that there is no risk involved.

A-5660. *The Chairman*: I take it that you are speaking of the money-lenders who are allowed into the mills?—Yes. I have found that this is more or less done with the permission of the Agent, or at any rate he is fully aware of the practice. I think that ought to be stopped.

A-5661. What would you suggest for stopping that?—I think if you had a section in the Factory Act that if advances are given the rates should be reasonable, the Factory Inspector might be able to check this practice of charging unreasonable rates of interest at least to some extent.

A-5662. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How could the Factory Inspector check this practice?—By observation.

A-5663. What would he observe?—He could find out whether exorbitant rates are being charged.

A-5664. The money-lender may be taking two annas from a worker but he may be showing on paper only half an anna?—I think the Factory Inspector might be able to check that.

A-5665. *The Chairman*: You would not say that the regular attendance of this gentleman both for making loans and recovering them on pay day made the worker dilatory when the manufacture was going on?—No; I do not think so.

A-5666. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you not think that these money-lenders might be excluded from the mill altogether?—I think in some cases the system is really in favour of the employee; if the advance is given at a reasonable rate, I think the employee benefits.

A-5667. Will it not be sufficient if the mill agents were to institute co-operative credit societies?—I think it would be of undoubted advantage if the mill agents themselves undertook this financing.

A-5668. *Sir Alexander Murray*: On the question of indebtedness, the previous witness stated that he could not prohibit the money-lender from coming into the compound of the mill, because if he did that it might affect his relations with his labour. In Bengal we do not allow any money-lender to come inside the compound of the mill; we keep him outside. Why should a distinction be made between the Bombay man and the Bengal man?—I do not know the situation in Bengal. I think if any action is taken on this matter there will be trouble to begin with, but I think it could be introduced.

A-5669. Trouble from whom?—From the money-lender.

A-5670. Surely if I am an employer I have every right to prevent any one other than my employees from entering my compound?—That is so.

A-5671. And there is really nothing to prevent any employer here from refusing to permit a money-lender to enter his compound?—I do not think there would be much trouble especially if the millowners provide the same facilities for advances.

A-5672. *The Chairman*: Does the favoured money-lender pay any commission to the Agent?—I cannot say absolutely on that point, but I have known of a few cases where the agent has benefitted in some way or other; I would not like to say that that is a regular practice.

A-5673. It rather stands to reason that it is a valuable privilege to be allowed to charge one anna per rupee per month?—Yes, and that without any risk.

A-5674. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Money-lenders have great difficulty in recovering their advances from a moving population?—Yes.

A-5675. And because the money-lender takes a certain amount of risk, he is entitled to charge a little higher rate of interest?—He can charge more if he advances outside the mill, but in cases in which he advances money inside the mill there is no risk whatever.

A-5676. Therefore, in instances like that it is only reasonable to suggest that, if in Bombay you are to give to a money-lender the privilege of entering the mill and collecting the loan at the time of payment of wages, he ought to reduce the rate of interest to something near the market rate?—That is so.

A-5677. Whereas if he is not allowed this privilege, there would be some reason for allowing a higher rate of interest?—Yes.

A-5678. I notice that you have given interesting statistics regarding indebtedness in your factory report of the last year; I think the figures given relate to Sholapur?—Yes.

A-5679. On the face of these figures it appears that the higher the wage the higher the debt. Is it the case that if a man is drawing high wages he has better credit and can borrow to a larger extent than a man who gets less wages?—I think the borrowings do not depend altogether on wages; what I mean is that a lot of these debts may have been incurred for certain ceremonies; it is well known that the bigger the man the more he spends on such things.

A-5680. It is an extraordinary coincidence, on the face of these figures, that the higher the wages the higher the indebtedness?—That is so.

A-5681. We have heard both in Ahmedabad and in Bombay that certain workers change mills very often. Why do they change if they have got to bribe the jobber every time they change?—There are probably a number of circumstances influencing that. For instance, a man may be able to get a job in a mill which gives him more wages than he is getting in the mill which he leaves.

A-5682. If he has got to pay bribe in every mill, why should he change so frequently?—If a man can get a job in a mill which adds Rs. 10 more to his earnings he probably thinks it worthwhile giving Rs. 5 as bribe.

A-5683. It is a custom of the country?—Partly.

A-5684. We have been told, in connection with the ginning factories, that the workers there do not know their hours. Speaking of the textile industry in Bombay, do you find that the workers know when they are to stop work?—Certainly. A lot of them carry wrist watches, and if they do not stop on the minute there is trouble.

A-5685. You made a statement in the information which you gave to the Government of Bombay, referring to the employment of children: "Children are generally employed on the single shift system." If a mill in Bombay works 11 hours, the children work in the forenoon and then go away for the rest of the day, and a fresh lot of children come on in the afternoon. Has an attempt been made to split up the shift system in Bombay where the children work for three hours in the morning and for three hours in the afternoon?—

The matter was considered some years ago, and there was a proposal to amend the Factory Act to that effect, but it was never tried out. Personally I do not think it would work in Bombay.

A-5686. It is the custom in Bengal?—In Bengal most of the workers' houses are near the mills. In Bombay I think the balance of advantage is in favour of the single shift.

A-5687. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it not a fact that some mills in Bombay refuse to allow money-lenders to enter the compound?—Yes.

A-5688. On pay day do not the *Pathans* hang about outside the gates trying to get the men as they come out?—That is so.

A-5689. I do not want the Commission to think that it is general for all mills to allow money-lenders in their compounds?—It is not general.

A-5690. Would you consider it better for the efficiency of the men to have two intervals, or one interval as now?—It depends upon the conditions. In Bombay there may be something to be said for two intervals, but in Ahmedabad one interval is preferred.

A-5691. I am speaking of Bombay?—I am inclined to think that two intervals would probably be suitable.

A-5692. Do you mean two half an hour intervals, or two intervals, one of half an hour and the other of one hour?—I should think that three quarters of an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon might be suitable. I do not advocate that, but it might be suitable.

A-5693. I notice from your memorandum that most accidents take place between 9 and 10 in the morning—in the third hour. Can you explain that?—It is very difficult to give any definite opinion on accidents when there are so few of them. Probably the activities are greater at that time.

A-5694. The next highest is between 4 o'clock and 5 o'clock. Taking the afternoon it is the fourth hour in which most accidents occur, and in the morning it is the third hour. You have not tried to find a reason for that?—No, I have not.

A-5695. You advocate that there should be a meal interval in the morning. Would you suggest stopping the engine for that interval?—It would be very difficult to regulate it otherwise.

A-5696. If you have a meal interval in the morning, I take it you would have to have two intervals?—Yes, you would have two then.

A-5697. Do you advocate a meal interval in the morning.....?—I do not advocate it. I say it may prove suitable.

A-5698. You do not go further than that?—No.

A-5699. In either case?—In either case.

A-5700. Do you think the men would prefer to work 8½ hours intensively or to work 10 hours more easily?—The latter.

A-5701. *The Chairman*: If the Commission came to the view that the time had come for an extension of factory inspection in India, would you favour as the next step in advance, the inclusion of factories employing more than 20 persons although they may not have power, or a lowering of the number from 20 to 10, keeping the definition as it is at present?—If the Act is extended to small factories using power and employing between 10 and 20 persons, I should probably need about 20 per cent. extra staff. If the Act were extended to the other factories I should probably need 60 per cent. extra staff. This is only an approximate estimate.

A-5702. You would need 60 per cent. extra staff in the case of non-power factories and 20 per cent. extra staff in the case of power factories?—Yes, that is to say, 80 per cent. for both.

A-5703. Has there been in Bombay any recruitment of Factory Inspectors in the last five years?—We recruited all our staff since 1923, except myself.

A-5704. You yourself hold a special position?—I was recruited by the Secretary of State in England and sent out here.

A-5705. Are you satisfied that there are sufficient recruits available to maintain the work at the standard which you have set?—I think so.

A-5706. Even if the service were extended to the extent of 60 per cent.—the figure you have just given?—If there were any extension to the Docks, for instance, I might require a specialist type of inspector.

A-5707. From what sources has your recruitment been made?—Government amalgamated the Factory with the Boiler Department in 1920, and they separated again in 1923. Then we advertised for appointments very widely, and we aimed at getting

inspectors with theoretical and practical knowledge who had themselves been working in factories.

A-5708. What amount of persons were available who had worked in factories?—There was a fair number. My Inspector at Ahmedabad has been in a factory for about seven years. He had been an apprentice, an Inspector and a fitter in factories.

A-5709. That was in the mechanical workshop?—Yes.

A-5710. What about the textile factories?—I have recruited one man who has been working as a manager, and who has been through the different grades, in the mill. I am speaking of my Indian Inspector. He has been through works in England, and obtained his B.Sc. at Glasgow. He has also had experience in India. With regard to my assistants, I have more or less to rely on theoretical men because no man with extensive practical experience will come on the pay. The assistants are more or less confined to the inspection of the smaller factories and they are gradually getting experience.

A-5711. You do think that there is an adequate source of recruitment for extension of your Department in India?—Yes, with the proviso that in some cases it may be necessary to get a specialist type of man.

A-5712. *Mr. Clow*: You say in your memorandum: "Section 22 should also provide substitution within three days of the weekly bazaar day". How would that give you anything that is not possible at present?—Suppose there is a bazaar day on Thursday. They have stopped on the last Thursday and the ordinary Thursday is a recognized holiday. Suppose they stop for Thursday. They have stopped on the preceding Thursday, which is a substituted holiday for the Sunday in between. Then they go on to the next Thursday, and if there is a religious holiday on the Wednesday they will stop on the Wednesday, but that Wednesday is not within three days of the succeeding Sunday.

A-5713. You still have the proviso that there should be no substitution resulting from a person working 10 consecutive days?—You have to fit in the day. You have to give every holiday within three days of the Sunday and you cannot run for more than ten days. It means that if there is a bazaar day on Thursday or Friday you cannot substitute Wednesday for that because it is not within three days of the succeeding Sunday.

A-5714. With regard to Section 20 of the Act do you consider that the proviso is adequate as it stands?—I think so. We had a very bad accident seven or eight years ago which involved a lot of prosecutions and the High Court judgment does not definitely exclude the provision of doors in the partition.

A-5715. Do you think it should be provided that there should be no doors or openings?—It is difficult to say. Up to the present we have been watching the matter and if there are doors we always see that they are kept locked. Since the section was framed some years ago there has been an extension in the methods of cleaning in pressing factories, which has added to our difficulties, but as far as I know at present the doors are kept rigidly locked.

A-5716. You are not in favour of prohibiting doors altogether?—Not altogether, because in some cases you could get a partition with a door which would be far safer than a partition without a door.

A-5717. We were told by the Factory Inspector in the Punjab that Section 36 (3) made it almost impossible to enforce some provisions of the Act, because it does not require the notice to be sent until 36 hours after the change; consequently if he arrived at a factory and found that the hours were not in accordance with those on the notice board, the factory manager simply said: "Oh I was just about to send you a notice. We made the change this morning or yesterday?"—That is a difficulty, but we overcome it here by prosecuting for not having the "D" register up-to-date.

A-5718. This is a difficulty which can be surmounted?—I think you might reduce the period of 36 hours and say "notice must be sent as soon as the change is made".

A-5719. With regard to humidification, you stated that you found legal difficulties in the way of prescribing that the use of live steam should cease at 85° temperature. Do the difficulties arise from the fact that you cannot say that the use of live steam at a higher temperature than 85° degrees falls, to use a legal term, within the mischief of Section 9 (d)?—That is the difficulty. Section 9 (d) simply states that no factory is to be rendered so humid as to be dangerous to health.

A-5720. Do you think it is detrimental to health if you humidify steam at a temperature higher than 85°?—The point is that no one can prove it. You cannot say that a certain amount of humidity at 86° secured by live steam is more harmful than humidity secured by water at 95°.

A-5721. What amendments do you suggest?—I suggest that it should be put definitely into the Act that no live steam should be admitted for humidification after a definite temperature.

A-5722. That would not meet the general case of controlling humidification otherwise than by live steam?—I propose that the Act should give power definitely to provide for standards of humidification, and that the Inspector should have power of imposing further measures with regard to temperature reduction, and that live steam should be prohibited after 85°. In England, Regulations are framed under the Cotton Cloth Factories Act.

A-5723. *Miss Power*: We were told yesterday that the notices about the Bombay Maternity Act are still not issued to employers, although the Act was passed in July. Who is responsible for the issue of notices when a new piece of legislation is passed?—The Act was passed very hurriedly and we are making arrangements to get the Act and the rules printed in the vernaculars and sent out.

A-5724. Does it not mean that a very great lapse of time has occurred—from July to November—during which the workers are still unacquainted with a piece of legislation which intimately affects them?—It was published in the Gazette.

A-5725. But the Gazette is not of much assistance to illiterate women, is it?—The millowners read the Gazette and can take steps to circulate the information.

A-5726. Are the millowners obliged to put up notices?—They can print the notices themselves and put them up.

A-5727. Do they in point of fact do so?—I think a few have done so.

A-5728. *Mr. Asvale*: The Secretary of the Millowners Association yesterday admitted that these notices had not been posted because the millowners had not received instructions from the Government Labour Office?—A few have done it, but it is not general, I admit.

A-5729. *Miss Power*: Is it a fact that the Government have to provide translations?—I do not think there is any legal obligation on Government to do so, but in this case Government are arranging to give the Act publicity and have agreed to print notices and send them round to each factory.

A-5730. *The Chairman*: Do you inspect the registers?—We shall have to do so under the Maternity Act.

A-5731. Up to the present you have not seen any of the registers kept by the employers?—I have not personally checked them. In the case of mills we always have the other check. We can check the muster rolls kept under the Factory Act.

A-5732. You cannot state the number of women who have already put in claims?—I know that certain women have been paid benefits, but I cannot say to what extent.

A-5733. I suppose, where even a few women have been paid benefits, the news spreads rapidly?—Very rapidly. As a matter of fact the general principles of the Maternity Benefits Act are well known amongst the women.

A-5734. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say "Absentee reports are usually daily forwarded to the managers"?—That is so.

A-5735. I suppose there is an entry made in the register of the report?—No, no report is entered. Absenteeism may be due to fever or other sickness or to a desire to get another job.

A-5736. Is not that in the report?—No.

A-5737. Are there any books of accounts that you see?—No.

A-5738. Is it not within your sphere to ask for these?—No. We cannot deal with individual cases of absenteeism. All we are concerned about legally at present is that no person is overworked.

A-5739. Suppose a man is absent on account of certain accident?—Every accident must be specially reported to us.

A-5740. By whom?—By the manager.

A-5741. How many cases did you have last year?—We get two to three thousand accidents reported to us in the course of the whole year.

A-5742. Do the employers pay?—They have to pay compensation under the Workman's Compensation Act.

A-5743. Suppose a man cuts his finger when he is weaving?—Then the owner has to pay compensation.

A-5744. How does he pay? Does he pay voluntarily?—He usually pays through the Millowners' Mutual Insurance Association.

A-5745. If a man cuts his finger owing to the nature of his work is he entitled to compensation?—Yes, if he is off duty for ten days.

A-5746. How does he get it?—He makes a claim to the manager and the manager sends it on.

A-5747. Does not the manager sometimes say "You foolish fellow, why did you go and cut your finger" and dismiss the man?—I do not think managers do that. We follow up all accidents. My experience of managers is that they are very reasonable in their treatment of injured cases.

A-5748. *The Chairman*: They are all insured?—Practically all.

A-5749. *Mr. Ahmed*: You state that there should be a clause in the Factory Act to the effect that where advances are given the rate of interest charged should be reasonable. You are therefore in favour of legislation providing protection to the worker as regards the rates of interest?—I simply bring that to the notice of the Commission as a point for consideration.

A-5750. Are you in favour of some sort of organization, like a co-operative society which will charge lower rates of interest?—I think an extension of the co-operative movement would be very helpful.

A-5751. Would it not also be helpful if the mills brought into operation some system to relieve the indebtedness of their workers?—I think any measures of that sort would be beneficial both to the mills and to the employees.

A-5752. Are you in favour of elementary education being given to the workers?—Yes, but I would not say that the millowners or factory owners should do everything in this respect.

A-5753. Are not the municipal schools far away from the mills?—I think there are schools in the mill areas.

A-5754. But not sufficient?—That is a question for the Municipality.

A-5755. Therefore if facilities for education are given by the millowners it will be beneficial?—The millowners provided schools some years ago but they were not found successful.

A-5756. Did all the mills provide them?—No, about a dozen.

A-5757. What was the reason of the failure?—I cannot say, because that occurred before I came to Bombay.

A-5758. *Mr. Cliff*: When we were at Karachi we went into a flour mill in which we found that the plant was not stopped during meal intervals. How do you control that?—They should give the intervals in the D register, so that there is a check in that way. The position is they cannot work for more than 10 hours on a 12 hour shift. The two hours interval should be put in the register.

A-5759. What is the "D" register?—That is a definitely prescribed register under the Factory Act, which every Inspector should inspect.

A-5760. I will not say that I saw the "D" register, but I saw a book signed by the Factory Inspector, and there seemed to be no provision for controlling the meal interval. I am told they get an exemption. Can you give us the exemption form under which they get exemption?—They have only been exempted from section 21 of the Act—from giving a rest interval if there is more than six hours' work. They have not been exempted from keeping the "D" register or from working an average 10-hour day within the 12-hour limit.

A-5761. There is a notice on the mill wall stating what the interval is, but there seemed to be no enforcement of the provision of the meal interval?—All flour mills here work on two 12-hour shifts, but we have to check that no person in the 12 hours works more than 10 hours.

A-5762. *The Chairman*: We had a statement from some persons who are not themselves workers in the factory that the Act was not being observed. We only accepted that as an *ex parte* statement. Has any representation been made to you in the last six weeks with regard to that complaint at Karachi?—No.

A-5763. The person who was speaking for the work-people has not advised you. We told him that we were not factory inspectors and indicated to him what was his proper course?—We have had no representations.

A-5764. *Mr. Cliff*: I talked to the manager of the mill, and he said "They go and relieve each other," but even he could not say what period they took for meals?—They should fix definite meal intervals. I will look into the point.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. L. R. TAIRSEE, Mr. MANU SUBADAR, and Mr. J. K. MEHTA
of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay.**

A-5765. *The Chairman* : Mr. Tairsee, you are the President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay ?—(Mr. Tairsee) Yes.

A-5766. Mr. Manu Subadar is a member of the Executive Committee and Mr. Mehta is the Secretary ?—Yes.

A-5767. Will you please tell us in a word or two about the scope and purpose of your Chamber ?—(Mr. Manu Subadar) The Chamber has a membership of 480 spread over the whole of Bombay Presidency. Among the members there are 39 textile mills, 38 share-brokers and bankers, 74 piece-goods merchants, 48 raw cotton traders, and 19 grain and seeds merchants. Besides we have 364 members in the general section representing a variety of small merchants, middlemen of different kinds and factories.

A-5768. So that you cover a really good portion of the industry and trade of Bombay ?—Yes, we think we do.

A-5769. The object of your chamber is to encourage the growth of industry and commerce of the Presidency ?—That is so.

A-5770. For that reason you have taken an interest in the work of our Commission and put before us a memorandum of your views ?—Yes.

A-5771. There are two points in your memorandum which I find very interesting. One, and perhaps the main point, is where you declare yourself in favour of compulsory arbitration ?—Yes.

A-5772. We have not yet had that proposal put before us by other bodies and therefore, I would like to be clear how far your Chamber has examined that question and if it has the general support of your members, not only those who are merchants, but also those who are employers in the great cotton textile industry. Has that subject been a matter of discussion in your Chamber ?—In our memorandum we have dwelt at length on the need for a compulsory arbitration machinery. We have shown there how a strike is harmful not only to the employers and the labourers but also to the industry generally and the general public. The evil effects of a strike last not only during the strike, but for a long period afterwards. Generally the purpose of the strike is not clear to both sides. There is no patience or friendly spirit of conciliation on either side to investigate the causes of complaint and bring the strike to an end soon. We hope that the machinery that we suggest would make strikes impossible. There have been several courts of enquiry which did good work in Bombay. But their lessons have been lost upon labour. Otherwise they would not have gone on strike last time.

A-5773. I am addressing myself to the practical aspects of compulsory arbitration. We are more or less familiar with the proposition as it has been canvassed in other countries ?—We propose the creation of a permanent and impartial body of that description to whom the points in dispute must be referred before a strike or lock-out is declared. We have made this proposal with certain reservations, namely, that it should apply to certain well-organized trades and industries and that it should be an experimental measure for a short period.

A-5774. You say, "My Committee would go further and advocate the compulsory reference of all issues arising between employers and employees to such an impartial and competent court." Do you advocate compulsory arbitration ?—Yes, we advocate compulsory reference.

A-5775. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is there not a difference between the two ?—The difference lies this way : arbitration comes in after the dispute, whereas reference comes in before. Suppose there was a point in dispute between the employers and the workers, and that it was not possible to settle it by negotiations between themselves. Suppose the workers considered the case to be serious enough to go on strike. They should not go on strike without referring the point in dispute to this permanent body. Similarly if the employers thought the point in dispute to be sufficiently serious to declare a lock-out, they should refer the matter to the permanent body, before they declared a lock-out. We suggest for the present, that there should be a competent permanent body, in which both the workers and the employers would have confidence. We make this suggestion although we know that such a machinery has not worked successfully in other countries.

A-5776. *The Chairman* : By making this reference compulsory you withdraw the right on the one hand to strike and on the other hand to declare a lock-out, in order that the matter in dispute may be settled by this permanent body ?—Yes.

A-5777. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do you mean that the findings of this body are binding on the parties ?—Yes.

A-5778. *The Chairman* : You suggest that in India under Indian conditions, compulsory arbitration would be a success ?—We have made the proposal with certain reservations, namely, that it should be confined to certain well-organized trades, and that it should be tried as an experimental measure for a short period. We do not suggest this as a final remedy.

A-5779. Have you faced the practical difficulties on the one hand in compelling men to work against their will, if they do not approve of the decision of the court, and on the other of compelling employers perhaps to work at a loss in pursuance of the decision of the court ?—Yes. But we have seen the abuses of the present system. The workers work when they like and strike when they like. The employers run their concerns when they like and lock-out the men when they like. The issues in dispute are never clearly understood by either body. Labour is not well organized to understand its own interests. If the employer wants to make his organization more efficient and economic resulting in the displacement of a few people, the labourers declare a strike. There is no clear understanding between both. On the other hand if the issues could be threshed out before a body of the kind I have suggested, strikes and lock-outs would become practically impossible.

A-5780. I understand what you say. You are looking in particular to the conditions as they are in India to-day ?—Yes.

A-5781. Experience in other countries may not necessarily apply to India and we take it that your suggestion is based solely on Indian conditions ?—Quite so.

A-5782. Do you think that if there were established a permanent court of arbitration of this kind, it would be acceptable both to the employers and the workers ?—We have suggested this solution of the problem confronting us to-day. The success of it will depend on the manner in which Government works it out. Attempt should be made to remove the suspicion on both sides. I must also say that in the present unsettled state of affairs the measure will be looked upon with suspicion by both sides. Anyhow it is worth a trial for a short period with reference to certain organized trades.

A-5783. Your idea is that there should be a panel of arbitrators, three of whom should be called upon to deal with any particular case ?—Certainly.

A-5784. Who should be made responsible for bringing this machinery into existence ?—Government.

A-5785. Not the employers on the one side and the workers on the other ?—No, Government would only act on the representation of the one or the other side.

A-5786. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Should they not act without any representation from one side or the other ?—How then could they know the situation. I do not expect Government to have a machinery of its own to keep itself informed of the points at issue.

A-5787. If Government were to act only on representation being made by the one side or the other, how does your suggestion materially differ from the machinery of the Trade Disputes Act ?—The Trade Disputes Act provides a conciliation machinery or a Court of Enquiry whose findings are not binding on the parties. Whereas, I go a step further and say that in certain trades to which my suggestion will be applied the award of the tribunal must be binding on the parties.

A-5788. Then the only difference is that the present law is optional, whereas you suggest that it should be compulsory ?—Yes.

A-5789. *The Chairman* : How would you compel the workers to work in the mills if they thought that the conditions were not fair ?—We cannot compel individual workers, but we could compel organized and recognized trade unions and trade union officials to carry out the decisions of the tribunal.

A-5790. At any rate to see that they do not visibly obstruct the order of the Court ?—Yes. If the workers refused to carry out any finding of this tribunal which they considered to be against their interests, then to that extent they should be deprived of the protection afforded to trade unions under the law.

A-5791. Take the other case, the case of an employer who said : " if I obeyed the verdict of this tribunal, it would mean a loss of 1 anna per pound of yarn or a yard of cloth which would make me bankrupt ; I would rather close my mills than incur such loss ". How would your tribunal deal with that ?—I think that we can convince the employers that any adverse decisions of the court I suggest, would in the long run do them much less harm, than the present system of strikes on the smallest provocation, lightning strikes, sympathetic strikes and all sorts of strikes the aim of which, workers do not generally understand.

A-5792. If we were looking at the unhappy history of the last few years you would probably be right ; but we must look further than that ?—There will be time to consider the question after the short experimental period I have suggested. In the meanwhile this measure would not do much harm to either side.

A-5793. During that period you might have difficulty in telling the employers to keep their works open although they might be working at a loss ?—They might restrict their operations, if they thought that necessary in the interests of their trade. But they would not be in a position to declare a lock-out.

A-5794. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Could an employer say : " I will close down all my mills, because otherwise I have to work at a loss " ?—We cannot prevent a company from going into liquidation.

A-5795. But is that not the same as a lock-out ?—The Directors and the Shareholders have certain powers and we do not propose by this measure to deprive them of those powers.

A-5796. What is the difference between that and a lock-out ?—There is a difference. Suppose an employer got an order which was unfavourable to him. He could not say that he would not work his mill and would declare a lock-out.

A-5797. Suppose he said that under the conditions he would have to work at a loss and therefore he was closing down his mill ?—Surely, I suppose the law would provide the necessary penalties for such disobedience of orders of the court.

A-5798. *The Chairman* : And the penalty you suggest, would have to be heavier than the cost of closing down ?—I should say that we have not gone into the question in such detail. All that we suggest is that the present machinery is inadequate to deal with the present situation, and that it should be stiffened up a little and applied to certain trades for a short time as an experimental measure. We hope that it would not do any harm if this proposal were tried for some time.

A-5799. In your memorandum you suggest a policy of prohibition with regard to drink. Would you apply that to the whole of Bombay ?—We are not speaking there on theoretical, ethical or other grounds. As a practical economic proposition, we find that the workers spend a large proportion of their wages, as much as a crore of rupees per annum, in this behalf. If at least a portion of this amount could be made to remain in their own pockets, it would do them immense good.

A-5800. And you think that the citizens of Bombay would not follow other countries in evasion of the prohibition law ?—Of course the vested interests would obstruct the enforcement of the machinery for prohibition. But I am confident that the general public would heartily support the measure.

A-5801. You are confident that the general public will not only support the Act of prohibition but also the administration ?—I am absolutely confident of that. Several resolutions have been passed by several public bodies, including the Legislative Council.

A-5802. You suggest that a difficulty arises from the revenue derived by Government from the liquor shops ?—Yes, Government derive a large revenue from this trade and they are not able to give that up.

A-5803. Does your Chamber include representatives of this particular trade ?—We might have some importers of foreign liquor.

A-5804. Would they not take any objection to your recommendation to us on that score ?—We have in the past recommended the same steps to Government, and received no protests from them.

A-5805. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In answer to the Chairman you suggested a plan of compulsory arbitration and admitted that there were certain difficulties in enforcing the award of the arbitrators ?—Yes. We also made certain reservations, namely, that the scheme should in the first instance be applied to certain well organized trades as an experimental measure. We had in mind trades where the unions concerned were well organized and had some funds.

A-5806. Is there any such industry in this Presidency ?—The Railwaymen's Union, for example.

A-5807. Take the general trade and industry of this Presidency. Take the textile industry, in which we have had so many strikes. You said that there were obvious difficulties in the enforcement of the award of the arbitrators ?—Yes.

A-5808. Let me put to you an alternative scheme. Suppose it were proposed to legislate to the effect that every cotton mill in Bombay should have a union and every worker employed in that mill should belong to that union ; next, that there should also be a central union to which every Mill Union was to be affiliated, thus organizing the whole

labour force engaged in this industry. What would your Chamber think about it? Questions affecting individual mills would be discussed between the unions and that mill with the owners, while general questions affecting textile labour as a whole would be discussed between the central union and the Millowners' Association. The unions of individual mills should be composed entirely of the men working in the mill, whereas the central union might be allowed to have the assistance of outsiders for a few years. Would not a scheme on these lines meet the difficulty and attain the object which your Chamber has in view?—When we referred to this compulsory arbitration as a measure to be tried as an experiment in some well-organized industries for a limited period, we had in mind the Ahmedabad Mill industry. There, the workers are well organized into a union sufficiently strong to control them. The employers also are well organized and intelligent enough to deal with their men. This principle of compulsion has been applied unofficially with success in that industry. That is how Ahmedabad has been able to steal a march over Bombay so far as labour disputes are concerned. You ask whether compulsory organization of a union for each mill in the city affiliated to a federal union, would not work well. On that point a person acquainted with labour problems intimately might speak with greater effect. But I understand that the mill committees attached to individual mills have not been approved of by the labourers. They have also been condemned by the Court of Enquiry. You suggest a vertical organization of labour in which labourers of all grades form themselves into a union. But the organization that has been successful in other countries is the horizontal organization, under which workers of the same calling and grade form themselves into a union and refuse to work with non-union men. That object would not be secured in a vertical organization. But if you suggest that the machinery of law should be used to help the formation of unions and federal unions with a view to organize labour on right lines, I have no objection to that. But even there the difficulty pointed out by the Chairman would still remain: how are you going to enforce the decisions of the court?

A-5809. If those unions work on proper trade union lines and remember that a strike is harmful to them as much as to their employers, there would hardly arise any occasion to resort to this extreme step. Similarly the employers also would have no need to resort to the extreme step of declaring a lock-out. There would then be greater chance of avoiding these troubles than under the present conditions.—We have said that the present conditions are deplorable. A strike is usually resorted to at the end, when issues have been formulated and negotiations have failed. But here the strike is the first thing to take place and the issues are formulated only afterwards. The workers do not know what they have struck upon till long after the strike has begun. Under the circumstances it is absolutely necessary that there should be a machinery of the kind I have suggested. I do not think there will be serious difficulties in the working of that machinery. But if and when they arise, ways can be found to overcome them.

A-5810. Would not that encourage constant reference to that machinery of even minor matters and thereby accentuate the strained relations between employers and labour?—No. On the contrary the cost of constant reference to be borne by the industry would be very small, compared with the enormous loss entailed by strikes even on small issues.

A-5811. I am not dealing with the question of cost. I am asking whether the existence of a permanent machinery like that would not encourage reference to it, even on flimsy grounds, and thereby keep up the existing differences? With trade unions on the lines I have suggested, that danger would be avoided.—I am not opposed to the formation and development of trade unions on the lines suggested by you. But I do not think that labour will react in the direction you mention. At present when labour is led by extreme labour leaders, it does not recognize that the Court of Enquiry is for its own benefit. But if you say that the findings of the court are binding and compulsory, the power of the extreme labour leader to mislead labour will be gone.

A-5812. Opinions may differ as to the practicability of a scheme which forces large number of persons on the one side and employers on the other side to agree to abide by the findings of a court, which they think, are not in their interests. With regard to the textile unions in Ahmedabad, we saw that only the workers in the spinning department were organized into a union; but the weavers as a class were not. There is another aspect of the Ahmedabad unions. It is said that the workers employed in the Ahmedabad mills are mostly Gujeratis; that the millowners are also Gujeratis; and that the mills are situated in Gujerat. This gives them an advantage in having a better understanding between the employers and the workers. On the contrary it has been pointed out that one of the obstacles in the way of a better understanding between capital and labour in Bombay is that while the employers are either Europeans, Parsis, Gujeratis or

Musalman, the workers are almost all Marathas. Do you think there is anything in that view?—I think it is a factor in the situation to be reckoned with.

A-5813. In your memorandum you say: "The ultimate limit of all amelioration of conditions of work and life is set by the price which can be realized for an article. This price is regulated by the price at which the article can be imported (subject of course to import duties) and also by the price at which a rival concern is prepared to sell. Internal competition and foreign imports, therefore, determine the selling price." Is it your idea that both capital and labour should be fully efficient in order to meet the internal and external competition?—Yes, that is so.

A-5814. Do you not think that the question of the efficiency of labour is very important and the level of wages to which labour is entitled, will depend on the market value of the work that they are prepared to put in?—Yes, that is so.

A-5815. In your memorandum you refer to certain fundamental questions connected with labour and industries generally and say: "They would earnestly request the Commission to analyse this fundamental economic fact and the bearing which it must inevitably have on the fortune of labour in India." Have you anything further to say in regard to the various points raised in this paragraph?—That is a large subject that we have touched upon and we have had necessarily to summarize our views on it. We feel that it is not sufficiently recognized by labour and those who are friends of labour that when they interfere with the course of industry in order to achieve what they consider to be their rights and so on, they do so with fatal effect to the industry as a whole. A certain body of men is thrown out; this body of labour either reverts back to agriculture on a lower standard of living or offers itself for work in another place at a lower wage. This tends to reduce wages and to reduce the standard of life. This is not sufficiently recognized; nor is it recognized by them that when industry progresses, the field of labour advances and the scope for increase of wages also grows, and when industry shrinks, no matter from what cause—industry might shrink from their own misguided efforts—they stand to lose. That is not recognized.

A-5816. You say: "My committee have been a consistent critic of Government's policy towards industry and they feel that the weakness of India's industrial position must be recognized if labour's condition is to be permanently improved." How do you think that Government could help any industry so that labour's condition might be permanently improved?—We feel that there is no national economic policy in India. Everything is allowed to drift and when an industry is in difficulties there is no immediate machinery for finding out whether its difficulties are altogether due to the faults of the people who control the industry or whether they are due to attacks which have been hurled against them from outside. When an industry weakens on account of outside attacks, even when it is well recognized that it is on account of outside attacks, there is no machinery by which things could be put right. The existing machinery is so dilatory that before the remedy comes the patient is dead. This sort of thing needs to be remedied. This remedy is required as much in the interest of labour as in the interest of capital.

A-5817. You just told us that there is no such thing as a national economic policy; will you please explain what you mean by that?—That is again a very big question.

A-5818. *The Chairman*: Do you mean higher tariffs?—Not necessarily higher tariffs. There is nobody in this country who is directly concerned with finding out how the productive activities of the country suffer and how they should be remedied, and even when such remedies are suggested by the public there is no machinery in Government which can readily take them up. If we ask for a readjustment of railway rates, there is a clumsy and ineffective process; if we ask for higher tariff, there is what is called the policy of discriminating protection, which does not mean protection at all; if we ask that Government should purchase the produce of this country in preference to the produce of other countries, the action taken is very dilatory, very ineffective and very unsatisfactory. This, in brief, is the position which the Chamber has taken from time to time on these three points, not to speak of finance which would be another very large subject.

A-5819. *Mr. Clow*: You have told us that about a crore of rupees is spent in drink in Bombay City; does that represent the spendings of the textile workers alone?—That represents the spendings of the working classes in Bombay. The Bombay Government derive their excise revenue mainly from country liquor, and that is the liquor consumed by the working classes.

A-5820. What is that estimate based on?—This was the information gathered from official sources when the matter was discussed in the Municipality.

A-5821. What percentage is that of the wage bill?—The textile wages, I understand, are about seven crores, and therefore it would be 14 per cent.

A-5822. But you said that one crore represented the spendings of all the industrial workers, not merely of the textile workers?—I think it is the textile labour which has been known to consume large quantities; those who have made observations say that the textile labourer is the worst sinner in the matter of drink.

A-5823. In your memorandum you refer to the undermining of discipline and say: "The result is that on the basis of ordinary costs of cotton and cloth, the textile industry should in Bombay to-day be well-off, but it is notorious that it is losing." Do you mean to say that but for the lack of discipline all would be well with the textile industry?—No. That was written about three months ago, when the real price of cloth left a margin of profit after deducting the cost of cotton and the usual cost of manufacture. The strike had just ended and the men had not rejoined in large numbers and those who had joined were showing no inclination to work. The mills were actually working at a loss. I do not think this will happen in any other country.

A-5824. Does your Chamber include selling agents of cloth?—Yes.

A-5825. Do you think the system by which one organization produces and a separate agency sells is a satisfactory one?—I think a merchant can sell better than a manufacturer himself.

A-5826. Have you considered the question of indebtedness among the workers?—It is notorious that they are in debt.

A-5827. Have the Chamber or the members of the Chamber ever considered whether any measures could be taken to reduce that indebtedness?—We have always encouraged the co-operative movement which is making an effort in this direction. Several of our members during the time of high prices established grain shops—it was a movement taken up in many mills—to sell grain to workers at standard rates in order to prevent profiteering. They got reliable goods at lower rates.

A-5828. You do not think that any statutory enactment on the lines of *damdupal* would have any effect?—Not with the Pathan who has no registered document. The indebtedness of the workman is either to the shopkeeper or to the Pathan in the city or the money-lender in the village from which he comes. His indebtedness is found to continue even after he has lost his land.

A-5829. Several of our witnesses have stated that the Pathan is able to recover debts by means of intimidation. It is puzzling to me how debts can be recovered so effectively purely by intimidation. Can you explain?—I think the Pathan also relies on the fact that the Hindu workman with whom he deals is essentially a just person. If he were to try and evade the Pathan he can succeed by changing his domicile and by various other methods, but he does not do so.

A-5830. Why does the Pathan find it less necessary to have recourse to courts than the Hindu money-lenders?—Because he loans out in small dribblets, and he waits near the mill compound and takes the money before the man has spent his wages.

A-5831. You do not agree that he depends upon methods which are somewhat unscrupulous?—There is of course the danger of physical belabouring. In the courts you have abolished physical belabouring as uncivilised. But if you established that it would be quite as effective as the Pathan's method. We do not want the Pathan method, but it is certainly more effective.

A-5832. In your memorandum you refer to the question of jobbers, and suggest that the Commission might be able to suggest some machinery which would prevent the exactions to which men are subjected by the jobbers. We have only had a short time to give to this question, but this must have been present in your minds for a long time. Have you any suggestions by way of helping us?—I would like to help, because it is one of the most startling evils. The jobber has now the right of recruiting the man and the man he throws out loses his job. So long as this is the position I cannot say what you could do.

A-5833. Is it possible to take that power away?—I should not like to say it is possible, but I would say it is very desirable. I would suggest that you might have a central recruiting place, a sort of clearing house, to which labourers in need of employment and employers in need of labourers would resort. If the Labour Office in Bombay, for example, which concerns itself with mere statistics, took this practical step then to some extent the evil might be reduced.

A-5834. Would it not be necessary in that case to compel the employer to take his men from the bureau?—No. I think it would be to the employer's own interests to resort to this bureau; at any rate he would lose nothing. He would employ the men whom the bureau sends to him only if they are efficient; otherwise he would not. There is another method to reduce bribery, but that lies in the hands of the labour leaders who

should induce the labourers to declare when, in what manner and to what extent they have bribed a jobber. Publicity is the greatest remedy against all corruption. I cannot think of any other remedy.

A-5836. But the employer tells us that he cannot say until the machinery is ready to start, how many men he wants so that it would be impossible for him to have recourse to the bureau.—I know the working, but I am sure he can get his men down to the place in one hour, particularly if he were careful enough to instal a lorry service. I do not see any insuperable difficulty.

A-5836. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : On the point of bribery, let us assume that you engage people without the jobber ; how are you to prevent the jobber from getting bribes so as not to report adversely on the man ?—There is only one method. Whenever a case is detected of coercion by a jobber, the employers should punish him ; but until that is detected they cannot do anything. I think it is the duty of the trade union leaders and of those who claim to represent labour to come forward and get the jobber punished.

A-5837. Are you aware of the fact that a number of these jobbers are themselves members of the unions ?—Yes ; they also belong to the unions.

A-5838. That makes it difficult ?—Yes.

A-5839. Assuming that the employer is desirous of stopping bribery, he can only deal with the case on the rare occasions when the workmen come up and report to him ?—I quite agree.

A-5840. With reference to compulsory arbitration assuming that the point is referred and the union does not order a strike, how are you going to prevent the men from going out on strike ? You know as well as I do that the labour leaders cannot control them ?—What we feel is that the labour leaders have no control over the men in the direction of any constructive work, but the extreme labour leaders seem to have demonstrated that they had very great control over the workers when it came to going out of work and keeping out for a long period to the detriment of their wages. In order to take away the power of the extreme labour leaders to harm the industry and the workmen, I say that there should be a compulsory reference.

A-5841. Some of the men go out on a lightning strike, as you know, for no reasons at all. There is very great difficulty in finding out exactly what the grievances are. They admit they do not know what they are. In such a case, what is the good of your compulsory reference ?—If there is compulsory reference, then the labour leaders cannot say to the labourers : " Do not give evidence ; let us boycott it ; it is a capitalist body."

A-5842. Suppose they still do it ?—Then you may have sanctions. What those sanctions should be is for the legislature and the select committee to decide. You may make strikes illegal, you may make picketing illegal, you may forfeit the wages of the men who do not carry out the decision of the arbitration court.

A-5843. I happened to be on the select committee which considered the Trade Disputes Bill. There was a great deal of opposition to giving Government any right to stop picketing. Could you let us know what your Chamber, who are jealous of giving powers to Government so far as labour is concerned, would recommend in the way of definite powers to Government ?—What we suggest in this memorandum is that we want Government to initiate legislation, in the first instance, in regard to certain selected trades, of which the textile industry would be one.

A-5844. Assume that the permanent body you suggest is already in existence. You say that the findings of that court should be binding. The court is sitting, but they refuse to work. What are you going to do ?—I would draw on the experience of other countries.

A-5845. And do what ?—In public utility services at all events they have declared strikes and lock-outs as illegal.

A-5846. What are you going to do with the mill industry ?—If you make reference compulsory to a court of arbitration, then I am sure there should be some sanction by which they would forfeit their accumulated wages.

A-5847. They have not any accumulated wages ?—Or anything else which they have. They have a union and the union has certain funds.

A-5848. There may be no union, or they may disobey the union.—We have made the suggestion as the very best method of avoiding the ruination of the industry involving the ruination of labour. If there is any insuperable difficulty in the minds of the Commission after they have carefully considered it, then we are only sorry.

A-5849. Would your Chamber allow Government to arrest workers who are trying to persuade other workers not to work ?—Certainly we would. While the compulsory

reference is pending before the properly constituted court of arbitration, any inducement by one man of another not to work must be made a penal offence.

A-5850. Even if it is in their own streets?—Yes, streets, shops, buildings, or rooms. If you make it a crime, then you must make it punishable only on sufficient evidence.

A-5851. Would you have to go to the High Court to prove that one man was persuading another not to go to work?—The ordinary machinery of the police court is, I think, adequate.

A-5852. Would you give a right of appeal from the police court to the High Court?—I would give a right of appeal, but pending the appeal the man would be detained so that he may be kept out of mischief.

A-5853. Is that not going to be very difficult?—It is going to be very difficult, but I think the disease is virulent enough to justify a drastic remedy.

A-5854. Do you think that Government should take that step?—No Government would sit idle in a situation of the kind which arose in Bombay. No Government would sit idle and allow matters to drift. A few months more and a little more money in the pockets of the labour leaders they would have gone to the extreme and disastrous results would have followed. This kind of thing should be avoided at all events.

A-5855. *Mr. Cliff*: As regards compulsory reference to a board, I understand from your memorandum that you want to change the existing condition. The existing condition is that if an employer wants to reduce wages he merely makes an announcement that wages are going to be reduced?—Yes.

A-5856. Your proposal is that, before the employer does that, the question should be submitted to the arbitration of some board?—You will have to draw a line somewhere between minor and major changes.

A-5857. I am assuming that you are proposing to deal with major questions.—With regard to major questions, questions affecting, say, fifty individuals or more, I would have no objection to a written notice being given of the intended change to a labour organization if it exists.

A-5858. If it does not exist, are you still prepared to have some body before whom the case for and against will be stated?—If it does not exist then the difficulties of enforcing the decisions are also great. I quite understand that you may not be able to prevent men going on strike.

A-5859. I am not dealing with the enforcement of the decision; I am dealing with the opportunity of examining the claim—whether it is wrong from the point of view of employers or employees. Do you agree that it should be examined by some impartial body?—That is the first step. If on the information before them they are agreeable to it, there is nothing more about it; if they are not agreeable, then the issue should compulsorily be sent to Government for reference to the court of arbitration. Government would be merely a post office.

A-5860. Some permanent body to examine it?—Who will call upon the employers to explain, and if the employers give an adequate explanation, they will say so; if the explanation is not, in their opinion, adequate they will say it is wrong; and their decision will be binding on both sides. Both sides will be saved from going on strike or lock-out.

A-5861. After this compulsory reference you propose compulsory arbitration?—There is compulsory arbitration in certain cases in the Trade Disputes Act.

A-5862. You are putting forward these suggestions for improving the present position. I am trying to find out how you would prevent an impasse.—Make the new experiment which we think might succeed.

A-5863. In your memorandum you put in the forefront that the most important need of the labour classes in India is education. May I take it that your Chamber are making representations to Government in season and out of season for spreading education?—Over a long series of years we have never missed an opportunity to support measures for the extension of education.

A-5864. You have got on your statute book a measure for compulsory education. The question is one of its application. I want to know whether your Chamber are making anything?—Our representatives in the Council and in the Assembly and in the City Corporation have never missed a chance of advancing the claims of education.

A-5865. You also say that the worker should be taught the value of money; he should have pointed out to him the evils of indebtedness and he should be encouraged to make savings. Would you say what the members of your Chamber or your Chamber has attempted to do in that way?—It is not primarily our function, but individual members of our Chamber have tried to save their employees, as far as possible, from the

shop-keepers, money-lenders and others. But it is a task which cannot be properly handled by the individual employer.

A-5866. Should not the employer in the existing state of affairs address himself to that work ?—The employer cannot spare the necessary time for this purpose.

A-5867. Everybody is passing the burden on. You are concerned with securing the efficiency of the workmen, and these are some of the things that are in the way. If the employer has not the time, he has the opportunity of establishing machinery to assist. I was wondering whether you could tell the Commission that you have done anything on these lines to assist the worker ?—Certainly. We have assisted through the Bombay Corporation in the establishment of a school board which is running schools in the Bombay City; several factories have established schools for half-timers. The employers have done whatever they could directly. If you suggest that the employers should make it part of their daily routine, it would be most unusual. Is the employer in any country in the world expected to take count how his employees are getting education ?

A-5868. I understand that there is no country in the world which has to face problems such as you have in India.—It is a problem for the State, and every proposal which has emanated from the State we have done our utmost to support; we have even tried to initiate some ourselves.

A-5869. I am anxious to know whether in these three practical problems you are dealing with, education, teaching them the value of money, and encouragement of savings, you have done anything.—We have established co-operative societies and co-operative stores where workmen purchase what they want at fixed and proper prices. Every time a constructive proposal of this kind has come forward, to the best of my knowledge the employers have encouraged it.

A-5870. Have you made any progress ?—There is no widespread organization. There are only individual cases of welfare work.

A-5871. What is your experience of the results ?—They are satisfactory. But we are labouring against the ignorance of the workers. They do not understand that that is being done for their benefit.

A-5872. In your memorandum you say: "Reduction of wages is not a practical proposition and therefore the only alternative left is in the direction of increased efficiency." What have the employers done to train labour to the standard of efficiency that is absolutely necessary ?—We appoint well-trained and efficient technical men to guide the workers in doing their task. Generally we find that the workers profit by the guidance of these technical staff. But if you asked me what we employers do to improve the home habits and conditions of the workers, I should say that we could not reach them there.

A-5873. I am only talking of the training for his craft ?—We appoint technical men trained in foreign countries and in technical institutions in our own country to supervise and guide the workman in his work. In fact we have too many of them in our industries, thereby increasing the cost of supervision in the Indian mills. With the assistance given by these trained men, our workers increase their efficiency.

A-5874. Are you recording improvements in the quality of the work turned out ?—Certainly the Indian workman has improved compared with what he was a generation ago. But he is still far behind the workman of other countries.

A-5875. Naturally, because he has not had the advantages of other countries ?—No, he has not the physical stamina, the mental equipment and the regularity of habits, which are matters to be developed in his home life and have nothing to do with the employers.

A-5876. It is possible that having regard to his environments he is doing exceptionally well ?—I do not think he is doing exceptionally well. He ought to do much better.

A-5877. Is there any scope for his improvement in the present standard of living he has ?—Undoubtedly there is enormous scope for improvement.

A-5878. In answer to Sir Victor Sassoon you said that you would be prepared to support any repressive measures that might be necessary in the circumstances. Would you be in favour of repressive legislation ?—I do not think we have supported any repressive legislation. On several occasions we have severely criticized Government for resorting to repressive legislation.

A-5879. So that you would not be in favour of repressive legislation ?—We would not be in favour of repressive legislation as such. But if you give a specific instance, I would be able to give a specific answer.

A-5880. In regard to labour legislation you are in favour of all-India legislation?—Yes, we are. But we want that no such legislation should be enforced unless the Provincial Council concerned acquiesced in it.

A-5881. And you also want that any such legislation should be applied to the whole of India including the Indian States?—Yes. Our Association is emphatic with regard to the uniformity of legislation all through India. If there is any reserve power in the hands of the Paramount power, I think, it could best be used in making legislation uniform throughout British India and the Indian States.

A-5882. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you say: "My Committee would like to see the scope for employment of women to be increased as otherwise it will be a serious blow to the family budget of the working man." Would you say in this connection that the wages of an unskilled worker in India were not fixed on a family basis, and therefore necessitated the employment of the women also?—The earnings of unskilled labour are determined by the law of supply and demand. The supply of unskilled labour is sometimes in excess of the demand. Moreover the class of people who go for unskilled labour have also their women working with them.

A-5883. You say further on "It is for the Commission in the course of their enquiry to find out what should be done to increase the scope of employment for women and to substitute them for lighter operations where men work at present." Unless you increase the extent of industrial activity in this country how would you increase the scope of employment for women? Would not your suggestion to substitute women for men in certain branches of the work, affect the family budget adversely?—I entirely agree that you cannot increase the scope for employment unless you increase the industrial activity of the country. Otherwise mere substitution of women for men where they are at present working would hit the men hard. There would also be the other danger of the standard of living of the working classes falling down considerably if a large number of women offered themselves for work at lower wages than men for the same work. That is why we say that there should be a national industrial policy evolved to see what could be done to increase the scope for employment all round.

A-5884. But at the present moment you see no prospect of increasing the scope of employment of women, unless it be at the expense of turning out men.—Mere substitution would not amount to increase of employment and it is not desirable. But if women are content to work in the place of men for lower wages, there will then be so much surplus in the industry which can be utilized to extend the scope of employment by starting other industries.

A-5885. But that seems to be a dangerous policy?—Yes. I am simply pointing out the effects. I am not advocating that.

A-5886. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are you in favour of engaging women at lower wages than men to do the same work?—I should be happy if there were no necessity for any women to do any work at all. But under the present circumstances there are certain classes of workers whose budgets are made up of the earnings of the men, women and sometimes children too. Therefore if you dislodge the women and children from work, the family budget will have a large deficit. For ourselves we do not advocate that women should work. We want that men should be able to earn enough to support their women and children.

A-5887. But you suggest that women might be employed on lower wages than men?—But we have to face the competition of the outside world, for instance, they employ women in Lancashire and Japan to do the same work which men do here. Now-a-days with the modern improvements in machinery and improvements in conditions of working, factory work is not so hard as it was in earlier days. Less physical exertion is required now than before. A worker has often only to watch the machinery and set it right if anything goes wrong. When such is the case I do not see any reason why women should not be able to do the same work which men do now.

A-5888. You suggest the substitution of women as a method of reducing the working expenses?—Quite so.

A-5889. In the Lancashire cotton industry a man earns on an average 48 shillings a week and a woman 29 shillings so that on an average the woman is paid much less than a man. On that score you would recommend that more women should be employed at lower wages?—Yes. My recommendation is exactly this: we must increase the scope of employment of women and substitute them for lighter operations where men work at present.

A-5890. *Miss Power*: What you want is increased scope of employment both for men and women and substitute women for lighter operations where men are now engaged, so that men might not suffer by substitution of women?—I want that there should be

an expansion of industry all round so that the total budget of the man and the woman might be improved.

A-5891. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You said that the national economic policy should be based on the general interests and not on sectional interests. Do you consider an enquiry into the conditions of industrial labour a sectional enquiry or a general enquiry?—We consider that a question of national economic policy. We feel that labour is as much concerned with the expansion of industry and its preservation as anybody else. If industry were to deteriorate as seems to be the case to-day, any number of laws you might pass for the welfare of labour would not be of avail. The labourers would then have to go back to their low agricultural standard from which they have come. All the technical efficiency which they have accumulated would be gone. In the interests of labour itself it is essential that there should be a sound national economic policy.

A-5892. You say therefore that India cannot afford the luxury of shorter hours. You also say that the earnings of the agriculturists are low and at the same time you want a high tariff?—Yes, it would be to the ultimate advantage of the agriculturist if all the goods he required were made at home from the raw materials which he himself produced, so that the enormous cost of transport might be avoided. As regards shorter hours, it is not right to make an experiment with shorter hours in India, unless you are sure that you would get the necessary protection from foreign competition. Of course that protection need be only for a short time and to the small extent that might be necessary.

A-5893. You would favour a tariff policy for a short time at least?—Certainly.

A-5894. You refer to Japan and you state that the efficiency of the work-people in India is not equal to that in Japan, and you say that there they work for much lower wages and with "an *esprit-de-corps* and a national feeling." Is that really the case?—That is the result of our inquiries into this subject.

A-5895. You mean to say they work for lower wages than the wages in India?—I do not mean lower wages than the Indian wages, but they have lower wages than the European and American wages.

A-5896. You also say that recognized evils complained of by labour should be put right by means of legislation or by administrative measures. What had you in view in making that suggestion?—I have this in mind that you must not trust to the humanitarian and generous instincts of the employer because whereas that may be effective in the case of the majority of them there may be a few who will still want to profit. Therefore, in order to get a uniform system and in order to prevent the worst employer from stealing a march over the better one you must have a uniform legislation.

A-5897. Would you suggest that that legislation should be all-India or provincial?—It should be all-India.

A-5898. Would you suggest that the initiative for legislation should come from Government or that it ought to come from the non-officials?—It should come from the Government on the representation of either the labour or the capital.

A-5899. But a moment ago you said that the employers could not be trusted to initiate the necessary legislation?—I said the majority of the employers could be trusted.

A-5900. Is it not the custom in all countries that Government initiates the necessary legislation?—But in a country like India where various bodies of public opinion on the side of labour and capital are actively working, there is hardly a grievance of labour which would not reach the Government in some representation or other. What I say is that until such representation has been received Government should not act. May I make my point a little more clear? What we do not want is that Government should send a few delegates to Geneva who, after their return, should tell us that this or that should be done in India. We want all things to be put right in India without dictation from outside.

A-5901. You say in one part of your statement that legislation should be undertaken with reference to Indian conditions alone, while in another part of your statement you say that no legislation should be initiated without reference to what has been done in other countries?—I am afraid you have completely misunderstood what we have stated. We do not want any outside dictation as to what shall be the law in India. We are in favour of all reasonable grievances being put right by legislation. We do not want Government to pass legislation as they have done once or twice in the past. Because certain conventions were adopted at Geneva they put forward ratifications of those conventions in our legislature without reference to the public opinion of this country. They should not do that.

A-5902. *Mr. Clow*: Can you give an instance of that?—I think in 1922 when those conventions were ratified, the ratifications came as a result of resolutions moved by

Government, not by representatives of the employer or the employee or by an ordinary private member.

A-5903. But the resolutions were approved in most cases unanimously by the Assembly?—I do not say that they were not approved, but I think it will be much more desirable, in order that the benefits may be clearly understood, if the demand for such measures comes from those whom it is going to concern.

A-5904. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You are desirous that India should have the same standing as other countries at the International Conference. If there is a treaty that makes it obligatory upon the Government to lay before the legislature any convention that is agreed to at the International Conference, what grievance can you have against Government for laying the convention before a properly constituted legislature in order to get an expression of its opinion?—We could have had no objection to that if the Government had taken care to see that those conventions had been adopted in countries which are competing with us. The Government in this country failed to do that, and we have repeatedly pointed out that they had no business to ratify conventions in India in advance of our more successful industrial rivals, thus inflicting an injury not only on the capital but on the labour.

A-5905. *The Chairman*: You are referring, I take it, to the delay in the case of Japan in ratifying it?—Yes.

A-5906. *Mr. Clow*: It was the Assembly that approved ratification of those conventions?—It is a good Assembly; it will approve any beneficial measure; but Government did not tell the Assembly that our rival, Japan, was not doing it.

A-5907. *Sir Alexander Murray*: At the time when that convention was put through and at the time when that convention was submitted to the Legislative Assembly for consideration, Japan had been given five years within which to give effect to the recommendations of that convention; five years after 1919 was 1924. So how could they have told the Assembly in 1922 what Japan was going to do in 1924?—The gravamen of the complaint is that there is no national economic policy. A Government that was watchful as to what the effect of any such measure would be on industry should have taken care that our industrial rivals did not steal a march over us.

A-5908. But how could the Government anticipate what Japan was or was not going to do?—I think they should have played the same game; they should have waited till the other countries ratified it.

A-5909. You suggest that our Government should wait until every other Government took action?—I do not say that; but why should our Government be first in taking action considering the other very serious handicaps which we have to face.

A-5910. *Mr. Clow*: You know that the Bombay millowners demanded legislation for 60 hours' work a week and the operatives struck on behalf of that measure?—Yes.

A-5911. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say specifically in your memorandum: "It is undesirable for Government to launch on any legislation which has not been definitely asked for by the industry itself, i.e., either by the employers or by the employees." Can you refer to any industrial legislation in any country for over 100 years that has emanated from either the employer or the employee? It has always come from Government?—The Acts are introduced by Government certainly, but the demand for them has emanated from leaders of trade unions, leaders of the Labour Party and from people who make it their concern to watch on behalf of labour; similarly, demands for protective and other measures emanate from employing classes who organize the trade.

A-5912. I do not think that there is anything under the sun connected with labour that has not been advocated by certain trade unions in India during the past year or two. Are you prepared to say that that is a sufficient indication to Government of what the desires of the work-people are? Will you tell us what legislation ought to be introduced?—I cannot say. The resolution of the Trade Union Congress is certainly one of the steps.

A-5913. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would you consider that sufficient? You say "employers or employees"?—Not in itself. When one section is asking for anything it is the duty of Government to refer that to the other section, and after getting views it should formulate a reasonable policy.

A-5914. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it not the practice of Government, before they put through any legislation dealing with industrial matters, to refer it to your Chamber and other Chambers for opinion?—They do refer, but as we have felt that in the past Government have done something by which they have left India at a serious disadvantage in a leading industry; we want that such a thing should be avoided in future.

A-5915. At the present moment trade union congresses and trade unions are public bodies ; they have asked for sickness insurance, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions and numberless other benefits for the work-people. Is that a sufficient ground on which Government from henceforth may proceed to initiate legislation for the benefit of the work-people ?—It is a better ground than the dictation from Geneva.

A-5916. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : But have not the trade union leaders approved the Geneva Conventions ?—The initial Conventions were ratified even before that.

A-5917. *Mr. Clow* : Not before they were approved by the Assembly ?—But before they were approved by the Trade Union Congress.

A-5918. Not till the Millowners' Associations approved in the case of 60 hours a week Convention ?—But there are 11 Conventions ratified by the Government of India.

A-5919. *Mr. Ahmed* : In your memorandum you say : " Among the general conditions in which improvement for labour is desirable, my Committee would give a very high place to the abolition of drink." What steps did your Chamber take with regard to this matter ?—Our representative was given a mandate to give his warm support to the resolution moved in the Bombay Legislative Council demanding prohibition. We have written to the Government from time to time ; we sent one or two of our members to work on the committee which was appointed by the Government to find out what alternative sources of revenue they could have if the excise revenue disappeared. Our representatives worked on the Committee whole-heartedly, but the report of that Committee has been shelved by the Government. We would be glad if the Commission would find out all about it.

A-5920. Did your Municipality also take steps with regard to this matter ?—The Municipality has prohibited the establishment of any liquor shop on premises belonging to the Municipality which is one of the largest land-owners in Bombay.

A-5921. Did the Government interfere with the action of the Municipality ?—No ; the Government have no right to interfere with the action of the Municipality ; under the Municipal Act the Municipality has sufficient powers to do that.

A-5922. But is not the Municipality granting licenses to liquor contractors ?—The Government is the licensing authority, but the Municipality has the power over their own estate. The Municipality and the Improvement Trust are owners of about 50 per cent. of land in Bombay. The Municipality has passed a resolution which prevents the establishment of a liquor shop on their land. (*Mr. Tairsee*) : The Bombay Municipality had sent their representatives several times to work on various advisory committees appointed by the Government, but they got so sick of Government and the co-operation that Government extended to them, that they had to ask their representatives to retire from those committees. The Municipality have refused to send their representatives to such advisory committees which are only an eye wash.

A-5923. What is the revenue from excise here in Bombay ?—(*Mr. Manu Subadar*) : About a crore.

A-5924. If this source of revenue is put a stop to, I suppose it will be a great hardship to Government to make up that amount from other sources ?—They will have to raise the revenue from other sources, or to look up to you in the Government of India for more money.

A-5925. *The Chairman* : I think you will be prepared to pay higher income-tax if this revenue is abolished ?—We are prepared to consider any reasonable proposal which Government may put forward for substituting new taxes for this revenue.—(*Mr. Tairsee*) : There is a history behind this. The excise income was to have been given to education but it has not been done ; the excise policy has been carried on against the wishes of the parties who are interested in it ; Government pocketed the money but forgot to do their duty.

A-5926. *Mr. Ahmed* : What steps have your Chamber taken regarding elementary and primary education for the workers ?—(*Mr. Manu Subadar*) : Through our representatives in the district council, in the provincial council and in the Assembly, we have given every time support to every measure for the advancement of education.

A-5927. The other day we were told in evidence by the Government of Bombay's representative that though under the Compulsory Primary Education Act the Government is bound to contribute half the share of expenses if a municipality were to be willing to contribute the other half, the Government, owing to financial stringency, could not at the moment give its sanction to the introduction of compulsory primary education. What suggestions have your Chamber to make to help this situation ?—Certainly our Chamber very strongly condemns the attitude of Government in this matter, and we feel that some way should be found to get out of the situation.

A-5928. In what way?—The late Mr. Gokhale was anxious to raise a loan of only 2 or 3 crores for compulsory primary education; he cried in vain. But subsequently hundreds of crores were raised both in provincial taxes and in debts in India, and still the advance of education is at a very unsatisfactory pace. We feel that that pace should be expedited, and we have never ceased to recommend it to Government on every possible occasion.

A-5929. You think that if Mr. Gokhale's Bill had been passed in 1910 and if people had been given compulsory education since then, it would have been of great help?—I am sure the condition of labour would have been very much better both physically and mentally.

A-5930. You mean efficiency would have been greater?—Yes, and they would have been saved from these disastrous strikes.

A-5931. It would have increased the production?—Yes; the industry would have profited.

A-5932. There would have been great advancement of the country because improvement of the masses means the improvement of the country?—Undoubtedly.

A-5933. I think you said that the cost of labour in Japan is much higher than the cost of labour in this country?—I said the individual earnings of labour are much higher in Japan than here.

A-5934. We heard from some witnesses this morning that the wages of a Japanese worker are just the same as they are here. Is that true?—No; our information is that in Japan they are higher, but if you ask whether the total cost of the finished commodity is higher in Japan than here, then it is not so; though the Indian labour is paid less, it costs more in the end for any particular unit of production.

A-5935. The question of getting at the correct statistics regarding the cost of living in the various provinces of India is a very difficult one. I know you are a great authority in India and so I am asking if you could give your experience to the Commission which will be of great help?—As you say, it is a very difficult matter. There is, I think, an index number maintained by the Controller of Currency which takes account of the wholesale prices at various ports and at various important centres and also wages.

Mr. Clow: Not now.

The witness (Mr. Manu Subadar): They used to do that in olden days. This method yields certain results but great care has to be exercised in employing the results of this method; if you employ any other method, it will be equally inapplicable in certain cases. Where it is a question of workmen's budget, it is absolutely essential that you should take account of commodities which go into their consumption, give it a proper weight according to the amounts which they lay out on this, and then give out the figures. Such an attempt was made by the Labour Office in Bombay, and I believe that that index number is still being maintained. Of course, it would not be conclusive; for example, I do not think it would apply to Chittagong, because the consumption is different; the Bombay mill worker, for example, takes a lot of rice while a Chittagong seaman takes a lot of fish. I do admit that it is not possible to apply indiscriminately the results of index numbers prepared in one locality to another locality.

A-5936. What will be the best course for us to take in order to get fairly reliable statistics?—I think if there is some sort of permanent organization on the lines we have suggested, then there would be attached to such an organization a secretariat; that secretariat, I think, ought to be charged with the function of raising up for each province an index number which would be of some use; if necessary, there may be two or three index numbers for each province, because, for instance, the index number for Bombay would not be directly applicable to Ahmedabad.

A-5937. *Mr. Asvale*: In your memorandum you say that you would prefer to see unions formed on proper lines and run by the men themselves. Do you think that at the present time the workers are in a position to form their unions and conduct them?—That is a pious hope, and we trust that some day will come when the Indian workman will claim that he has organized unions and is running them without the assistance of any outside person.

A-5938. Are the unions at present run by the workers themselves?—No, they are not.

A-5939. You say: "The formulation of grievances comes about in India after the strike has been declared." May I put it to you that before the declaration of strikes of 1923, 1925 and 1928, grievances were formulated?—You are referring merely to textile strikes. I was referring to the phenomenon of strikes in individual mills. I have myself had the experience of at least three or four strikes in which men were standing out instead

of going to work and when I asked them what it was about they said they did not know and they expected to tell me in the afternoon.

A-5940. You say : " The education, which the Chamber would like to see imparted, not only to children but to adults working in factories, ought to comprise elementary hygiene and elementary citizenship." Do you not think that technical and vocational training would be better for the workers in India ?—Technical training, as I have explained, is being given by the assistants and supervisors in the mill. What I am referring to is education for adults ; they want night schools where they can be taught elementary hygiene and elementary citizenship and various other little things which they seem to lack ; it would do them a lot of good.

A-5941. You say : " the provision for old age or for any social or for any other contingency is rare indeed." May I take it from that that you are in favour of old age fund ?—What I mean is that the worker does not understand the value of savings ; he spends all that he gets and he is happy to remain very often in a condition of indebtedness. This is a very undesirable state of affairs. If he thought that he would be unable to work when he became old and would have to fall back upon his savings, then there would be many benefit societies and other organizations established to which he would make regular and proper contribution, or he would have some kind of insurance. All this is unknown in India, and that is very unfortunate.

A-5942. Do you think a man earning a wage of Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 a month can save anything in the city of Bombay ?—A man is going to be too old one day to be able to earn even Rs. 15, and it is his duty to look forward to that time. If a man can spend so much money in drink and on certain other purposes there is no reason why he cannot put forward whatever little he can as provision for his old age.

A-5943. How many labourers do you say are in Bombay City ?—The textile industry claims about 120 to 150 thousand.

A-5944. And there are dock labourers, municipal labourers and railway labourers ?—Yes.

A-5945. I put it to you that the labourers in Bombay number about 6 lakhs ?—I think that is an overstatement. I admit there is a very large number.

A-5946. You have stated to the Commission that only one crore of rupees income is derived from Bombay city. Do you know how much is spent on drink out of that one crore ? It comes to Rs. 16 or 17 per head ?—If instead of spending that Rs. 16 in drink it was put by for old age the workers would be very much better off.

A-5947. After all they are human beings, and should not poor people have recreation and leisure ?—If you are justifying drink as recreation rather than provision for old age, I beg to differ from you.

A-5948. I did not say I do justify it, but surely you would excuse these people until they are better educated ?—I would like to get them to adopt a better method of spending their money.

A-5949. Are you in favour of the provision of a provident fund for the working classes ?—The system of provident funds does not work except for superior employees, anywhere in the world.

A-5950. Do you know that in some mills a gratuity is paid and a provident fund is in vogue ?—Yes, but it is a voluntary system. If you ask me whether I am in favour of a compulsory system I reply that I am not.

A-5951. Do you know that the Municipality has such a system ?—That is a public body.

A-5952. Do you not think that such a fund would be at least helpful to the working classes ?—Certainly. I favour it wherever it is established voluntarily between the management and the work-people.

A-5953. *Mr. Lalji* : Mr. Tairee, you have been a labour leader, and during the recent strikes you made special enquiries about the position of the mill labourers. Can you give us the benefit of your opinion ?—The people who went on strike had, for sometime, something to fall back upon. They fell back upon the parties who were supplying them with what they wanted. There is also a family system prevalent whereby anybody is always accommodated in time of trouble. That was why even those who were in difficulties and who were hungry carried on.

A-5954. You said something about the matter at your meeting ?—What I said was this that a better spirit between the two sides was desirable and that both parties must realize that fighting with each other was not leading anywhere except to the ruin of both. Therefore a better contact, a better sense of responsibility and better sense of rights and duties were absolutely necessary.

A-5955. You are in favour of trade unions?—Yes.

A-5956. You say that they must be conducted on proper lines and by proper persons. What do you mean by that?—The workmen are illiterate and they fall into the hands of those who ask for things which are absolutely unattainable. These people carry on trade unions for other purposes than those for which trade unions should be used. The one who can promise the work-people most is the one who is most in demand, whether it is possible to attain it or not.

A-5957. Do you not think that if the unions were run by millhands or by certain persons who devoted themselves entirely to the work they would be more successful?—Yes, but at present their leaders are champions of every cause in the country and they have so many causes to champion that they are not able to attain any of them. (Mr. Manu Subadar): It is for the Commission to find out what can be done to secure something more definite for the protection of labour than these extreme men who mislead them. (Mr. Tairse): It is to the interests of both sides to set up some machinery whereby negotiation, conciliation and arbitration are possible before a strike is brought about. That will have this advantage. At present when a man is in the mood to strike he is more or less excited. If there is some body in operation, such as I have suggested, he will get time to think over the situation. There will be a process of negotiation, conciliation and arbitration. That will give time to both the sides to review their position. I would go so far as to make it absolutely compulsory. It has been done in England. In the boot and shoe trade in England both parties agreed to deposit a certain amount of money with trustees and agreed that if either side broke the agreement and caused damage to the other party, they would be called upon to make good the damage done from their contribution to the fund. The result has been that in the last 28 years no strike has occurred in that trade.

A-5958. *The Chairman*: That is quite true, but it depended on a good organization on both sides?—That is what we are seeking for, and that is why the Labour Commission has come here.

A-5959. *Mr. Lallji*: Can you give the reason why Indian cloth going to East Africa and Arabia from Bombay has decreased in quantity in recent years?—It is on account of the cheaper Japanese freights. The Indian textile export trade to East Africa and Arabia is now down to a minimum. Where thousands of bales were sent in the past only a few bales are sent now.

A-5960. Can you give the reasons why there are more non-technical persons on Boards of Directors of different companies than there are technical persons?—Some people are in demand for Boards of Directors because of the big names they bear. They are also "guinea pigs" who can be of great service in arranging loans, finance and so on. They are not on the Boards because of what they are worth, but for what they can bring to the company.

A-5961. Can the companies do without them?—If the companies are in constant need of finance they must go to financial people.

A-5962. Do you not think that a large number of mills are in need of finance?—Most of the mills want finance except in the case of multi-millionaires like Sir Victor Sassoon.

A-5963. May I take it that from 1910 to 1914 the condition of the mill industry was bad; from 1914 to 1916 it was bad; from 1917 to 1922 it was good; and from 1922 to 1929 it was again bad?—That is a fairly correct picture.

A-5964. *The Chairman*: Roughly speaking, that is paralleled in other countries?—Yes. We cannot get away from world conditions, but we have our own ills which make the position worse.

A-5965. *Col.-Russell*: Have you any suggestions to make as to the methods by which statistics of absenteeism and of sickness might be collected?—I think the employers ought to co-operate if there is a proposal from the Commission for statistics.

A-5966. We want to get statistics for the use of the Commission. Can you suggest how these statistics might be collected within the next 12 months?—You cannot collect these statistics unless you set up some organization to do so.

A-5967. What organization would you suggest?—If you wanted specimen statistics you would probably have to take one factory of a representative character and work up its time-keepers' records for the last 12 months and all the men who are on the permanent staff. You cannot get statistics in connection with *badli*s, which does create a complication. Any statistics you got would be those in relation to the permanent staff. The substitute men form a larger percentage in India than perhaps in any other country.

A-5968. In so far as that percentage is concerned, the statistics would be vitiated?—I am afraid you would have to make merely shrewd guesses. You could not get at the *badli* statistics, because the names and whereabouts of *badli*s are not known.

A-5969. Do you think it would be possible to collect any statistics of value within the next 12 months?—Certainly. If the Labour Office in Bombay were authorized to do so and if the Millowners' Association co-operated with them.

A-5970. What additional staff do you think would be necessary?—If you took a sample mill or two mills then you could do with two or three men, but one of these should be a trained investigator, so that he could discount certain facts put before him.

A-5971. Are there any such trained investigators available?—There are any number in this country.

A-5972. *The Chairman* : The difficulty, as we see it so far, is that there is nothing to distinguish sickness leave from any other kind of leave in the books of the employer. Everything is lumped together under the one heading of "absenteeism." A man's absence may be due to quite a legitimate call from home in the time of the monsoon—something he always intended to do when he first went to work; or it may be due to sickness, or to marry a daughter or to bury a grandmother. All these things are lumped under the one heading of "absenteeism"?—In order to get at the actual amount of absenteeism on account of sickness you would have to set up a staff who would question the permanent members in each department as to the reasons for their absences. You would have to adopt a method of personal questioning "You were absent twice last year, what was the reason". If the reason was illness, then you would have to enquire for how long it was.

A-5973. Do you think we could call on employers to keep a book which would make a distinction between the various causes of absenteeism?—I do not know how the employers could do it, because a man goes away without notice. All the employer could do would be to ask the man when he comes back whether he had been away for illness or for something else.

A-5974. We are told that the employers are about to introduce a new system whereby a request for leave will be made and granted, and, presumably, the reasons for it entered?—It will be many years before that can be enforced. Not only men working in factories but even domestic servants simply disappear, and then come back. They do not understand that it is essential to give a warning to the employer.

A-5975. *Col. Russell* : Do you imagine that any statistics collected in the face of these difficulties would be of any value to the Commission?—They would not be of any value to the Commission.

A-5976. These statistics would take years to collect?—Yes, but I think such a system of collecting statistics should be introduced forthwith.

A-5977. You say that education ought to comprise elementary hygiene. Do you wish to include the subject of elementary hygiene in the ordinary school curriculum?—It was included when I was a boy. I do not know who was responsible for removing it.

A-5978. You think its absence now from the curriculum is a defect?—I think so. The better classes can learn it in their homes from their parents, but the working classes never learn it from anybody.

A-5979. *Mr. Clow* : You suggested that Conventions have been in some cases ratified to the detriment of India. I understood you to say that you were not referring to the Hours Convention but to other Conventions?—I was referring to the Hours Convention which was ratified by India before Japan took such a step.

A-5980. Was not there a demand from both the workers in a great many of the most important centres of India, including Bombay, and from the Bombay Millowners' Association for legislation in accordance with that Convention?—I think the Convention was prematurely ratified. It was the duty of the Government to see that competing countries also ratified it.

A-5981. Neither the Millowners' Association nor labour suggested that India should wait for other countries to ratify it?—I am not defending the Millowners' Association. I certainly think they made a mistake in asking for this Convention to be placed on the Statute book before it had been ratified by Japan.

A-5982. Do you not think, in view of the demand from both sides, which I have mentioned, it would have been quite impossible for Government to have said, "In spite of the opinion of the Assembly, of the millowners and of labour, we decline to ratify this Convention until our important trade rivals have done so."?—We are anxious that in future no such cases should re-occur. As the final authority in this country Government should see to it that no demand of any kind should be made by either party which is likely to cut the country's throat.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING
BOMBAY

Saturday, 30th November 1929

●
PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

<p>Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.</p>	}	<p>Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
<p>Mr. HOSEINBOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.</p>	}	<p><i>Assistant Commissioners.</i></p>
<p>Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. Mrs. K. WAGH.</p>	}	<p><i>Lady Assessors.</i></p>
<p>Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN.</p>	}	<p><i>Joint Secretaries.</i></p>

Mr. G. L. WINTERBOTHAM, M.L.A., President, Mr. G. H. COOKE,
and Mr. R. J. F. SULLIVAN, Secretary, of the Bombay
Chamber of Commerce.

A-5983. *The Chairman* : Will you, in the first place, tell the Commission something about the constitution of your Chamber, its scope and membership ?—(Mr. Winterbotham) : We actually have 179 members, the membership being divided into Chamber membership and Associate membership. The scope of the work of the Chamber is defined in the Chamber's Memorandum of Association, which I can furnish to the Commission.

A-5984. Generally speaking, I may take it that it is to watch over the interests of trade and commerce within the Presidency of Bombay ?—Yes.

A-5985. Your membership covers not only Bombay city but the Presidency ?—That is so. We also have members from outside the Presidency who have trade connections with the Bombay Presidency.

A-5986. Will you give the Commission a rough idea of the composition of your Chamber by way of classification—manufacturers, merchants and so on ?—Our membership includes representatives of the two principal Railways on this side of India, every branch of activity in trade including Tata's, the Bombay Mills, and people purely engaged in trade and commerce as opposed to industry. The Chamber is as representative of the trade and industry of India as it is possible for any association to be.

A-5987. It covers leaders of industry and commerce, both European and Indian ?—We have a small Indian membership only.

A-5988. Your membership is open to any one engaged in industry and commerce ?—Yes.

A-5989. You have been good enough to supply the Commission with a memorandum on the matters into which we are enquiring. There is no necessity to stress the difficulties of Bombay Presidency during recent years. We are well aware of your difficulties both

internal and external. You remind us that the recent great industrial disturbances have had a disastrous effect on the country as a whole and on Bombay in particular. In your memorandum you give your support to works committees and works councils, which you consider one of the best methods of avoiding the friction and trouble which has so long existed in Bombay. Have you anything to add to what you state there in the way of actual observation or experience of works committees?—No.

A-5990. You say your committee "is strongly of opinion that these attempts should be renewed and persisted in." I take it that means that some attempts have been made but have not been very successful hitherto?—It was in 1920-21, that the question of works committees was first raised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. We supported the idea at the time. As far as we can trace, the question has not been specifically before us since, but the principle of works committees is one which we unreservedly support.

A-5991. With regard to the question of co-operation, you give the support of your Chamber to progressive efforts in that direction?—Yes.

A-5992. Have you any actual experience to give us in that connection. I suppose the practical working of these schemes does not come under you as a Chamber but only under your constituent members?—That is so.

A-5993. We have to look to the members of individual trades and industries for information on that matter?—Yes.

A-5994. With regard to education, you say that that is primarily a matter for the State. May I take it that your Chamber is giving support to every effort which the State and the Municipality are making to recognize their obligation under that head?—Certainly.

A-5995. We are told that the advancement of primary education is largely a matter of finance; and it is hampered by lack of revenue. I take it that your Chamber is not putting forward any objection to delay the advancement of primary education because it may mean higher local taxation?—Certainly not. Our Chamber has been one of the leading advocates in favour of the revision of the Meston Settlement which, we hold, bears very hardly on the Bombay Presidency and which prevents the necessary revenue being found for the nation-building departments, such as education.

A-5996. In the same way you tell us that in your view technical and vocational education should also be the concern of the State, although employers might be expected to provide facilities for their own workmen who are able to profit by such training. You do not, I take it, regard it as the individual duty of the employer to provide this technical training, but you think it should be done by Government, with the support of the employers whom you represent?—Yes.

A-5997. You tell us that you are opposed to the proposal of the Government of India to set a statutory limit to the time within which wages must be paid. Have you any knowledge as to whether some of the industrial unrest has been due to the unreasonable withholding of wages after they have been earned?—I have no such knowledge. It seems to the Chamber that once the time of payment of wages is fixed in the first place, and is regularly adhered to, the question hardly arises of fixing a statutory limit of time.

A-5998. You say "adhered to," but I suppose you would be ready to admit that there are black sheep in every flock?—Certainly.

A-5999. And that it is the black sheep who bring about most of the trouble?—As a Chamber we should be opposed to any illegal withholding of wages.

A-6000. Would you be opposed to any statutory provision which would make the black sheep amongst the employers come up to the standard of the best?—None whatever. We had in mind that the question of setting up a statutory limit had some reference to the number of days within which, after the end of a month, wages should be paid.

A-6001. We have some evidence that a few employers withhold wages for a much longer period than is the practice with the majority of employers?—We should be in favour of bringing these people into line with the majority.

A-6002. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In answer to the Chairman you stated that you would have no objection to increased taxation in regard to the promotion of education?—I did not say we should have no objection to increased taxation. I said we were not opposing any measures on the ground of their meaning increased taxation; that is to say any specific or particular measures.

A-6003. Is it a fact that the Bombay Province as compared with other provinces in India, is more heavily taxed at present per head of population?—I believe that to be a fact.

A-6004. In your memorandum you make the interesting statement: "Bad as the situation has been in the past there are those who think that Bombay has still more serious labour troubles ahead by reason of the increasing importance of the political factor. During the past decade or more the Indian labourer in Bombay has been gradually educated up to a higher standard of living, but the danger lies in the fact that neither his reasoning power nor his efficiency has increased in the same ratio as his standard of living." Do I understand you to mean that while efforts have been made to raise the standard of living of the labourer there have not been simultaneous efforts taken to instil into the mind of the labourer the added responsibilities which are thereby put upon him.—I am a little doubtful what you mean by "efforts"; efforts on whose part?

A-6005. Primarily, efforts on the part of Government and the employers; for instance, efforts on the part of Government in the direction of raising their standard of literacy?—The will has been there. As far as Government is concerned, I think they are hopelessly hampered by lack of finance.

A-6006. You say: "The Government under which he lives has applied to him all the privileges and safeguards which have been framed in countries where labour is much better able to realize its responsibilities. In most Western countries such safeguards have come with, or followed, the advance of education among the workers, whereas in India it appears to have been hoped that greater efficiency and a sense of responsibility would follow the safeguards." The procedure adopted in India is different, according to you, from the procedure followed in Western countries. Taking the case of compulsory education, it was introduced in England about 60 years ago, and to-day practically every adult male and female in Britain is educated in the language of his country. You also say that the grant of privileges and safeguards to the labour unions has followed the development of a sense of responsibility in them through education. In India, labour is illiterate, and the safeguards and privileges which were given to labour in England after great fight and full growth of responsibility, have been introduced here without the same conditions prevailing?—That is what is meant.

A-6007. And the consequence is that while the system works well in the Western countries, it has been found defective in actual practice in this country—I mean in bringing about better understanding and cordial relations between the employees and the employers?—We take the view that the situation is full of danger unless and until the labour movement realizes the part it has to play after having received the various trade union and other benefits which have been given to it by the legislature.

A-6008. What would be your remedy in the conditions which prevail at present in India? Would you pursue the policy which has been followed during recent years, namely of conceding all the reasonable privileges and safeguards which labour in Western countries has and expect the sense of responsibility subsequently to arise; or would you before conceding further privileges make efforts to qualify them to enjoy those privileges?—I think the Chamber's view would be that the real solution is the growth of literacy and the education of the employees which is bound to be a slow one, but that anything possible which could be done to inculcate immediately a spirit of responsibility in the trade unions should be done.

A-6009. You say: "One of the principal tasks of the Commission will be to suggest measures for arousing in labour a sense of responsibility and placing the trade union movement on healthier lines." Would you help us by making some suggestions as to how this could be accomplished?—I am afraid I am not in a position to help you immediately, except possibly as indicated in our memorandum under the heads "Trade Combinations" and "Industrial Disputes". We think that possibly the suggestion we have put before the Commission has a bearing on this subject.

A-6010. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you any other suggestion to make?—None emanating from our Chamber.

A-6011. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: With regard to 'trade combinations' and 'industrial disputes' you draw our attention to the three prolonged strikes which occurred in recent years inflicting great loss and suffering on the community. One of those strikes occurred in Bombay, one in Jamshedpur and one in Calcutta. Those three centres are under three different provincial Governments. Is it a fact that the Government of Bengal acted promptly in regard to the Jute mills strike by prohibiting meetings, controlling labour union leaders, and by various other means?—It may be that the Bengal Government acted promptly in the manner in which you suggest, but my information is that they also added to the difficulties of the situation by negotiating with unregistered trade unions.

A-6012. I am not dealing with that aspect of it. What I meant was, that so far as the powers vested in provincial Governments are concerned, they were used more promptly by the Bengal Government in connection with the jute mills strike ?—I think that the view of the Bombay Chamber would be that they would prefer somewhat delayed action on right lines rather than prompt action on wrong lines.

A-6013. Is it not a fact that as a result of that action the jute mills strike was brought to an end in a short time ?—It would appear so.

A-6014. Do you know that the Bihar Government did not act promptly in regard to the Jamshedpur Steel Works strike, and the strike was prolonged ?—I am speaking with no intimate knowledge of the strikes in Calcutta and Jamshedpur; only from what I have heard and read.

A-6015. In Bombay also there was considerable delay in putting into effect the powers which Government had. I am talking of the latest strike which, as you say, was not the result of a trade dispute at all but was organized for political purposes by a body which has communist tendencies. There was considerable delay in the Bombay Government taking any action ?—To a certain extent the delay was inevitable.

A-6016. I merely want to know whether that was a fact; I am not going to pursue the subject any further.—I wish to give an answer which would not be misleading. As regards the measures which the Bombay Government could take to intervene in the strike itself apart from the question of the maintenance of law and order, we took the view that the only possible course was to submit the dispute to a court of enquiry under the Trade Disputes Act, and at the time of the start of the strike the Trade Disputes Act was not in operation. Rules had not been framed. The Government of Bombay, in my opinion, took prompt action in getting the Government of India's consent to the Bombay Presidency being allowed to frame its own rules in advance of the rest of India.

A-6017. Are you aware that when the strike was on, meetings were held by the leaders of the Girni Kamgar Union, some of whom are now undergoing trial at Meerut, where a large number of mill workers were present, and speeches were made which led to a great deal of excitement, ultimately leading to serious riots and disturbances ?—Yes, I am.

A-6018. And the notification of an order prohibiting meetings when the struggle was on, had a salutary effect ?—Yes.

A-6019. There is a considerable amount of feeling among Indians that while in the West the Governments act promptly in all matters where heavy loss to the community as a whole is involved, in India, there is no corresponding machinery. For instance, we recently saw in the newspapers that President Hoover called together the people concerned in regard to the recent happenings in New York; and in Great Britain, the Ministers are constantly engaged in trying to solve the problem of unemployment and in increasing the national income. Is that not so ?—I think it is very difficult to reply to that.

A-6020. Do you not see in the newspapers that the various Ministers are keeping busy with the problems affecting the British community ?—Yes.

A-6021. They are doing it ?—Yes.

A-6022. Have you got in India any machinery corresponding to that which would come on the scene and look to the interest of the community on the same lines on similar occasions ?—I think I should have to give a general reply to that question. It seems to me that just as the position as regards the labour movement itself is entirely different in India from the West and there are special difficulties in their way, so there are special difficulties in the way of the Governments of India, whether central or provincial, in dealing with these matters as compared with the Governments of the West.

A-6023. Are you aware of any machinery existing at present in the Government of India or provincial Governments which could tackle these problems as they arise such as problems of strikes, and problems affecting the interests of the community generally arising out of certain measures ?—I am aware of the Trade Disputes Act which has been specially passed for dealing with strikes.

A-6024. You state: "It is a matter of common talk that the other two strikes were either instigated or prolonged at the instance of speculators dealing in forward business in the shares of the companies concerned or the prices of raw materials or finished products. Will you kindly explain what you mean? If these are facts, has your Chamber any suggestions to make as to how to deal with them ?—We cannot refer to them as facts.

Mr. Cliff: It is stated in the memorandum: "My committee cannot assert that this is true, but the impression certainly prevails and is widely believed."

A-6025. Have your Chamber taken any steps to ascertain what truth there is in that statement?—No. We have not applied ourselves specifically to that problem.

A-6026. Does your Chamber intend to examine the question, as it affects vitally the trading and industrial community as represented by your Chamber?—The intention of the Chamber was to ventilate the complaint in their memorandum to the Royal Commission on Labour.

A-6027. The Commission would like to have definite information on the subject, as it is of vital importance. Would your Chamber consider the desirability of taking some steps to ascertain the exact facts?

Sir Victor Sassoon: Is your Chamber in a position to do so?—I should say that even if the Chamber were in a position to do so, it would have been exceedingly difficult even at the time when it was suspected that the transactions had taken place for the Chamber to get any definite proof.

A-6028. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: I take it that the Chamber's view is that such heavy loss on the community inflicted by any action of the speculators requires to be investigated and put a stop to?—Certainly.

A-6029. You say: "My committee are entirely in favour of trade unions as a means of protecting labour and enabling it to employ collective bargaining in its dealing with employers. What they desire is to protect these institutions, which in India are in their infancy, from exploitation in the interest, whether pecuniary or political, of other persons". Would you make any suggestions to prevent such exploitation?—The only suggestion we are in a position to make on this is contained in our memorandum, namely that the question is worth considering whether the law should not be amended so as to provide that where it has been proved that any trade union has been guilty of engineering a strike for purposes other than the furtherance of a genuine trade dispute, it should be liable to have its registration withdrawn.

A-6030. Would you advocate an amendment of the Act to that effect?—It is difficult for the Chamber to say at the moment whether they would advocate it, but they think it is a question which needs careful examination at the hands of the Commission.

A-6031. *Mr. Clow*: You are aware that in Great Britain and the Dominions, the benefits of the Trade Unions Act are granted to all trade unions whether registered or not?—I cannot say I was aware of that.

A-6032. Do you stand by the statement quoted by *Sir Ibrahim*, namely: "The Government under which he lives has applied to him all the privileges and safeguards which have been framed in countries where labour is much better able to realize its responsibilities?"—In point of fact we have considered whether in using the words "all the privileges and safeguards" we have not made too sweeping a statement. I think we should like to alter that to say "many of the privileges and safeguards."

A-6033. Do you not think that where labour is not literate and well organized, it requires more safeguards? Where labour is well organized and responsible trade unions have been formed, it is able to protect itself and does not require the same safeguards as when it is not well organized?—I should be quite willing to agree with that, but at the same time to qualify it by saying that it is no good giving safeguards to people who do not know what they mean. Arising out of our answer to that question in the memorandum it is suggested that we are against safeguards being granted. We may not have made our point clear. Our point is that it is all 'take' and no 'gave' on the part of the trade unions.

A-6034. *Mr. Cliff*: May we take it that you are agreeable to giving them the safeguards?—Yes.

A-6035. *Mr. Clow*: You suggest in your memorandum that the standard of living has risen substantially; is that your belief?—There again on reconsideration we are inclined to think that the last few words of that particular sentence imply something which we do not mean to say. We do not mean that there has been a substantial rise in the standard of living but rather that it would have been possible for an increased standard of living to have been availed of if the labourers had been in a position to do so.

A-6036. In answer to questions on the Workmen's Compensation Act, I understand you suggest that the existing list of relatives entitled to claim compensation should remain more or less the same, but that proof of dependence should be required in every case and that compensation should continue to bear no relation to the number of dependents. Do you not think that these answers are mutually inconsistent?—May I know how?

A-6037. If proof of dependence is required, why should not any relative who is actually dependent be allowed to make a claim?—I should like to have notice of that question.

A-6038. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum with regard to "Public employment agencies", you say that from the employers' point of view there is no necessity for such agencies. In the circumstances obtaining in Bombay, would you consider that there is no need for these agencies from the point of view of the workers? Would not his position be bettered? Is there no relation between the institution of a public employment agency and the decrease of the system of bribery?—I cannot give any evidence on the question of bribery; I cannot commit the Chamber.

A-6039. Would not the establishment of a public employment agency have any effect on the system of bribery?—I do not see how I can answer that, unless I admit that a system of bribery exists. I am not prepared to do so, because I have no particular knowledge of it. I am speaking on behalf of the Chamber. In those industries with which I am connected, I am prepared to say that there is no system of bribery to any extent in the matter of the recruitment of labour. I am representing the Chamber; I cannot commit the Chamber to a knowledge of the system of bribery in the present system of recruitment, because that question has never specifically been put before them. Our answer to that question is intended to convey that we do not think it would help the labourers to get their employment, because they would prefer, as at present, to come direct to the person from whom they hope to get employment rather than go to a third party.

A-6040. *Mr. Cliff*.—Would you tell us whether your Chamber has considered the establishment of works committees on the same plan as in Germany?—No. The question of the form in which works committees should be set up has not been specifically examined by the Chamber.

A-6041. Can you give a rough idea of the number of working population that your Chamber represents apart from textile?—We cannot claim to represent the whole of the textile industry, but only those members who happen to be mill agents or millowners. It is quite impossible to give any specific answer to your question, except to say that the number of representatives is very large indeed; included, as I said, in our membership are both railways on this side of Bombay, Tatas, oil companies, shipping companies.

A-6042. *The Chairman*.—I take it that your Chamber deals with the general principles and leaves to the specific industries matters that pertain to those industries in particular?—That is so, unless any particular question is referred to us to look into.

A-6043. *Mr. Cliff*.—In your memorandum you make precise and detailed suggestions in regard to trade combinations and industrial disputes. Therefore I want to know what part of the working class population your Chamber represent excluding railways, shipping and textile?—I may tell you that the small committee which drafted this memorandum now before the Commission consisted of representatives of the following: railways, textile workers, shipping, engineering, oil companies, and I may say, the general labour employed in the Bombay city.

A-6044. We have memoranda from the Port Trust, the Railway and the Textile Industry. I wanted to know, apart from these interests, which are the interests represented by this Chamber of Commerce. In your memorandum you say "Bad as the situation has been in the past there are those who think that Bombay has still more serious troubles ahead by reason of the increasing importance of the political factor." When was the first trade union recognized by members of your Chamber?—We could find that out. At present I cannot say offhand when that was done.

A-6045. Would it be true to say that it was not recognized until a couple of years ago?—As a general answer to your question I might say that any trade union well-organized and representing a fair section of the employees would have received early recognition by our members.

A-6046. But the evidence we have had up to the moment points to the fact that trade unions were not recognized until a very late date?—The Act was passed only in 1926 and has been in operation only for two years.

A-6047. There were trade unions before the Act?—Possibly.

A-6048. Would you say that the worker is unintelligent?—No, certainly not. Not as a general rule. He is uneducated, no doubt, but he is not unintelligent.

A-6049. In answer to Sir Ibrahim you said that there was a difference between labour movements in India and in the West. In essence what is the difference?—The one is

established and the other is not. The one is in its infancy, and the other is in a state of mature growth.

A-6050. Is there any difference in the object?—Ultimately none.

A-6051. The only difference is the difference of age?—Difference of age and difference of conditions.

A-6052. Here we have a young movement of workers whom you describe as not being unintelligent. Is it not reasonable to suppose that they are capable of looking after their interests?—Ultimately they are.

A-6053. But not now?—No, there is ample evidence to show that they are not.

A-6054. Do you think it is the duty of the State to protect them until they are able to protect themselves?—We take the view that the State has already come in to protect them.

A-6055. In your memorandum you say that there is no unemployment here. As far as the textile industry is concerned we learn that a number of mills have been closed and about 14,000 workers have been thrown out of employment. Do you suggest that all these 14,000 workers have found employment now?—They may not have found employment in that particular industry, but they cannot be said to be unemployed, for they have always the alternative of going back to work on the land.

A-6056. But the evidence before us shows that opportunities of going back to work on the land are practically non-existent. Have you ever taken a census to find out whether there is unemployment in Bombay or not?—The Bombay Labour Office made a special enquiry into middle class unemployment. That is the only one I know of. As far as we are aware we believe that there is no unemployment in this Presidency in the sense in which the term is used in Britain. That is to say, there is no one who is likely to be starving owing to the fact that he cannot get work.

A-6057. We had evidence as to where the textile labour comes from and the need for their leaving the country from which they come in order to seek work in the textile industry in the cities. We had also evidence from the textile employers who said that they had closed many mills and as a result thrown out of employment 12,000 workers. I am asking you whether your Chamber has carried out any investigations to find out whether there is unemployment here or not?—We have carried out no special investigation.

A-6058. With regard to the payment of wages, there is a delay of 10 to 15 days in the payment. We have had evidence on the point and we have been told by certain employers that one of the reasons why they do not want a change in the time and periods of payment of wages, is that they want to have a certain amount of wages as caution money so that the workers might not have a tendency to change mills often. Do you think that that is a proper reason to give for the delay in payment?—No, certainly not. That is an improper reason.

A-6059. What then is the reason in the opinion of your Chamber?—(Mr. Cooke): The delay is only due to preparation of the pay rolls.

A-6060. Would you be opposed to any legislation cutting short the delay in payment?—I cannot answer the question without seeing the details of the proposal.

A-6061. Why do you require 15 days to elapse before the wages are paid? What are the practical difficulties in the way of cutting short the time?—Fifteen days is the longest period I have heard of. Seven to 10 days is the more usual thing.

A-6062. You said just now that you represented the Railways among other people?—(Mr. Winterbotham): I said that the Railways were members of our Chamber. But I do not represent them at the moment.

A-6063. If 15 days is the maximum, would you say that 10 to 15 days is a fair period?—(Mr. Cooke): I think up to 15 days it is a reasonable period, provided it is constant.

A-6064. What are the practical difficulties in the way of paying the men earlier?—Pay rolls have to be prepared including the pay up to the last day of the month. Very often they have to be checked by the controlling offices, and the money has to be actually sent down from those offices to various works for paying labour. All this takes a long time, especially when we have to deal with thousands of workmen.

A-6065. But how do they in other countries manage to pay earlier?—There are possibly different conditions in other countries.

A-6066. Surely there can be no difference in calculations?—No. But I think that in this country pay rolls are complicated by absenteeism to a greater extent than in Western

countries. (Mr. Winterbotham) : Dealing with this question of the prompt payment of wages we submitted a memorandum to the Government of India in 1927, in which we have stated our reasons fully.

The Chairman : We have that with us.

A-6067. *Mr. Clifff* : Except absenteeism, there is no other difference between this country and other countries. Therefore is that not due to defect of management ?—(Mr. Cooke) : I am not prepared to admit that there are no other reasons. For instance, the illiteracy of the average workingman, as we pointed out in 1927, has been a great obstacle to the introduction of satisfactory mechanical time-keeping appliances.

A-6068. In the mills I have been in this week, it did not appear to me that there was any manifest difficulty in adopting those time-keeping methods. I put it to you : is that not a question of defect of management ?—No, not of management. There is the question of allocation of the cost of labour to various heads. In Western countries the men themselves will probably be able to do that. But here you want a supervisor to do that. All these things have to be sifted at the end of the month. There are possibly more matters of that nature which go to cause this delay.

A-6069. *Mr. Ahmed* : You said that in Western countries, Government always took prompt action and averted any trouble in industry or commerce, whereas in India they were slow to move ?—(Mr. Winterbotham) : I did not say that.

A-6070. You said that the Bengal Government acted promptly and settled the dispute in a fortnight's time, whereas the Bombay Government did not do so and allowed the dispute to drag on. You said that you saw no reason why the Bombay Government should not have acted promptly and avoided the trouble. Is that not what you said ?—I never said that Government did not take prompt action. I said that it was suggested to me by certain people and that it was my information.

A-6071. With regard to the establishment of co-operative societies with a view to saving the workers from the clutches of the money-lenders, what have the members of your Chamber done ?—They have done many things.

A-6072. Could you tell us what they have done ?—I should have to make enquiries to give you the details.

A-6073. With regard to a public employment agency you say that there is no necessity for it ?—Yes, that is our view.

A-6074. Do you not think that it would help the workers a good deal if there were a public employment agency ?—We think that those who desire employment are in a position to get it, by applying direct to the employers with whom they seek employment.

A-6075. Are there not a large number of people, as many as 60,000, now out of work ?—No.

A-6076. Whenever a man wants to go on leave, he puts in a *badli* in his place ?—That is so.

A-6077. And *badlis* are usually available in large numbers ?—That is not within my knowledge.

A-6078. But as a rule they are available ?—Yes.

A-6079. That means that there are any number of *badlis* available and there is so much unemployment ?—No. The question of *badli* is a voluntary arrangement. If a man puts a *badli* in his place voluntarily it does not mean that he is unemployed.

A-6080. *Sir Alexander Murray* : It has been said that in America and other western countries, whenever there was a strike or some other trouble in industry, the Government of the day promptly and effectively interfered and settled the matter in dispute. Is that anything uncommon in India ?—No.

A-6081. For instance, a strike was declared on the 26th April 1928. On the very next day, 27th April 1928, His Excellency the Governor called the parties together with a view to settling the question. Could the Government have interfered earlier with regard to this matter ?—No.

A-6082. Again in 1929 there was another strike and His Excellency the Governor called a conference of the parties concerned with a view to arrive at a solution of the difficulty ?—Yes.

A-6083. Therefore is that anything new in this country for the Government to call a conference of the parties concerned and promptly take steps to put an end to the trouble ?—No.

A-6084. And in 1921 Government actually took steps to establish joint committees of workers and employers in several groups of mills?—Yes.

A-6085. And the Currimbhoy Mills have tried that method and found it to be a success. Have you any knowledge of the effect of those joint committees?—No.

A-6086. Are they a success?—(Mr. Cooke): I have tried joint committees, but they were not a great success. After the troubles were over and the whole thing settled down, the workers did not take any interest in them. They had no matters to refer to those joint committees.

A-6087. The Fawcett Committee recommended certain mediation rules in 1929. Of course they are only effective for negotiations between the employers and the workers before the strike takes place.—Yes.

A-6088. But after the strike has been in being for some time what machinery is there to bring the two parties together in order to arrive at a settlement?—The Trade Disputes Act.

A-6089. Previous to the Trade Disputes Act there was no machinery?—No.

A-6090. There was nothing corresponding to the tribunal or arbitration committee such as we have heard of in Ahmedabad where matters of dispute are referred to the representatives of employers and workers?—None that I know of.

A-6091. Are you in favour of compulsory arbitration? In other countries, as I understand, there is some kind of compulsory arbitration for public utility companies—I do not know if there is such arbitration for private industries. It has been suggested to us by some to have compulsory arbitration as between textile workers or any other employees and employers; do you think it would be a feasible one?—On the question whether it is desirable or not I think I should require notice. It would be exceedingly difficult to enforce at the moment the findings of the committee as binding on both parties.

A-6092. I suppose it is for that reason that you are strongly in favour of properly organized trade unions?—Yes.

A-6093. You have already said that you as a body will do everything in your power to encourage the formation of trade unions on proper lines?—Yes.

A-6094. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Before 1926, would you say the trade unions that existed were on the whole nothing more or less than strike committees?—I am afraid I have very little information about trade unions before 1926.

A-6095. In the case of an unemployed worker the question whether he can go back to his village to support himself is largely dependent on monsoon, is it not?—Yes.

A-6096. Therefore, a large bulk of the workers here are driven to industrial work because of the uncertainty of making a living on their own land?—I should qualify that by saying, driven to temporary industrial work.

A-6097. Therefore if you could ensure good monsoon there would be no difficulty for a large number of them, if they were dismissed from the textile industry, going back and making a living in their country?—Probably not.

A-6098. *Mr. Asvale*: You said that people have sufficient work?—I never stated that.

A-6099. You said that there is employment in the city of Bombay at present?—I think what I said was that unemployment could not be said to exist in India as it was understood by the term in other countries.

A-6100. What you said was that there is enough scope for them to go to their villages and work on land?—They can and do go.

A-6101. The Collector of Ratnagiri in his written statement to the Commission says: "Only about 1/3rd of the total area of 2,564,284 acres in this district being culturable the pressure of population (1,154,244 which excludes for the most part the emigrants who may number about 200,000) is heavy on the land. The district does not yield grains sufficient for the wants of the people." When such is the state of affairs, do you think that if they return to their village they will get sufficient work to maintain themselves?—I can speak from my personal knowledge. We know that the work in a particular industry entirely depends on the season, that is to say, we get the supply of labour during one season of the year only; the labourers prefer to go and work on the fields, possibly their own fields, in another season of the year; if they have no work on the fields they come back to the industry. It is largely a question of the labourers' own choice.

A-6102. You say : " During the past decade or more the Indian labourer in Bombay has been gradually educated up to a higher standard of living, but the danger lies in the fact that neither his reasoning power nor his efficiency has increased in the same ratio as his standard of living." What do you propose to increase the efficiency of a textile labourer ?—I want the textile labourer to come to understand that it is only by better work that he can make more pay and so increase and better his standard of living, and we take the view that that can only be done gradually by education.

A-6103. Do you mean to say that with the present machinery and work in the mills they will be able to give more production ?—That is a question to be answered by somebody intimately connected with the mill industry.

A-6104. You say that a majority of the workers in India are hopelessly indebted to the *baniya*. Have you any information why these labourers are always indebted ?—I can give a large variety of reasons.

A-6105. Give one or two reasons ?—Improvidence and social customs largely.

A-6106. Do you think that the labourers in the textile factories here are adequately paid to maintain themselves and their families ?—I prefer not to answer such a very general question.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. K. J. DUBASH and Mr. P. G. KANEKAR, Representatives of the
Social Service League, Bombay.**

A-6107. *The Chairman* : Mr. Dubash, what office do you hold in the Social Service League ?—(Mr. Dubash) I am the Secretary of the League.

A-6108. And you Mr. Kanekar—(Mr. Kanekar) I am one of the workers of the League.

A-6109. Will you tell us, in the first place, how long your Social Service League has been working, its membership and its objects ?—The League is in existence for the last 16 years and its membership is over 1,000; the chief object of the League is to ameliorate the economic and social condition of the masses.

A-6110. You have given us an interesting paper, along with an annual report, showing the kind of work which your League has been doing. We are greatly obliged to you for what you have put before us. May I ask you, in the first place, with regard to what you say about the bribery and corruption which seem to you to be inherent in the present system of engagement of labour through jobbers. Do you know of any mill in Bombay where this evil has been successfully attacked and removed ?—I do not know of any mill where any systematic effort has been made to remove this evil.

A-6111. Therefore you think it is still prevalent ?—More or less in each mill.

A-6112. With regard to " more or less ", do you say it is much worse in some mills than in others ?—Yes.

A-6113. In the mills where it is less, is that due to more care on the part of management ?—Yes.

A-6114. Can you tell us what steps on the part of management have led to this evil being reduced if not altogether abolished ?—When the management does not rely so much on jobbers, when recruitment is entrusted to the higher staff and when the manager and other officers are of a better type from the moral point of view, there is less corruption.

A-6115. You hold that it is possible, if employers took sufficient trouble in the selection of their own staff and showed their personal interest in the matter, to greatly diminish that evil ?—Yes.

A-6116. But you cannot point us to any single factory in which you believe the evil to have been wholly removed ?—I have come across no such instances.

A-6117. Have you any knowledge of any factory where there is a special officer for recruitment of labour ?—No.

A-6118. Dealing with the methods of recruitment you say : " The desirability of public employment agencies at least in big cities cannot be denied." Have you thought of the difficulty that these employment agencies in Bombay might not succeed unless it was made compulsory on employers to engage all their labour through them ?—Yes; otherwise each employer will recruit his labour independently, and the agency will become useless.

A-6119. You would accompany your recommendation with a further one that it should be made compulsory?—Though there may not be legal compulsion, the full support of the employers is absolutely necessary.

A-6120. Therefore it necessitates for its success either the full co-operation and agreement on the part of employers to use that agency, or else compulsion by law?—Yes.

A-6121. You deal also with the question of unemployment in Bombay in your memorandum. We are informed that probably more than half of the migratory labour in Bombay comes from a single district through Ratnagiri which is also in the Presidency of Bombay. Do you think that anything can be done to help and regularize that flow of labour so that it need not come in more quantities at any one time than there is demand?—Unemployment is a national question. There are many men from other provinces in Bombay; they come here simply because they have no employment in their own provinces. The question has to be tackled nationally.

A-6122. Bombay is burdened with some thousands of persons coming in search of work, who never get employment at one and the same time. That is a burden upon housing accommodation and on the municipal services of Bombay which again reflects itself in the high rate of taxes and makes the living dearer to those who are employed?—
Yes.

A-6123. In your memorandum you say: "The Social Service League has been maintaining at its Workingmen's Institute at Parel a Textile Technical School, which is meant for the training of ordinary millworkers." Does that school still continue its operation?—Yes.

A-6124. But you think that it is not receiving the support that you would like from the employers?—No, not in the direction of holding out definite prospects to the students who complete the course.

A-6125. How far do you find the actual mill workers take advantage of this technical school; how many spinners and weavers have you at any one time?—At present we have got about 68 students; almost all of them are workers.

A-6126. Are you teaching the theory or the practice?—Both.

A-6127. So you have spindles and looms?—Yes.

A-6128. Under whose direction is this technical school conducted?—There is a supervising committee consisting of some experts like Mr. Turner, the Principal of the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Mr. Bell, Mr. Fernandez and others.

A-6129. What you would like is that the employers should give more recognition to the work that is being done in the way of employment or promotion to the students?—And also offer scholarships to the workers who take advantage of this institution.

A-6130. Do you have discussions with the employers like the Millowners' Association?—We wrote to them several times but got no response.

A-6131. If I may say so, India is fond of writing letters. Have you asked them to discuss with you? We understand that they have a managing committee which meets very frequently?—There are some representatives of the millowners on our supervising committee.

A-6132. Have you asked them to meet you? Instead of writing many letters it would be better to sit round the table and discuss matters?—It is the Millowners' Association that has got to do that.

A-6133. Yes, but you have been working, you tell us, for so many years, and it does not seem unreasonable for you to ask the Millowners' Association to discuss matters with you?—We have made that suggestion several times.

A-6134. You tell us also, with regard to works committees, that your League had taken the initiative in urging some of the employers to experiment with works committees, but you say that your experience in this matter has not been encouraging; you think that there was not the right spirit on the side of the management?—Yes.

A-6135. Are any of those works committees, to your knowledge, at present in existence?—So far as I know, they are not in existence.

A-6136. You think the reason for their non-success was that the employers did not play their part in the right spirit?—The management ought to have been more sympathetic.

A-6137. I suppose you would admit that the success of such an experiment depends on a good deal of tact and good-will on both sides of the table?—Yes. At the time when works committees were started the labour was not so militant as it is now; they were prepared to take whatever little they got but even then the management was not sympathetic.

A-6138. Do you think that the present occasion is a favourable one for a new experiment in this direction; do you think that the workers themselves are prepared to meet the employers in these works committees?—Yes.

A-6139. You think a beginning could be made even now and you would have hopes of favourable results provided there was good-will on both sides?—Yes.

A-6140. You have something to say about welfare work in the factories. Of course, we can well understand "Widespread and acute labour unrest has pushed back welfare work, and it is not a matter for surprise." But still I take it from the very work that your League is doing you think that there is a great field for welfare work on the part of the employers, or do you think that it should be done by agencies outside the factories?—Outside agencies are useful in certain respects. If welfare work is carried on departmentally it becomes more or less a routine like thing.

A-6141. Then do you think that the first essential to welfare work is that there should be a welfare officer attached to the firm who takes the lead and responsibility in matters of that kind, relying also on such outside agencies as are available? Do you know of any case where a welfare officer on the staff of the firm is carrying out such works successfully?—As we have said in the memorandum, it is very difficult at present to make welfare work popular.

A-6142. That again clearly will depend on certain personal qualities on the part of the officer who is chiefly charged with the promotion of welfare of labour?—That is one thing; as we have said in our memorandum, the essentials for success in welfare work, like stability of employment, just and fair treatment by the employers, are lacking at present, and so long as this state of affairs continues I do not think welfare work will ever be popular.

A-6143. Surely one of the first duties of a welfare officer within the works would be to attend to those little injustices, whether real or fancied, which led to this state of affairs?—The welfare officer who will do that will soon become unpopular among the members of the staff; that is my experience.

A-6144. That is your actual experience?—Yes; I worked as Welfare Superintendent in a Workers' Institute for five years, and that is my experience. Since we started the works committees and the workmen began to bring grievances before the management, we became unpopular. It was thought by the management that it was we who prompted the workmen to bring their grievances. As a matter of fact, we simply introduced the machinery, and we merely acted as post-offices; because we were responsible for the institution of works committees we were looked upon as enemies of the management.

A-6145. Any one will agree with you that there are obvious difficulties in introducing such an officer, and unless he is a man of great qualities and tact, he may get into trouble with the departmental manager, but if he has the right personal qualities and also the right support of the head of the firm, do you still think there is an insuperable difficulty?—Still I have my doubts, because the agents or the owners will always rely more upon the departmental officers and the managers than on the welfare worker howsoever he may be the right person for that task.

A-6146. That all depends on the quality of the man, his status within the firm and the amount of trust which is given to him by the head of the firm?—Unless he is a partner of the firm it is not possible for him to be successful.

A-6147. You also give us some interesting information with regard to workmen's compensation and particularly with regard to certain agencies which have sprung up purporting to assist the workmen in presenting their claims. I understand that your League itself has as one of its functions to assist injured persons in getting their proper dues under the Act; is that so?—Yes.

A-6148. You suggest to us that there are some agencies which ought to be limited in their activities, which are really acting more for their own interests than for the real interests of the work-people?—They are business agencies.

A-6149. What exactly would you suggest in that connection?—There should be some restrictions with regard to the commission they receive, and keeping accounts of their transactions; those agencies which are recognized should only be allowed to appear on behalf of workmen.

A-6150. You suggest then, I take it, that only such agencies that have been registered should be allowed to operate and certain conditions should be laid down for registration as, for instance, that the amount of their commission should be limited and that their books should be open to inspection?—Yes.

A-6151. *Mr. Clow* : You say in your memorandum " Though the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act has been fortunately repealed, the employers can take advantage of section 492 of the Indian Penal Code for the purpose of maintaining their hold on the employees ". Is not that incorrect ? Was not section 492 of the Indian Penal Code repealed at the same time as the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act ?—If that is so, then this statement is incorrect.

A-6152. You say that labour should be free and not indentured. Surely there is no indentured labour ?—Not in the strict sense of the word.

A-6153. You would not exclude agreements between employer and employed, would you ?—There is no necessity for having individual agreements. If there is such an agreement it becomes a sort of indenture. My idea is that there should be no recruiting. There is so much unemployment that if the wages are fair, and if all other conditions are favourable, the workmen themselves will go to the plantations.

A-6154. Do you think workmen in Bombay, who have been unemployed for some time, will be able to find sufficient money to take them to Assam ?—I know that many men from districts in the Punjab come here as seamen. They are not invited here, but they come here because they have prospects of employment ; and why should not people go to the Assam plantations of their own accord ? At the most, the plantation owners should advertise ; but there should be no recruiting.

A-6155. In the old days in the Bombay cotton mills it was a common thing to send men out to obtain recruits. Do you see anything wrong in that ?—This sort of recruiting is dangerous because there is so much scope for fraud. The agent's commission depends on the number of men he secures, and in order to secure his commission he may tell any sort of lies to the workmen.

A-6156. Do you mean to say that the Government should start a recruiting agency for Assam ?—That would be better than the present system.

A-6157. You say that it has been found that the percentage of patients suffering from tuberculosis is very high among women employed in *bidi* making. Can you tell us where to find the enquiries which were made on this subject ?—I will send in the reference later.

A-6158. You say " Sickness insurance schemes are possible in those industries in which skilled and literate labour is employed and where there is some stability of service, as for example in Railway workshops." Do I take that to mean that where the conditions which you suggest are not satisfied, you consider that sickness insurance schemes are not practicable ?—A beginning should be made in those industries where there is some stability of service.

A-6159. You do not regard literacy as essential ?—No.

A-6160. *Miss Power* : You deal with the frequency of the worker's return to the land and with the fact that he has to start again on his return as a new worker. In view of the intimate connection of the Indian worker with the land do you suggest it is possible for some scheme to be instituted which would give privilege leave to men who work consistently in one mill over any long period ?—Yes.

A-6161. How long a period do you think should entitle a man to privilege leave ?—One year's service.

A-6162. How much privilege leave should be given ?—One month.

A-6163. You do not mean privilege leave with pay, do you ?—Yes. We mean privilege leave with pay.

A-6164. How long would you expect him to remain in his village ?—If he wants to go there to recoup his health he may be there for a month or so, not more.

A-6165. You do not suggest that after 12 months' service a man should be paid full wages for a month's absence, do you ?—Yes. We mean he should be paid full wages.

A-6166. You deal with the power of the jobber in both taking on and dismissing labour. Would you be prepared to admit that the power of the jobber in both these respects has very much waned in the last few years, or do you think it is as strong as ever ?—There is not much change in the power of the jobber.

A-6167. With regard to employment exchanges, you suggest that if groups of different people met together, there is no reason why these exchanges should not work successfully. Do you suggest private exchanges or State managed exchanges ; and do you suggest that the principle of compulsion should be introduced ?—It is difficult to say whether it should be compulsory or voluntary. It should be a State agency,

A-6168. Would you leave it voluntarily to the workers and employers to make use of that agency, or would you make it compulsory?—I would make it compulsory on the part of the men and also on the part of the employers.

A-6169. And that no person should offer himself for engagement in a mill except through that agency?—Quite so.

A-6170. You say "Unemployment insurance is one of the remedies to alleviate the distress caused by unemployment, but it must be borne in mind that it will be useful only in the case of those who are purely industrial workers and permanent residents in industrial towns." In Indian conditions how would you distinguish between what is "a purely industrial worker permanently resident in an industrial town", and one who is not?—That could be found out from the record of the man.

A-6171. You do not propose to make the basis of the insurance the man's industry, but merely the extent to which he is permanent in that industry. Is that the idea?—Yes.

A-6172. There is a great difference of opinion as to what percentage of the workers in the mill industry is permanent labour. To put the onus of that on the State would practically break down the scheme, would it not?—There is a class of worker which is permanent in Bombay.

A-6173. You refer to suggestions for regulating loads which women carry. You realize that at present the Indian Factories Act does not regulate loads carried by women even in industries coming under the Act. What form of regulation would you suggest, which could be effectively enforced?—There should be some limit to the burden.

A-6174. Regardless of race, job or physical development, would you say that there must be a certain weight fixed at the heaviest which the women may be allowed to carry. Is that your suggestion?—Yes.

A-6175. You suggest something in the nature of the clause in the new English Factories Bill which leaves it to the Inspector to say whether the load being carried by any individual person is excessive?—Yes. We prefer that way of doing it.

A-6176. You state: "It is necessary to have some machinery on the lines of the Trade Boards in England for fixing minimum wages in such industries as are not organized on the workers' side." What industries in India do you consider are organized on the workers' side?—There are a number of small industries in which the workers are not organized.

A-6177. Do you mean where there has never been a trade union?—Yes.

A-6178. Industries such as *bidis* making?—That is so.

A-6179. In view of the difficulty of getting the workers together even where they are partially organized as in the mill industry, do you think it would be an easy thing to get those wholly unorganized to occupy positions such as worker's representatives occupy in England on the Trade Boards?—Yes.

A-6180. You think you could get workers' representatives to shoulder that burden?—Yes. It is not impossible.

A-6181. Your view is that legislation on this matter should start with the small unorganized industries rather than with the bigger industries, such as cotton or jute. Is that your view?—Yes.

A-6182. You say that you want a Ministry of Labour in the Central Government, and you suggest certain advisory councils for the provinces. Do you suggest that there should be a Labour Office in every province?—Yes.

A-6183. In addition to a Ministry of Labour in the Central Government?—Yes.

A-6184. What would you suggest that these advisory councils to the Labour Office in the provinces should do?—They would be useful in making suggestions, and in helping the workers in the Labour Office. It sometimes happens that the workers' case is not properly represented to the investigators of the Labour Office. The information collected by the workers of the Labour Office will be more authoritative from the labour point of view if there are such advisory councils.

A-6185. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In one place in your memorandum you talk of "wide-spread unemployment", but in another place you say "it is difficult to obtain figures about unemployment." On what facts do you base your statement that there is wide-spread unemployment?—Many people are found to be wandering about without employment.

A-6186. Why do you say it is "widespread"? Is that rhetorical?—It is not rhetorical; it is a fact.

A-6187. What evidence have you got that there is widespread unemployment since you say it is difficult to obtain figures?—We move among the workers as a social agency and that is our experience.

A-6188. Would you say there was unemployment in the mill industry?—Yes.

A-6189. How many men are unemployed?—Twenty to twenty five thousand.

A-6190. How do you know that? Is it a guess?—It is a guess.

A-6191. How do you know there is widespread unemployment all over India. Are you guessing that too?—The guess is based on the impression we receive.

A-6192. How often during the year do you get information from each district in India to tell you what the unemployment is?—Everywhere there are complaints.

A-6193. How many times a year do you get reports in from all over India. Do you get any reports?—We do not, but we see the reports published in the newspapers and elsewhere.

A-6194. You are merely going on on what you read in the newspapers. You have no facts on which you base your statement?—We have no figures. It is not possible for us to collect such figures. It is for the Government to collect statistics on such subjects.

A-6195. You say "The problem of unemployment which is of a diffused character in this country can never be satisfactorily solved by taking such measures as are mainly applicable to populations permanently settled in industrial town." What measures would you apply? You mean unemployment in the rural districts, do you not?—Yes.

A-6196. How do you propose to alleviate that?—By starting village industries.

A-6197. But somewhere in your memorandum you say that the lack of village employment is due to the cheap products of the manufacturers. How do you propose to get your revived village industries to compete with the factory product?—There are certain districts in which village industries can be started with special advantages, such as forest industries near forests, and cotton industries in cotton districts. I refer you to the experiments narrated by Prince Kropotkin in his book "Fields, factories and workshops" He shows that it is quite possible to run industries on a small scale because the overhead charges are so very small. Decentralization of industry is possible except in the case of heavy industries like that of iron and steel.

A-6198. You talk of the work being very exacting and taxing. Do you mean by that that the textile work in Bombay is so exacting and taxing that you cannot expect the men to improve their efficiency?—Yes. Take the cotton mills. It is very difficult for a man to keep himself in good health for a number of years without having a change of air.

A-6199. You do not think we can expect any improved efficiency from labour?—Not under the present circumstances.

A-6200. We have to compete with Japan, where young girls have a much higher standard of efficiency than the Indian worker. How would you expect the cotton industry here to compete with Japan in those circumstances?—The instance of Japan is brought up every now and again, but I do not think anybody has made any searching enquiry into the matter.

A-6201. Will you accept from me that enquiries have been made; it has been found that one Japanese weaving girl looks after 5 or 6 looms, and that her industrial life is from three to four years. If you say that the work in India at present is so exacting that the Indian worker cannot increase his efficiency, can you state how you expect the mill industry here to compete with Japan, unless there is a drop in wages, which I take it you do not want?—The conditions of work, the machinery and the material must first be compared.

A-6202. I am assuming the same machinery and the same material?—Then these Japanese girls must be superhuman beings.

A-6203. You do not think there is any possibility of the Indian workman reaching the superhuman state of the Japanese work girls?—I do not believe this. First of all there is no sufficient data on which to make any comparison.

A-6204. If the case is what I say it is, do you propose to let the industry in Bombay die?—It all depends upon the mill agents.

A-6205. I am assuming that it depends upon the labour?—I do not think it will die through the labour. It is likely to die through the millowners.

A-6206. You say that the Indian labour is not able to give more efficiency than Japanese labour even if the former is given the machinery and the raw material of the latter. I then ask you, do you want Indian labour to get less wages so as to be able to compete with Japan?—No.

A-6207. If the Indian labour is not to get less wages and if Indian labour cannot increase its efficiency, will you say how the unfortunate Indian mill agent is to get his cost of production down to the same figure as the Japanese?—The millowners must try to find out their difficulties scientifically and not in a haphazard way.

A-6208. You say something about scientific management. Do you know anything about scientific management?—No I never wanted to be a works manager.

A-6209. Have you read about the various systems of scientific management in America?—I have read something about them.

A-6210. You are quite sure that a system of scientific management will remove all the difficulties of the Bombay mill industry, without reducing wages or getting extra efficiency from the workmen?—Yes.

A-6211. You state in your memorandum that people are in the habit of making purchases on credit. Is that true?—Yes.

A-6212. Yet further on in your memorandum you say that if there was to be weekly payment this would check the habit of purchasing grain on credit; but the reason why the people will not buy from the co-operative distribution agencies like the cheap grain shops, is because they want to purchase on credit?—Under the present system they are in the hands of the grain dealers.

A-6213. Why? Take my own mills, where there are grain shops which sell grain and chillies and other things at wholesale rates and on a monthly credit?—The man who purchases grain or other articles on credit from the shopkeeper has to pay at the end of the month.

A-6214. Will you answer my question? I have got grain shops where men can buy grain, chillies, etc., at wholesale rates and where they can get credit for a month. Why do they not use these facilities more widely?—There are certain difficulties. First they do not want to cut their connection with the grain dealer because in times of strikes, or if they have to leave the service of the mill, they will then have to go to the grain dealer again. There is also the question of distance. Some of the workers in the mill do not live in the locality of the mill but at some long distance away.

A-6215. Why should not they go to the co-operative distribution stores?—Then they will have to pay cash.

A-6216. No; they will get a month's credit?—Some stores have to give credit out of necessity because they cannot get cash customers.

A-6217. Why do not they go to their co-operative stores?—Co-operative stores should be independent of the millowners. There are not such independent stores.

(The further evidence of these witnesses was adjourned till later in the day.)

Principal SOHRAB R. DAVAR, Bar-at-Law, and Mr. JAGMOHANDAS J. KAPADIA, representing the Bombay Shareholders' Association.

A-6218. *The Chairman*: How long has your Association been in existence?—(Mr. Davar): We started about November last year; we have a membership of 503.

A-6219. I take it that your Association came into existence for two purposes: (1) to protect the interests of the shareholders which may in some cases differ from those of the apparent contending parties, and (2) to promote the interests of industry in Bombay?—That is so.

A-6220. With regard to your work I take it you do not go outside Bombay City?—No.

A-6221. You suggest with regard to recruitment that there should be a central bureau in each province to keep up a continuous propaganda among the agricultural classes with a view to directing them towards industrial centres. Is it not the case that in Bombay there are more workers than the factories can employ usually?—At the present moment perhaps, but when the industry was in a flourishing condition sometime ago there was always a scarcity of labour in Bombay, particularly in the textile industry.

A-6222. I take it what you advocate is a sort of information bureau in the agricultural districts to assist labour to go where there is a demand and a prospect of employment?—That is so.

A-6223. Dealing with the question of recruitment by jobbers, you suggest that labour should be engaged by the officer in charge of the mill as is done in centres outside Bombay?—We mean managers.

A-6224. Have you any knowledge of cases where a special officer has been engaged to deal with the recruitment of labour as well as with welfare work and that kind of thing?—Not so far as Bombay is concerned.

A-6225. You say that in these days of keen competition a reduction in costs of production is very necessary. You would agree, I imagine, that low cash wages do not necessarily mean low cost of production, but it is possible to have comparatively high wages and get a low wage cost over the production?—Comparatively high wages with efficiency and low cost of production; that is what I mean.

A-6226. Then it is not to be taken that you are advocating a reduction of wages but that you favour a system whereby comparatively high wages can be paid if that were accompanied by a reduction in cost which would enable Bombay more easily to compete on the one hand with Japan and on the other with the up-country mills?—That is so.

A-6227. You say "We would suggest the employment of technical experts both by the employers and the workmen who could watch and safeguard in mutual co-operation the interests of both parties." You would agree I think that there are technical experts on the staff of the employers?—What we mean is a technical expert who would command the confidence both of labour and employers if possible.

A-6228. Then do you mean a technical expert who would be outside the individual mill?—Yes; more or less connected with the trade union on one side and the employers on the other, in whom the workmen should have confidence, so that if matters of efficiency are explained to the workers and the workers insist upon a higher wage on a machinery of lower efficiency because the same high wage is paid in another mill where the efficiency is higher, then of course the technical expert ought to be able to explain to these men how wages could be adjusted and why in more efficient mills wages are higher for more efficient workmen.

A-6229. May I take it then that you mean a public official?—A public official would be more welcome.

A-6230. Then you suggest a public official attached, presumably, to the Labour Department in Bombay and paid by the public. He would not be biassed in favour of one side or the other and could give technical and impartial opinion as between the claims of the employers and the claims of the workmen?—That is so.

A-6231. You urge that immediate steps should be taken with a view to reducing the number of liquor shops in factory areas as far as possible?—That is so.

A-6232. We have already had some evidence on that point, but you hold that that is an evil which requires a remedy?—That is so. Of course we quite realize that liquor cannot be entirely abolished but we want a gradual reduction as far as possible, because the amount of absenteeism and various other irregularities are due more or less to this habit which unfortunately is prevalent among a large number of employees.

A-6233. With regard to methods of payment of wages you say "The present period of wage payment at the end of every month may advantageously be replaced with weekly payments if possible"?—Yes; that is not only possible but it is most desirable because with monthly payments when the workman gets a large amount of money in hand the weaker type of workman generally misuses it.

A-6234. That is an interesting statement, but it varies from some of the evidence that we have received. May I take it that that proposition has been discussed by your Association?—That is so.

A-6235. And it is the deliberate view of your Association?—All the views that I express here are those of my Association.

A-6236. That it would be an advantage to the workers that wages should be paid weekly instead of monthly?—Yes.

A-6237. On the question of works committees, I observe that you advocate the German system of compulsory works councils?—Yes, and on the same principle as the Whitley Council in England which has recommended 50 per cent. on either side.

A-6238. But the Council to which you refer did not recommend the compulsory establishment of works committees?—No; I confess we go one step further.

A-6239. You are convinced that that is a wise step forward ?—Yes.

A-6240. Sometimes things which are the result of goodwill on both sides rather than of law have more chances of success than those which are governed by officialdom, but I take note of your view. On the question of hours of work you tell us you recommend an experiment of a further reduction of at least half an hour ?—Yes. That is just as an experiment because the reduction of hours from 12 to 10, as far as our information goes, has not resulted in reduction in production, the production has been more or less maintained. We think a further reduction may be tried in view of the fact that the workmen's representatives themselves before the Fawcett Committee urged that such a reduction would not result in a reduction of production, that there was a lot of loitering and other irregularities that could be overcome if workmen were not compelled to work for longer hours than the human constitution can bear.

A-6241. You advocate a reduction of half an hour ?—That is the first step as an experiment, and if possible the idea is to reduce them to nine hours if possible.

A-6242. You speak of an experiment, but you realize, that very often you cannot go back again ?—Yes, we realize that. That is why we are very nervously recommending half an hour to start with.

A-6243. And you think that half an hour would be replaced to the employer by the abolition of loitering or going out while the machinery is running ?—And if the employers come to some sort of arrangement with the trade union reducing the time by half an hour, and if the promises of the trade union are not realized and production does suffer then the ordinary 10 hour would be restored. I think it could be done on a preliminary agreement.

A-6244. There might be difficulties about that ?—I quite see that.

A-6245. You think there is a lack of personal contact between heads of the firm and the actual workers ?—That is so.

A-6246. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum you refer to what the Industrial Commission of 1918 said about the scarcity of labour, and you say that in Bombay this scarcity is particularly felt ?—That was so at that time.

A-6247. We are speaking of the present time ?—We cannot take the present conditions as a standard because we are at present at the lowest water-mark of our industry owing to strikes. Whenever industry has been working under normal conditions in Bombay there has been scarcity of labour. That was so throughout the period of the War and some years after that. The scarcity existed two or three years ago before the strike troubles.

A-6248. You say there is no unemployment here ?—No unemployment among this class of labour, except of course in the abnormal circumstances which exist at present.

A-6249. You say a tariff is necessary ?—Yes, for the protection of local industry.

A-6250. You say "Our Bombay labour is mostly made up of agriculturists who are extremely poor and it is frequently urged on their behalf that they hardly get one square meal a day." If you were to put on a tariff to protect the industry I presume that would involve higher prices for manufactured articles ?—Not necessarily. The local industry would have time to recuperate and stand on its own legs.

A-6251. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You suggest that an enquiry should be made into the managing agency system. If we were to abolish the managing agency system entirely, would you still have Directors ?—Yes.

A-6252. And you would still have a manager at the mill. Is it the Director and the manager of the mill that you want to get into close personal touch with the worker. Do you think the Directors should go to the mill and create personal touch with the workers ?—Yes.

A-6253. Have you any personal experience at all of labour matters; have you been in contact with labour ?—I have not been in personal contact with labour.

A-6254. *Mr. Ahmed*: You want to make picketing illegal ?—Yes

A-6255. We note that a number of amendments were lost in the Legislative Assembly ?—(Mr. Kapadia) The debates show that there was some arrangement in the Select Committee whereby no amendments to the Trade Disputes Bill as settled in the Select Committee were to be moved in the Assembly. When that particular amendment was moved the Member for Industries intervened and pointed out that arrangement; he definitely gave a promise in the Assembly that an amending Bill would be put forward if necessary.

A-6256. So that it is not quite right to say that that was lost ?—(Mr. Davar) The reason why we recommend that picketing should be stopped is because in our opinion it cannot be peaceful with our illiterate labour. (Mr. Kapadia) We think that intimidation arising out of picketing prolonged the last strike, as pointed out by the Pearson Committee.

A-6257. *Mr. Lallji* : In view of the fact that the mills are financed by the banks on the security of the managing agents, if the system of managing agents is abolished, how do you think the mills would be financed ?—(Mr. Davar) The question of financing the mill industry has been thoroughly gone into by several enquiries. The banks are quite prepared to finance the industry provided the managing agents are prepared to hypothecate their goods. Also the question of finance would not arise at all under normal circumstances, as I think the Tariff Board pointed out, if mills started with sufficient capital.

A-6258. But as things are at present no bank will advance money to the mills without the security of the managing agents ?—I differ from you there.

A-6259. Can you give me the name of a single mill which can get money without the security of the managing agent ?—(Mr. Kapadia) If you will refer to the evidence given by the millowners' representatives before the Tariff Board you will find that Mr. Saklatvala stated that the Imperial Bank lent money without the agents' security. (Mr. Davar) In times of depression a kind of finance is resorted to to which I strongly object and which I think is detrimental to the interests of all concerned; that is the system by which money is borrowed from the reserve of one mill and lent to another mill. Not only that, but frequently money is borrowed on the credit of a strong company to finance a weak company under the same agents. The result is that the strong mill is pulled down with the weaker mill. I can cite you any number of instances of such finance by some of the best managing agency firms in Bombay. When a mill has no credit and cannot borrow, the credit of a good mill is utilized for borrowing money and lending it again.

A-6260. *The Chairman* : You are a shareholders' association ?—That is so.

A-6261. You represent the real owners of the mills ?—We do.

A-6262. Therefore in your annual meetings you have power to bring about a reform ?—Yes.

A-6263. Have you endeavoured to use your power in the direction of getting rid of the managing agents ?—You know the extent of the shareholders' power under the constitution of a joint stock company, when a managing agent is manipulating share capital. Most of the powers of the shareholders can only be exercised by a special resolution requiring a three-fourth's majority. It is very seldom that the three-fourth's majority can be obtained because the Managing agents and their nominees generally hold one quarter or more. Of course I know that in legal theory the shareholders are the proprietors and everything should be done according to their wishes.

A-6264. You come and ask the Commission to do something which you have apparently power to do yourself if you have sufficient faith and persistency ?—We are doing it; for instance, our Association has appointed a special committee for considering amendments of the Companies Act; we have already addressed Government. We have sent in suggestions as to amendments.

A-6265. But apart from that you have the legitimate power by refusing to vote for the proposals ?—We have none, because in the Memorandum and Articles of Association the borrowing and lending powers are taken from the very start by the managing agents whose lawyers draw up the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

A-6266. *Mr. Lallji* : You have stated that good mills lend money to the weaker mills. If they do not do so the weaker mills would go into liquidation ?—It is better that they should do so, than that really substantial mills should be pulled down. Another point which my Association has particularly asked me to represent is that the Agency system is a drag on the industry, because it is a most expensive system; it is in every way a wasteful system, as regards the managements' method of control. There is a company in Bombay of which about 70 per cent. of the shares are issued to the public. These shares are Rs. 30 each. Thirty per cent. of the shares are allotted as fully paid to the managing agents for the trouble they have taken in forming the company; these shares are Rs. 4 each. That is one of the methods by which managing agents control the companies.

A-6267. *The Chairman* : It is rather surprising that you should put your money into such concerns ?—In every country in the world, even in the most advanced countries, the shareholder is a gullible person. Many investors in this country do not know English and do not understand Company law.

A-6268. *Mr. Asvale* : You speak of the position of the agricultural labourer. Is that a subject of which you have any knowledge ?—What I am saying is from documents officially acknowledged ; it is the result of statements not only of public men who are in touch with agricultural labour but it is also the result of reports of Commissions which have investigated this question.

A-6269. At present the land is not owned by the agriculturist but by *sowkars* and similar people ?—That may be so, but we have not investigated that point.

A-6270. You say “unemployment, therefore, as far as industrial labour is concerned, is unknown in our city except among the incapables and undesirables.” What do you mean by that ?—It means those who are either sick, crippled, or rogues and vagabonds who are not wanted by the mills.

A-6271. The Millowners' Association have shown that there are nearly 10,000 persons unemployed ?—They said it was due to the closing of seven mills and these strike troubles.

A-6272. You seem to think that wages are too high. Do you think the wages of the highly paid people should be decreased or only of the lower paid people ?—We are only talking of labour ; we do not want to lower the wages of managers. If labour is paid high wages it results in absenteeism, whereas if you increase the salary of a manager it encourages him to be more regular and hard working.

A-6273. You have spoken of the wages paid to Government peons ?—What we felt was that if the same class of workmen was satisfied with Rs. 30 a month as a domestic worker and did his work satisfactorily, the mill labour is certainly being paid more, and perhaps the absenteeism is due to that fact.

A-6274. Do you think a wage of Rs. 15 to 25 a month is sufficient ?—I personally pay my peons from Rs. 18 to 30 a month and they seem to be quite satisfied. My Association does not say that they should not be paid more provided their standard of living justifies it and provided their efficiency justifies it. The Shareholders' Association would be very happy to see wages increased on that footing. If you pay them a higher salary they must raise their standard of living.

A-6275. Do you know that there is a technical school in Bombay ?—I know there is one small school where very little training is given ; I should like to see a large number of such schools, started by the State as well as by the employers.

A-6276. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Do you feel that the wages of labour should be decreased in order to strengthen the industry ?—When the industry was prosperous and prices of necessities were high labour extorted a rise in wages ; now that the industry is in a depressed state labour should adjust itself to the circumstances and be prepared to accept lower wages.

A-6277. You complain that labour does not realize what the needs of the industry are. Have any efforts been made to take labour into the confidence of the employers and explain to them the conditions of the industry ?—No, I am afraid that has not been done by the employers ; it should have been done.

A-6278. Can you suggest any means by which there may be genuine and real co-operation between the workers and the employers ?—That could be done by a welfare worker or a committee of each mill consisting half of labourers and half of the representatives of employers.

A-6279. In your memorandum you say that the Ahmedabad workmen are drawn from a class which is given to thrift and saving habits, whereas the Konkan workman is more extravagant and is inclined to be easy going. On what grounds do you say that ?—I have discussed these things with managers of mills, and I knew these people. Unfortunately the classes of labour we have in Bombay do not care to earn more by any effort.

A-6280. Have you any statistics as to the thrift habit to which you refer ?—(Mr. Kapadia) I think the Tariff Board has referred to that point ; after considering the figures of absenteeism in Ahmedabad and Bombay I think they came to the conclusion that the Ahmedabad labour had the saving habit whereas the Bombay labour was extravagant ; they came to the conclusion that absenteeism was higher in Bombay than in Ahmedabad.

A-6281. The managing agency system is peculiar to India ?—That is so.

A-6282. In other parts of the world the banks do not make any objection to financing industries without the security of managing agents ?—That is so. This difficulty only arises in Bombay ; in other places the managing agent's signature is not required. The real cause of the trouble is that managing agents control too many concerns,

A-6283. You mean that if a whole-time managing director controlled each mill, he would be able to devote his whole time and attention to his factory?—Yes.

A-6284. You say a managing agent who devotes all his time to one or two mills is not so objectionable as a firm of managing agents who have charge of a large number of mills besides controlling their own private business?—Precisely.

A-6285. *Mr. Lalji*: There are usually more than one partner in a firm of managing agents?—Yes; there may be 10 partners but there are not 10 safes out of which capital can be provided.

A-6286. If a firm of managing agents are controlling four or five mills, there may be as many as 7 partners in that firm?—That may be.

A-6287. Can you give the name of any firm of managing agents controlling ten to fifteen Companies?—Currimbhoy Ebrahim & Sons. One of their directors, when he gave evidence before the Tariff Board, said that the directors were all dummies. This particular firm manages 13 mills and some other concerns.

A-6288. How many partners are there?—Three partners.

A-6289. Is it not a fact that there are 7 partners?—The sons of the agents may be partners; if you consider them to be *pucca* partners we have nothing to say.

A-6290. *The Chairman*: Do you suggest that this system exists only in Bombay; is there any managing agency in Bengal?—Yes, but there is a great difference; that system is being conducted more or less on partnership lines.

A-6291. It does apply but to a different extent in other parts of India?—Yes.

A-6292. Are you suggesting to the Commission that we should recommend legislation to deal with the internal affairs of the industry in this way?—The legislation which the Association would like this Commission to recommend would be that no managing agent shall be a managing agent of more than 2 or 3 mills and he should not have any interest, say in the purchase and sale of cotton or insurance business, etc., etc.

A-6293. Have you visualized the passing of an Act of that kind and its results on industry?—(Mr. Davar) We do not suggest that legislation should by one stroke of the pen sweep away the existing managing agents. We would suggest that managing agents should continue during the length of time for which they have a contract. When their contracts expire they should not be allowed to exercise the options which usually exist to continue the agency. We suggest that the Company Act should be so amended as to make it difficult, if not impossible, for future companies to be controlled in this way under managing agencies.

A-6294. It is a form of socialism which is rather new to me?—No, it is not socialism; outside India there is no managing agency system.

A-6295. You remember the legislation, or the attempts made in the United States of a rather similar character?—I have not studied those attempts and I do not know if there are managing agencies in America.

A-6296. *Mr. Clow*: We are only interested in the labour aspect of this question and not in the general organization of the industry. Assuming for a moment that the managing agents were to disappear, do you suggest to us that the relations between employers and employees in industry would be substantially altered?—Yes, very much.

A-6297. Or do you merely suggest that out of the general benefit to the industry labour would incidentally benefit?—Of course labour would benefit through the industry having benefited; that is one thing. Then there would be the advantage arising from close contact between the managers and labour.

A-6298. *The Chairman*: I take it you are dealing with the managing agency system as being one of the factors which prevents personal contact between the actual head of the firm and his workmen?—Exactly.

A-6299. What you are asking is that inside each factory and in more or less daily attendance in the factory, there should be some head of the firm or some official of the firm who would have personal and human contact with the worker in the mill?—That is so.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. DATATRYA RAMCHANDRA MAYEKAR and Mr. NARAYAN RAO KULKARNI, representing the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal, Bombay.

A-6300. *The Chairman*: Mr. Mayekar, you are the Secretary?—(Mr. Mayekar) Yes.

A-6301. Will you tell us how long your union has been in existence?—(Mr. Kulkarni) It was started in 1923. It was due to the efforts of Mr. Mayekar that the strike of 1925,

which arose out of the decision of the millowners to reduce the salary by 20 per cent. was settled. Mr. N. M. Joshi was a member on the advisory board of this union. It was in January 1928, after the settlement of the 1925 strike, that the Bombay Textile Labour Union was formed. This gentleman, it may, therefore, be said, is the Columbus of the labour union movement in Bombay. He belongs to the working class, is Bhandari by caste, began work as a sizer, became a sizing jobber, and is now Head Store-Keeper at the Colaba Mill, which is managed by Messrs. Brady and Company, on a salary of Rs. 100. He was the only man who strongly opposed the last strike of 1928 as well as of this year (1929). He said that the strike would not be justified, although the Bombay Textile Labour Union and the Girni Kamgar Union were jointly in favour of the strike in 1928. It is only this year that misunderstandings have arisen between the Bombay Textile Labour Union and the Girni Kamgar Union. The reward that this gentleman got for his straightforward work this year was an assault which resulted in his remaining in the hospital for 15 days. No one therefore comes forward to give his views from Mayekar's Union, because he knows what his reward will be. This gentleman has also done good work in connection with the Tenants' Welfare Institute, which is recognized by the Government and of which Mr. J. Addyman was the President till 1926. We came into contact every day with the workmen. Last year when there was a strike, Government wanted to eject the millhands from Development *Chauls* and bring outsiders. But we moved in the matter and told Government that the Development *Chauls* were built mainly for workers, and so, the Cotton duty was levied to house the workers. The same procedure was followed when the landlords wanted to eject their tenants by providing single-roomed tenements in Development *Chauls*, without deposit and advance rent. Mr. Mayekar is also editor of a newspaper called *Kamkari*, which was registered in July 1924.

A-6302. Will you tell me how many paying members there are in the union at present?—There were 35,000 before the strike of 1928. It is difficult for us to know where the members, who have to pay, are gone. They are not like middle class tenants whose addresses can be known; when their rents fall into arrears they leave without notice. So that, we are unable to trace our members and to collect their subscriptions. Our membership is now about 1,500.

✓ A-6303. The membership of your union is composed of those who are workers in the mills?—(Mr. Mayekar) Yes.

A-6304. You rely upon yourselves and not upon outsiders in your trade union?—Yes.

✓ A-6305. Do your members cover all classes of workmen in the mills, for instance, in the blow room, in the card room, in the spinning and weaving rooms; or are they mainly from one class of workers?—They come from all classes of workers.

✓ A-6306. Is the strength of your union spread over the whole of the eighty mills in Bombay?—It is spread over all the mills. It is very difficult to get the men to become members, because for one thing they are afraid of the officers of the mills and secondly they have not yet been taught the value of a trade union.

A-6307. I appreciate fully the difficulty of building up a trade union under the peculiar circumstances of Bombay where so much of the labour is only, to put it at the best, semi-permanent and so great in fluctuation. Is your union expecting gradually to increase its membership?—Yes.

A-6308. You are continually working?—Yes. For the last fifteen years I have been trying to create a strong trade union.

A-6309. What is the obstacle which prevents the two unions, your own and the Bombay Textile Labour Union, from coming together and getting the benefit of the joint strength of the two?—There are many leaders in Bombay and each one tries his own way to speak the minds of the workers. Some workmen follow one leader and others some other leader.

A-6310. Did you come to Bombay from the country, or were you born in Bombay?—I come from the Ratnagiri district.

A-6311. You come from a district where the bulk of the workers come from, and you have an advantage there, one would think, in persuading them to follow your lead. You have not yet made it quite clear to me how it is impossible for you to join forces with the other union. Is it because of the outside leadership which you get in that union or its methods?—For the last twenty years, many outsiders have been trying to help us, but I find that it has made no difference in our state. The educated leaders do not know the workers and the workers do not know them. So, my opinion is that we should help ourselves.

A-6312. You think the leader of a trade union needs to stay amongst the workers rather than spend his time in Delhi or elsewhere or further afield. You think the leader should be some one who should go round and help the members of the union?—Yes. I have no objection to these educated men coming and helping us as advisers. But some of them like to interfere in things which they do not know. Therefore, there are difficulties in the way.

A-6313. What is your relationship with the employers in Bombay. Amongst your 1,500 members you have from time to time difficulties and grievances which they bring before you and the officers of the union. What kind of attitude do you meet with on the part of the employers; do they listen to you to hear your cases when you as a trade union secretary put before them?—Sometimes they listen to us, but not always.

A-6314. You say that some millowners are better to deal with than others?—Our difficulty is with the subordinate officers, the jobbers and the head jobbers.

A-6315. I take it that generally speaking, the millowners are ready to listen to the grievances which you bring to them. But you are sometimes obstructed by the jobbers and the under-managers in the mill?—Yes.

A-6316. So that you feel that your grievances are not in all cases listened to?—We do not go to the millowners every time we have a grievance. Only in connection with big questions like the reduction of numbers and so on, we go to the millowners. But for the rest, we mostly go to the subordinate officers and managers.

A-6317. We have been told that in Bombay, on an average 50 per cent. of the mill workers change every year. They either change from mill to mill or go back to the country?—The percentage is not so large as that. It will be about 25 per cent.

A-6318. In your view what is the reason for this constant change? Why do not the men stay longer in one mill?—For instance, if a man wanted to go back to his village for one or two months to look after his land, and if he did not get leave, he would be discharged from that mill. He would have to go to another mill.

A-6319. Suppose the man had leave to go back to the village for one or two months in a year, and then came back to the same mill, would he be treated as absolutely new?—No, the men generally got leave for one or two months in the year. That is the case in many of the mills I have worked. I have worked nearly in 14 mills. The workers are not discharged unless there has been some trouble on their account.

A-6320. Have you been changing almost every time you went home and returned?—Yes. If I got more pay in another mill I left my old mill.

A-6321. That does not seem helpful to the industry?—No.

A-6322. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Are you employed in the Colaba Mills?—Yes.

A-6323. Did the workers there go on strike during the strike of 1928 and 1929?—No.

A-6324. But the labourers there belong to the same classes as those in other mills in Bombay?—Yes.

A-6325. How do you account for the fact that the Colaba Mill workers did not go on strike while all the other mill workers went on strike during two prolonged periods in 1928 and 1929?—The Colaba Mill is situated in Colaba, the extreme south of the island, whereas the other mills are situated in the centre and north of the island. The workers in many mills in the island did not appreciate the grounds for a strike, but they were all intimidated and forced to strike. But this intimidation could not proceed so far as Colaba and they were left free to do their work. Then there is also another reason. The Colaba Mills give a pension for workers who work for 25 years and more. Naturally the workers do not want to have a break in their service.

A-6326. So that there is very little of migration of the workers in the Colaba Mills as compared with the other mills?—Yes, the workers are allowed to go home for one or two months in the year and are allowed to return to the same work. They are not regarded as absentees. But no pay is given for those two months.

A-6327. *The Chairman*: You are given what is called recognized leave which is not counted as absenteeism?—We are not paid for those two months, but we are allowed to return to the same work and we retain the privilege of pension. That is the case in other mills also. If the workers return in time they are engaged.

A-6328. How does the change of labour in that mill compare with that in other mills? How many men in the mill in which you work have been working for 5 years or 10 years?—There are many.

The Chairman: It has been suggested to me that we should obtain from the millowners a statement of the number of workers who draw these pensions and also the average length of service of the workers. I think that would be useful to us.

A-6329. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You said that your union has a membership of 1,500. What is the total number of labour employed in the Colaba Mills ?—About 2,700.

A-6330. Out of the 1,500 members of your union how many belong to the Colaba Mills ?—About 200.

A-6331. Why have not the other workers in the Colaba Mills joined your union ?—Most of them do not recognize that it is in any way to their advantage to become members of a trade union, and therefore they will not join.

A-6332. *Mr. Clow* : You say in your memorandum : " Government hospitals have been opened but how far the patients going there are improved is a most serious question to be solved." What do you mean by that ?—Many of the workers are not satisfied with the medicine given in Government hospitals ; it is their belief that they will not be cured if they depend upon the doctors in Government hospitals.

A-6333. The workers do not believe in Western medicine, is that what you mean ?—Not exactly that ; in the Government hospitals the doctor cannot pay as much attention to the patient as a private practitioner does ; moreover, the patient can explain everything to the private doctor in his own vernacular but he cannot do that in all cases to Government doctors.

A-6334. Do the mill managers understand Marathi ?—Not all ; very few of the managers who are Europeans can speak Marathi.

A-6335. *Miss Power* : You say in your memorandum : " It is quite necessary to keep jobbers." In view of the complaints made against jobbers, why are you still in favour of keeping jobbers ?—Because recruitment cannot be made without jobbers.

A-6336. Why do you think so ?—Because a jobber holds himself responsible for the work done by those whom he recruits, and he is a man with practical experience ; in his technical knowledge he is as good as an Associated Member of Cotton Trade (A.M.C.T.).

A-6337. In your memorandum you say : " The present and most urgent demands of the workers are education and housing with suitable accommodation with tolerable rents." What percentage of the earnings of a worker do you consider reasonable to be spent on rent ?—Ten per cent.

A-6338. *Mrs. Wagh* : You know that the general complaint against jobbers and *mukadams* is that they take bribes at the time of recruitment, but still you prefer recruitment through these men ; why is that ?—Since the owners are not taking any steps to put a stop to the present system, we cannot expect any improvement.

A-6339. What steps do you want the owners to take in this matter ?—I prefer the system which is in vogue in the Toyo Podar Mills where, if any men are required, they put up a notice board, giving the name of the department and the number of men required.

A-6340. That means that they are not making recruitment through jobbers and *naikins* ?—No.

A-6341. You say in your memorandum that suitable accommodation is one of the demands of the workers. What do you exactly mean by " suitable accommodation " ?—The workers want two-room tenements.

A-6342. *Mr. Asavle* : You said that you have a membership of 1,500. Do you maintain a register ?—Yes.

A-6343. Will you kindly send us a list of names of your members ?—Yes.

A-6344. You say in your memorandum that in the year 1925 there was a out of 11½ per cent. in mill workers' wages, and a strike was declared. Do you know that at that time there was, in fact, no other union except your own ?—Yes.

A-6345. There was a strike committee appointed and you were a member of that committee ?—Yes.

A-6346. The strike was settled not only with the efforts of your union but also with the efforts of the strike committee which consisted of some outsiders besides your union representatives ?—Yes.

A-6347. You say that in the year 1928 you did not like that there should be a strike. Do you know the reason why that strike took place ?—There was no legitimate cause for the strike : the strike was due to the influence of communists.

A-6348. Who brought these communists ?—They themselves came.

A-6349. In your report for 1924-27 you say your Managing Committee consisted of : Appa Shastry Sathe, Dhandu Mukund Deshpande, Surve, you yourself, Shankara Doondiraj and Joglekar. Is not Doondiraj at present tried at Meerut ?—Yes.

A-6350. Who is this Deshpande ; is he also tried at Meerut ?—No.

A-6351. In one part of your memorandum you have stated that you do not allow any outsiders to interfere with the cause of the workers, but at that time was not your union the cause of bringing these outside communists and others amongst the labourers ?—At that time they were not communists.

A-6352. Who brought them in ?—It is not our fault if they are communists ; we have to take the advice of any one, be he a communist or not.

A-6353. I put it to you that in 1928 strike you tried your best to capture the working classes but you could not succeed ?—I tried my best to get the men who were on strike on to our side but they did not listen to me.

A-6354. Was a general meeting held at Nagusayaji Wadi before the strike committee was appointed ?—I do not know.

A-6355. Was not your name suggested at the meeting ?—I do not know.

A-6356. I think you know this much that the whole mass of the workers were against you at that time ?—I do not know ; when I was not present at the meeting how could I know that.

A-6357. After that, were you taken as a leader or did they approach you for advice ?—When the people did not want to listen to me and follow my advice, I kept aloof.

A-6358. At many of the meetings during the 1928 strike were you not driven away by the labourers ?—During that strike I did not attend any meeting at all.

A-6359. Were you not suspected of working on behalf of the millowners ?—The communists and other unions that wanted to bring down my union wrote something against myself and my union.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. K. J. DUBASH and Mr. P. G. KANEKAR of the Social
Service League, Bombay.**

A-6360. *Mr. Ahmed* : You say in your memorandum : " The system of recruitment of seamen has given rise to a good deal of bribery and corruption ". What system do you refer to ?—The system of recruitment through brokers.

A-6361. You are in favour of the immediate abolition of the broker system ?—Yes.

A-6362. You think recruitment for Assam should be done by an officer and not by contractors ?—Yes.

A-6363. *Miss Cama* : In your memorandum with regard to welfare work you seem to be rather disappointed with the welfare work done during the last five years among the employees of Messrs. Currimbhoy Ebrahim & Sons and Messrs. Tata Sons ?—Yes.

A-6364. How was this system of social service organized ; was it in charge of one man or were there different men in charge of each department ?—There was one head, the superintendent, and there were other men under him to look after different activities.

A-6365. What were the activities ?—Day and night schools, crèches, gymnasia, cheap grain shops, co-operative societies, etc.

A-6366. Did each of those have a different supervisor ?—Not each ; sometimes they were grouped together if the activities did not require a separate man.

A-6367. What were the relations between you and the managers and weaving masters ?—Both sides, the workers of the League as well as the members of the management, met together.

A-6368. Did they look to the Secretary to settle any disputes or any complaints as to ill-treatment of employees ? Did they go to the Secretary and complain to him, and was he in a position to go to the heads of the departments and tell them about complaints or was the work done as charity ?—Grievances were brought before the works committee ; otherwise the welfare worker had no right to interfere even to help men to bring forward their grievances.

A-6369. You mean your Secretary had absolutely no personal touch with the heads of departments ?—Internal matters, such as dismissal or fines, were left alone.

A-6370. He was not able to go up to any manager or weaving master ?—It would have been looked upon as interference on the part of the welfare worker ; that was left to the works committee.

A-6371. If you had had a man who could go up to the manager or a weaving master and say that this is the complaint of such and such a man, without going to the works committee or anywhere else, and settle complaints amongst themselves, would not the employers have had some advantage ?—I do not think the officers would have liked the idea.

A-6372. Would they not have liked the idea of having a sensible man to come in and show them what the trouble was with the work-people ; do you mean to say they were spending all this money as charity and not wanting to get any good from it ?—Something like that. There is a difference between the mentality of the agents themselves and of the officers ; you have to take that into consideration, and also the attitude of the millowners themselves in respect of the grievances of the workers.

A-6373. But they were spending such a large sum of money : they wanted to do some good to the workmen ?—Certainly, from their own point of view.

A-6374. Were they able to get the full benefits of the money they were spending ?—They did not get it ; I have stated that, because the essential factor in welfare work was lacking ; unless the workers have full assurance of justice and stability of employment they can have no faith in social welfare work.

A-6375. But it is the duty of the secretary to smooth over matters and bring the grievances of the workmen to the heads of the departments ?—But whatever the duties of the secretary may be, he is powerless.

A-6376. What was your welfare secretary paid ?—He was paid by the Social Service League, and not directly by the employers.

A-6377. A man in that position must be an intelligent man who understands both sides ; what would be about his pay ?—I think Rs. 200 to 250.

A-6378. Was he a whole-time worker ?—Yes.

A-6379. And he understood the people thoroughly ?—Yes. I think the whole thing has been misunderstood ; it is not a question of the secretary's ability ; it is the attitude of the management ; the secretary was helpless.

A-6380. But you will admit that now the attitude, if it was as you say, has changed ?—I cannot say that. We are not doing this work now.

A-6381. *Mrs. Wagh* : I understand the subsidy you used to get during the first few years from some of the employers has been stopped ; what are the reasons for that ?—The first thing was this, that welfare workers had to take part in the labour movement when there was a question of justice between employers and employees ; as social workers we could not be partisans of capital when injustice was being done to workmen ; so we had to come forward and take part in the labour movement. That was rather resented by most of the employers. And through our having introduced the works committees the attitude of the officers was against us.

A-6382. Was it in connection with the organization of the union ?—No.

A-6383. Do you think the existence of a number of unions has in any way affected your popularity among the workers ?—Our social work is different from trade union work.

A-6384. Has your popularity been affected on account of the existence of so many unions ?—As social workers our popularity has not been affected ; we are carrying on our work.

A-6385. Is organization of labour one of your duties ?—It is not our duty but individually we sometimes take an interest in it.

A-6386. As a social worker do you take the view that it is better to improve completely the lot of one individual than to do general service to a number of people ?—Opinions may differ as to that.

A-6387. To what extent have you succeeded in checking the drink evil among the workers ?—We have done our best, but I think as long as the shops are open and the present policy of the Government continues, it is nearly useless.

A-6388. Have you made any representation to the Government to deal with the shops ?—Yes, several times.

A-6389. *Mr. Lalji* : You have had a permanent secretary for a number of years ?—Yes.

A-6390. And he was a gentleman who did the work as secretary although he was offered a much higher pay outside ?—Yes.

✓ A-6391. Is it a fact that your Social Service League was the first body which took an interest in the welfare of the working classes, years before the trade unions were formed ?—Yes.

A-6392. Is it not a fact that your association has been going round every ward and inviting the attention of the municipality to the bad condition of the *chawls*, water supply and so on ?—Yes, we take sanitation rounds.

A-6393. Your League made strong representations about the liquor question to the Excise Committee and the Taxation Committee ?—Yes, we did.

A-6394. In your memorandum you say that the employers should not supply houses because the housing accommodation provided by them interferes with the workers' freedom. How do you say that ? Have you ever come across instances where employers have treated the workmen badly ?—When there are strikes, the workmen are likely to be evicted.

A-6395. But during the big strike in 1928, when the workmen did not pay rent for 5 months, none of the landlords turned them out ?—But they were served with notices ; there was some difficulty on that point.

A-6396. But no worker was turned out ?—I do not know, but there were difficulties and complaints ; notices were served.

A-6397. Are you sure that the Konkaneese are in the habit of drinking more than other classes ?—Yes, but even among the Konkaneese all are not addicted to drink to the same extent ; it depends upon their communal traditions and customs.

A-6398. You had settlements at Madanpura and other places where you were giving weekly or fortnightly lectures against drink and on other subjects ?—Yes.

A-6399. With reference to what you say in your memorandum regarding the popularity of Western medicine among the workers, we have had evidence that the workers do not want to take advantage of Western medicine. Is it a fact ?—It is not true to the extent that is represented by some of the witnesses.

A-6400. *Mr. Asvale* : In the Presidency have you any branches of the Social Service League ?—We have no branches.

A-6401. What is your opinion as to the extent of unemployment in the Presidency ?—We have no figures to prove the exact extent of unemployment, but there are grounds from which we can infer it. For instance, at present there are 7 mills closed. The average number of workmen employed in those mills may come to 15,000 or so. In some mills the number of looms and spindles has been reduced ; that may also account for 5 to 10,000 workers.

A-6402. You work among the mill workers in the Parel locality ?—Yes.

A-6403. Are you admitted to the *chawls* at night ?—Yes, sometimes we go there to give lantern lectures.

A-6404. How many times in a year do you visit the *chawls* ?—Two or three times a month sometimes.

A-6405. Did you find instances of 30, 40 or 60 people living in one *chawl* ?—No, it is physically impossible.

A-6406. What do you think is the living wage of a worker ?—That depends upon the standard you set, but I think Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 a month must be regarded as the minimum.

A-6407. How much has to be spent on rent, clothing, food and so on ?—For two rooms at least Rs. 10. The food charges of a man, his wife and two children will be about Rs. 30 ; Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 per year will be required for clothing.

A-6408. Having regard to the present rates of wages, do you think the workers are able to drink ?—No, only for a day or two after pay day, in the case of low-paid workers.

A-6409. *Mr. Chow* : You conducted a special enquiry as to seamen ?—Yes.

A-6410. Do you think the figures of unemployment given in your report can be taken as typical ?—That enquiry was not extensive ; it was intensive.

A-6411. For instance, you gave the number of Goanese at sea, at Bombay and in their villages ; but do these people find other employment as waiters and butlers in Bombay ?—Very few ; I made enquiries on that point and found that those who are accustomed to a sea life rarely take to other occupations.

A-6412. As the result of your enquiries is it your opinion that bribery amongst seamen has increased in the last few years?—Yes. That is due to the law of demand and supply; there has been less demand for seamen and more supply since the Great War was over and trade depression set in.

A-6413. Are you in favour of attempting to stop the recruitment of fresh seamen for some years?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
THIRTIETH MEETING
BOMBAY**

Monday, 2nd December 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. G. D. BIBLA, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,
I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOOSAINBHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C. }

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
Mr. A. DIBDIN. }

**Mr. W. H. NEILSON, Chairman, Mr. G. E. BENNETT, Chief Engineer,
Mr. C. N. RICH, Mr. MACMURRAY, of the Bombay Port Trust.**

A-6414. *The Chairman* : Mr. Neilson, you have been good enough to help our work by the presentation of a full memorandum on the subjects of our enquiry. I need hardly say that we have examined it with care, and, I hope, also with profit. There are two questions I would like to ask you on your memorandum. In the first place, with regard to recruitment you tell us in one place that the majority of your employees recruited from outside Bombay visit their homes once a year. In another place you tell us that in the Engineering Department they rejoin afresh on their return to Bombay after an absence of two or three months. " Besides the practice of leaving work during the monsoon the staff also avail themselves of the 14 days' leave on full pay allowed them per year." Do I understand rightly from that that you recognize their need to return to their villages and that that absence is not treated under the term " absenteeism"? You appear to have a better system than in some places by way of recognizing the need of the migratory workers to return to their villages. Will you describe to the Commission what your system is?—As long as they ask for leave, as long as they say they want to go to their village, then they are marked down as " leave without pay." They are given leave with the promise of being taken on again when they come back, if there is work for them. As regards the workshop, the workmen there are all daily paid men. We recognize their desire to go home to their villages during the monsoon period for cultivation and for other purposes and we arrange accordingly. It is the slack period in the docks, so that we can let them go without much difficulty.

A-6415. It is recognized leave, and they have a preference when they come back again?—Yes, the men that we know; but they must definitely say first of all that they are going. If a man absents himself and says nothing about it and we do not see him for some time, then we take it for granted that he has got work elsewhere; but if he definitely says in the first instance that he wants to take leave in order to go to his village for a specific period, then he is marked down and we know where he is; and when he comes back we take him on if there is work for him.

A-6416. You say " he is marked down ". Is that separately marked in your books?—Each section has its own time-sheets and time-keepers, and it is all marked down. There is a record kept.

A-6417. One of our difficulties is to differentiate between what I will call at the moment village leave, and sickness absence. Would your books show leave to go to villages in a different classification from absence on account of sickness?—Yes. In the case of sickness they have to produce a medical certificate from our own dispensary doctor.

A-6418. We are anxious, if possible, to find an opportunity of analysing the causes of absence. In many places absenteeism is taken as a general term to cover both absence from sickness and absence for the purpose of returning to villages. Would your books afford an opportunity of distinguishing between the two?—When we refer to absenteeism we refer to the whole class of absenteeism; that is men who go without leave—those who just do not turn up; men who present sick certificates and get a certain amount of leave granted by the doctor; and those who ask for and are granted a certain amount of leave. That is what we call absenteeism.

A-6419. All those three classes are put together?—Yes.

A-6420. But do your books afford an opportunity to an investigator to distinguish between the three kinds of leave?—Yes, because we have the sick certificate for a period. If a man is granted leave it is marked down "leave without pay", because if he is given leave for one month and if he does not turn up at the end of that month, we take it for granted that he is not coming back at all. We have that record. In the case of a man staying away without leave, he is simply marked absent and if he stays away for a certain period we knock off his name.

A-6421. You tell us that in the Engineering Department the work-people are allowed 14 days' leave on full pay every year. Do you pay them when they are on sick leave, having obtained a certificate from your doctor?—Yes, up to fourteen days.

A-6422. That leave with full pay may be taken partly as sickness leave?—Yes. It can be taken one day at a time. If a man does not turn up for one day he may not have been sick at all. He may have just taken the leave for that day. Then one day is knocked off the 14, if it is due to him and he is given his full pay for that day.

A-6423. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Even if he has not asked for leave?—Yes, for one or two days. (Mr. Bennett) He must give a good excuse when he comes back. (Mr. Neilson). This excludes casual dock labourers of which we have no tally.

A-6424. *The Chairman*: Those men are engaged by, and under the control of, the *toliwallas*. Have you yourself made any analysis of absenteeism under these three heads?—No.

A-6425. Would you be prepared to allow an analysis to be made from your books for the information of the Commission?—Certainly

A-6426. You describe to us the method of engagement of the day to day dock labourers through the *toliwallas*. Is there any complaint of bribery in that system?—(Mr. Rich) Occasionally we have complaints from the men that they do not get their full quota of wages. We enquire into those complaints and endeavour to put them straight. We do not get accusations of bribery and corruption. I think it is probably too general amongst that class of people for anybody to look upon it as anything other than customary.

A-6427. You think it exists, but you only have complaints when it is carried to an extreme degree?—The complaints generally are that the men are receiving short wages—not of bribery and corruption.

A-6428. How do you deal with these cases?—We hold enquiries into them. We have certain representatives of the men before us, and the *toliwallas* and we do our best to get at the truth of the matter.

A-6429. When you find that in some cases that practice persists do you get rid of the particular *toliwalla*?—We should do so. We have only had to get rid of one in the last four or five years for that reason.

A-6430. Can you compel a *toliwalla* to employ a man in his gang?—No.

A-6431. I gather that the *toliwalla* mostly has men from his own village working in his gang?—That is largely so.

A-6432. It is largely based on their village life and their knowledge of one another before they come to Bombay?—That is so.

A-6433. Presumably if there was any great degree of injustice they would refuse to work in the gang of any particular *toliwalla*?—Yes, I think so.

A-6434. You tell us that the men are allowed to work up to the age limit of 65 years, provided they continue physically fit, and that many who have done good service in the past are retained on light work to an advanced age. You tell us at the same time that the average duration of service of coolies is about 10 years. I gather from various statements in the memorandum that you have a greater regularity of labour than some undertakings with which we have been concerned?—(Mr. Neilson) Yes, particularly the workahops.

A-6435. Can you give us the reason why you have this greater regularity of service, dealing as you are largely with the same kind of labour as other undertakings?—I take it that the only reason is that our conditions of service are attractive.

A-6436. You do have men constantly coming back year after year to the same work?—In the workshops, yes. The difficulty is to get rid of them. They have their provident fund, gratuity, leave, sickness benefit, workmen's compensation and a co-operative credit society.

A-6437. You speak of sick benefit. What is that?—The dispensary and medical attendance.

A-6438. Dealing with absenteeism, you tell us that in the case of coolies it is about 11 per cent, increasing to 14 per cent, during the two months of seasonal exodus just before until just after the monsoon, and you say that the causes are the marriage season and the demands of village agriculture. The absenteeism—that is the absence without leave—amounts to 6,000 days per annum among 470 men?—That is the Railway Department.

A-6439. Does the Railway Department distinguish in its books between the three different causes of absenteeism?—Yes, very much so.

A-6440. Therefore that would offer a favourable case for analysing the different causes of absenteeism?—We could give you that information.

A-6441. You tell us what you have done in the way of amenities for the workers—living quarters, schools, infant welfare, maternity centres, and a co-operative credit society and other schemes, and you say that these have done much to increase the contentment of the people in your employ. I take it that that gives the answer to an earlier question as to how it is that you attain a greater regularity of employment?—That is so.

A-6442. Dealing with the method of payment of wages, you tell us: "Payments are made in cash monthly except for labour at the outlying quarry at Anik, where the payments are made half-monthly owing to the isolated nature of the work." We have been told in some cases that the isolated nature of the work brings about a delay in payment?—(Mr. Bennett) The labour at Anik is very transient and is changing in its numbers. The workmen there are not so regular in their employment or in staying in their employment as they are in the other parts of the work.

A-6443. Do you see any practical difficulty in paying your regular men at shorter intervals than a month?—(Mr. Neilson) There is the practical difficulty of extra expense and also of it not being necessary.

A-6444. You mean not being the desire of the workmen themselves?—Quite so.

A-6445. They do not themselves desire more frequent payment than the customary month?—That is so. They are not living from hand to mouth to that extent.

A-6446. Are they not living on the *bansia*?—You are opening a very large question indeed now.

A-6447. I am aware of that. You appear to have taken thought on so many questions that I was hoping I might get from you a view on that question?—That is why we have opened the co-operative credit society, where we lend over two lakhs of rupees a year.

A-6448. In your view is that the best method of relieving the work-people from the incubus of the money-lender?—I think, if they take full advantage of it, they can clear themselves.

A-6449. Have you opened your provident fund and your co-operative credit society to lower grades of workmen than is the case on the Railways generally?—I cannot say that, but all our labour, even our daily labour, who have served three years, come on the provident fund—anybody who has done three years' service. I am not talking about the casual dock labourer but every one else who has done three years' service all come on the provident fund.

A-6450. Without regard to any lower limit of monthly pay?—There is no limit.

A-6451. The three years' service is your only condition?—Yes. As regards that point, I might mention that amongst the lower paid classes it is an inducement, so to speak, to leave the service; because when they come on the provident fund they find they have accumulated a certain amount of money, and they leave the service in order to get hold of that money, either to pay off the *bansia* or to relieve their temporary stress. Then they come back again. I have seen that done many times. It is a great pity but they do it.

A-6452. They use it for a temporary savings bank, and then draw out what they have accumulated?—They have to leave in order to get it. It is a great pity. Then they have to serve another three years. It is improvident, but what can one do?

A-6453. That is a weakness of human nature?—I think it will improve in time.

A-6454. With an improved standard of living that tends to pass away?—Provided they get out of the hands of the money-lenders.

A-6455. Have you any means of stopping it?—No. The man leaves and he draws his money.

A-6456. He is entitled to do so under the conditions?—Yes.

A-6457. He does not get your contribution?—No, except he serves five years. The Provident Fund Act has been altered and now he has only got to wait a few more years in order to get a good deal more money. Then he resigns.

A-6458. It is only education and persuasion that can help him?—I think it is mainly due to the difficulty that they get into through borrowing. The *bania* knows that money is there and presses the man in order to get it.

A-6459. In dealing with "Housing" you make one observation about your own *chawls*: "Lighting is provided in passage ways." Some of us had an occasion to visit these *chawls* and noticed the provision you make in that respect. Do you regard that question of lighting the passage ways as an important item in the attraction of any *chawls* for workmen?—I personally consider it absolutely essential to light the passage ways and the lavatories. Otherwise you get insanitation. I do not blame the inhabitants at all. When they get into a dark passage way, they do not know what they may come up against—there may be *mavalis* knocking about. Lighting helps the inhabitants very considerably. In fact, in some of the *chawls* we had not got lighted, we had petitions to have them lighted. I think it is essential for the comfort and welfare of the people that the passage ways and lavatories should be lighted, particularly for women and children.

A-6460. You think that in any *chawls* where the passage ways and the lavatories are not lighted, that is a strong reason why they are not attractive to workmen?—That is one of the reasons.

A-6461. We had occasion to visit your bright little maternity home, which is made good use of by the women; you told us then, as you tell us here, that owing to the increasing demand a scheme for extension is now being prepared?—Yes.

A-6462. Dealing with the question of provision for old age and premature retirement, you tell us what your provident fund system is, into which any workman can be admitted after three years' continuous service, and you say "The employee contributes 8½ per cent. of his earnings." Is that done by deduction from his pay?—Yes.

A-6463. The fact of his entering the fund means that he agrees to have that deduction made?—When he enters service he is subject to these conditions of service.

A-6464. These are conditions of service when he first joins service?—Yes; it is laid down in the service rules. Some of them have an alternative to elect to have a gratuity instead.

A-6465. And to the workman's contribution you add an equal amount, and in addition interest on both?—Yes.

A-6466. On the question of housing, you tell us that about 36 per cent. of the normal number of labourers engaged are housed. I suppose "normal number of labourers" excludes the casual labour recruited by the *toliwallas*?—No; it includes them. The *chawls* you visited the other day are reserved exclusively for casual labour employed by the *toliwallas* plus the conservancy men employed in the docks.

A-6467. That is 36 per cent. of your total labour force?—Normal labour force. You may see in another part of the memorandum the variation of the labour force in the docks and in the railways.

A-6468. Mr. Clow: In regard to safety measures, you state: "There is no actual need for legislation on the subject," and later at the end of your letter No. 4831, dated 26th October 1928 to the Under Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Marine Department, you say: "The Port Trustees as distinct from 'Ship' and 'Merchant' operating in the Docks are already observing practically all the more important safety precautions." Does that mean that certain classes of people employing labour in the Docks are not observing the same safety precautions?—(Mr. Rich) This letter was in answer to the questionnaire from Government on the safety precautions, and we as trustees were answering on our own behalf and not on behalf of the merchants, stevedores, etc.

A-6469. But you are familiar with the conditions in the Dock?—We do not offer an opinion on labour not under our control.

A-6470. But you say: "As far as the Port of Bombay is concerned, there is no actual need for legislation on the subject."?—From our point of view.

A-6471. You qualify that by saying that it relates only to labour employed under you?—That is in answer to Government's enquiry. We took it that Government had enquired from the shipowners and stevedores their point of view.

A-6472. I take it that Government would like to have your expert opinion on conditions in the Bombay Port?—That is our answer on conditions in the port—there is actually no need for legislation on the subject. That is our opinion as regards our own local labour; we exclude the "Ship" and "Merchant" side.

A-6473. Do you not think it is too broad to say that there is no need for any legislation on this subject?—That is our general opinion, so far as we can say.

A-6474. As regards accidents do you not think it desirable in the case of an accident to have an investigation independent of those responsible for employing labour?—In the case of all fatal accidents there is police investigation, and in the case of most accidents that are likely to prove fatal—serious accidents—the police always hold an enquiry.

A-6475. Do you think the police are the best authorities to hold an investigation? You know they have no technical experience.—(Mr. Neilson) They have their technical officers.

A-6476. In your memorandum you give a table of accidents. Out of a total of 725 accidents in the year 1928-29, you have classified 655 as due to "other causes." Taking the fatal accidents half are due to other causes. Could you give us any indication of what are the other causes which contribute to a bulk of the accidents?—(Mr. Rich) People falling into the dry docks; people falling of bales of cargo and getting hurt.

A-6477. You classify falling into dry docks separately.—Yes. There are quite a number of cases of people falling into holds of ships.

A-6478. Is this the classification you ordinarily follow?—(Mr. Rich) Yes. (Mr. Neilson) We could give you the exact information as to what the other causes are.

A-6479. This is the classification for your own purpose?—(Mr. Rich) This is the police classification, and the one we adopt too.

A-6480. Do you not think that if any attempt is going to be made to classify accidents, it should show the specific causes of at least the great bulk of the accidents?—(Mr. Neilson) You can detail them of course; it depends on how far you want to go.

A-6481. There must be some big classes.—You are getting your big classes there; you have seven big classes; and the other is one general class, the same as there may be accidents to yourself or other people walking in the streets. Simply because the number is greater in "Other causes" that does not mean that there are bigger heads under that than the other.

A-6482. The other heads account for not more than 10 per cent. of the accidents, and the other 90 per cent. go unclassified?—Do you want eight other separate heads? Is it worth while?

A-6483. Surely it is worth while to make some attempt to classify 90 per cent. of the accidents?—You get 8 or 9 specific heads; I suppose you do not call that an attempt?

A-6484. I do not when those heads account for only 10 per cent.?—I am afraid I do not agree. When there are high heads of accidents, I must call that a serious attempt.

A-6485. If not more than 10 per cent. of the accidents comes under the heads you specify, then I suggest that it is not of much value?—It is a difference of opinion.

A-6486. *The Chairman*: The first six items under "On quays, sheds and roads" appear to me to be accidents due not to the men's own fault but to failure of gear or something of that kind. These would seem to be grouped together under one head. But it would seem to be better if there was a similar broad analysis of "other causes."?—We can do it if we get the information.

A-6487. *Mr. Glow*: Under the head "Days worked per week", you mention that you are endeavouring to extract some information from the men as to the average number of hours per week worked by casual men, but this will not be available in time for your report but may be referred to in the oral evidence. Have you any remarks to make on that?—(Mr. Rich) I have the figures worked out. The average number of hours per week worked by the casual labour employed in the Docks comes to 45½.

this was taken for a period of over six months. The average per day is about 6½ hours. They do not quite tally.

A-6488. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that cover six or seven days?—Mostly six days, and of course night work.

A-6489. Can you give us a division of night work in this figure?—I am afraid I cannot.

A-6490. *Mr. Clow*: Under the head "Extent and effect of payment through contractors, sub-contractors or headmen," you refer to payment of *toliwallas*, and you state: "Prior to 1925 the Port Trust paid the *toliwallas* at daily rates per man supplied. Since 1925 the Trust has paid them at piece-work rates on tonnage handled. The men are paid by the *toliwallas* according to both methods." Does that mean that when the *toliwallas* are paid on tonnage, they can pay their men daily rates?—The *toliwallas* are almost invariably paid by the Port Trust on tonnage; but the *toliwallas* pay their men sometimes on tonnage and at other times on daily rates depending on the nature of the cargo dealt with. In the case of imported rice, the men are generally paid per 100 bags. On miscellaneous cargo from Europe they generally pay per day.

A-6491. *Miss Power*: Could you tell us how Government select their representative of labour on the Port Trust?—(Mr. Neilson) By nomination.

A-6492. From what classes of persons is he selected?—Government nominate a man and tell us that he is nominated. That is all that I know.

A-6493. What is the size of an ordinary gang of a *toliwalla*? Does it vary according to the work that is being done?—(Mr. Rich) The average size of the gang is about 15 to 18. The more successful *toliwallas* may control a number of gangs; some of the smaller *toliwallas* only control two or three gangs; some of the bigger *toliwallas* may have 10 or 15 gangs under them.

A-6494. How is the work allocated among the *toliwallas*?—(Mr. Rich) The allocation is by ships and is controlled by the Port Trust. It is done by the Hamallage Department which I think you saw the other day.

A-6495. In regard to wages, there is no particular reference in your memorandum to night work. Is there any extra pay for night work?—(Mr. Rich) No, not to labour; they get the same pay for night as for day.

A-6496. No additional pay?—Only a small allowance in order to ensure his appearance, which is 2 or 4 annas; it is given as a sort of earnest money. In the old days when the wages were low, these two or four annas were of more utility than now when wages have doubled. This payment is now only an exchange of confidence between the coolie and the *toliwalla* that the coolie will turn up to work at night.

A-6497. Turning to hours of work, you refer to an hour's interval in the middle of the day. Do the dock workers take their meals during that time, or do they, like the mill workers, take rest during that hour and take their meals at an earlier period?—They take their meal during the rest hour in the middle of the day and again at night.

A-6498. Have they always done that?—To the best of my knowledge, yes.

A-6499. Why should there be this difficulty in regard to the mill workers and not with regard to the dock workers?—I am afraid I have no knowledge of the mills.

A-6500. *Mr. Clow*: Your work is not so continuous as the mill work?—Not quite so. I should have thought they could do it in the mills. The shipowners want to go on during the recess hour, but we set our faces definitely against this; we have this rest hour so that they can get their rest, and, if necessary, get their meals.

A-6501. *Miss Power*: Are there any women employed by the Port Trust?—Only a few sweeper women, but not in the docks.

A-6502. Nor by the *toliwallas* either?—No.

A-6503. *Mr. Asvale*: In answer to Miss Power you stated that one representative of labour has been nominated to the Port Trust by Government. Since when?—(Mr. Neilson) Since the 1st April.

A-6504. Was the Act amended at that time?—No.

A-6505. The Act was amended in October?—I believe so.

A-6506. There was no representation of labour on the Port Trust till then?—After the 1st April it was done.

A-6507. Who is the present representative?—Mr. Syed Munawar, Secretary of the Indian Seamen's Union. Mr. Bakhale took his place when he went to Geneva.

A-6508. *Miss Power*: I want to know the type of man Government nominate. Is he a trade unionist?—They reserve that power to themselves; we have nothing to say to it.

A-6509. *Mr. Asavle*: You state that in the Railway Department the permanent labour force is 470, or 512 including locomotive and firemen. Is there any casual labour in this department?—(Mr. Neilson) There is some casual labour employed during seasons when seeds and cotton move.

A-6510. In regard to method of recruitment you state that the *toliwallas* act as bankers to their regular gangs. Do these *toliwallas* borrow money from the *baniyas* and *marwaris*?—You must ask the *toliwallas*.

A-6511. Are you aware of that?—I have no knowledge that the *toliwallas* borrow from the *baniyas*. We are not in the *toliwallas*' confidence to that extent.

A-6512. I know for certain that they borrow?—If you are certain, why ask me?

A-6513. I wanted to know whether your department was aware of it. You state that there is no need of a public employment agency. Do you not think that your department is a sort of public employment agency?—No; not public. It is only a system we have adopted.

A-6514. You charge a certain rate to the merchants on tonnage; but you do not pay the same rate to the *toliwallas* or the labourers.—Why should we? We have to pay our debt charges; we have to pay the whole of the overhead charges.

A-6515. Do you not think that you are acting as an agent taking commission out of the earnings of workers?—No; the rates we charge to the merchants have no connection with the rates we pay to the *toliwallas*.

A-6516. *The Chairman*: Your Trust, I take it, is not a profit-earning concern; all you have to do is to produce interest on your capital?—We have got to balance our budget; and what we charge our merchants has nothing to do with what we pay our *toliwallas*.

A-6517. *Mr. Asavle*: As regards the rents you charge for the workers' *chawls*, you state that the economic rent per room is Rs. 15 and the maximum rent you charge is Rs. 7-8-0. Do you not think that for the man earning Rs. 32, a rent of Rs. 7-8-0 is very high?—I think you understand the conditions as well as anybody, and I do not think you can say that one room is occupied by one single man; others occupy that room, and so he does not pay the whole of that rent. The second point is that for low-paid sweepers we charge Rs. 3-12-0, and the actual economic rent of that room is Rs. 15.

A-6518. *The Chairman*: You charge the ordinary workman half the economic rent and the sweepers one-quarter of the economic rent?—Yes.

A-6519. *Mr. Asavle*: Are you aware that the Municipality charge their employees as low as eight annas, ten annas or twelve annas?—Are you aware that we have a lot of free quarters and that we charge nothing at all for them?

A-6520. With regard to Workmen's Compensation you state: "It is considered that the party who employs and pays the workman should be responsible for the payment of compensation but the workman should be allowed to claim against the principal, leaving the latter to recover from the contractors." Is this the practice at present in force?—Yes; I think it is. That particular item has been a subject of very great legislation in England. A great amount of money has been spent on elucidating this particular point. We accept liability in all doubtful cases. We have gone as far as we possibly can, but we must, in the case of accidents happening to *stevedores* and labourers of that kind, be able to pass on the liability to the party directly employing the men.

A-6521. You state in relation to hours of work that in the Engineering Department it is 8½ hours. Do you not think that the same should be the case in all industries?—I do not think 8½ to 9 hours a day hurts anybody.

A-6522. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In your workshops and quarry you have 60 hours?—That is including overtime. That is the maximum.

A-6523. *Mr. Asavle*: You state in reference to your Port Department: "The majority of the crews of the Port Department flotilla live on board their vessels. The *lascars* of the Prince's, Victoria and Alexandra Docks are provided with free quarters at the Docks for their own use only but not for their families." Do you give any allowance for the families of these workers?—No; we pay the men.

A-6524. What about the families of the workers?—The workers do not all keep their families in Bombay.

A-6525. Do they not all keep their families in Bombay?—No, not this particular group.

A-6526. *Mr. Lalji*: With regard to the Engineering Department, you say, "When new men are required they are selected according to their experience and general suitability." Who makes this selection?—The Mechanical Superintendent and the Assistant Mechanical Superintendent.

A-6527. Do they themselves make the selection and not the *mukadams*?—The foreman makes the selection subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

A-6528. Is there any limit to the maximum weight that a labourer has to carry in the docks?—(Mr. Rich) The maximum weight that the bag carrying coolies take is 2 cwts. Rice is 1½ cwt. a bag.

A-6529. *Col. Russell*: In dealing with health you give a list of the number of patients that amounts to thousands in various dispensaries. Have you any malaria in your Port Trust area?—Yes. There is malaria all over Bombay. We take our own malaria preventive measures on which we spend a considerable amount of money. We even go outside our area in some cases. For instance, in the Ballard Estate which is under the care of the Municipality we have spent a good deal of money, which it is not necessary for us to do.

A-6530. Have you any method of co-operating with the Municipality in regard to the anti-malarial measures?—Yes. We really work under the Municipality and we are subject to the Municipality's direction. If they find an area on our estate breeding mosquitoes they write to us and tell us what measures we should take. They inspect our tanks and do all that sort of thing.

A-6531. Do you maintain a separate staff?—Yes, we do maintain a qualified doctor, called malaria officer. We have Doctor Pettigara with two assistants, coolies and so on.

A-6532. Has there been any considerable malaria in your area in recent years?—No. I should say that it has very considerably improved, particularly in the docks.

A-6533. And you are satisfied that the anti-malarial measures that you have carried out are effective?—Yes. If we had not carried them out, I feel certain that malaria would have been rampant in our area. We could not have relied on Municipal effort.

A-6534. In dealing with maternity benefits and the maternity home scheme, you say that the maternity home was opened on 16th November 1928. I understand that there was some difficulty in having that work started earlier. What was the difficulty?—We were unable to do any welfare work until a few years ago when the Act was amended. Under the old Act we had no powers to do any kind of welfare work. Since the Act has been amended, we have started a welfare fund which has its own revenues from various sources. In addition to this we allot so much a year from our general revenues. In this way we have allotted very considerable revenues to the welfare fund.

A-6535. Does the present Act give you sufficient powers to do all the welfare work you require?—Yes.

A-6536. In dealing with first-aid and medical relief you say that "the Trustees have under consideration the provision of first-aid boxes in the Docks." Is that consideration likely to be brought into effect within a reasonable time?—We have to train the men first of all. We told Government that we were prepared to do that. But Government did not follow that up. It does not appear to me to be necessary to go to the extent of training our men in the Docks for first-aid, when we have all the aid we could possibly require at a short call in the city. It is different on the Railway where you are at long distances from any medical aid.

A-6537. You say that "City ambulances are obtainable within 15 minutes of the occurrence of accidents in the Docks." But accidents may occur which may prove fatal within that time.—(Mr. Rich) When such an accident occurs the man is taken on board a ship and given first-aid there.

A-6538. Would it not be possible for you to train a number of your employees in first-aid work?—(Mr. Neilson) We could do that.

A-6539. Have you that under consideration?—No, not under our immediate consideration. (Mr. Bennet) We have been doing that in the past. It was done by our medical officer. We have made a start in that direction already.

A-6540. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are there not some men in your employ who are trained by the St. John Ambulance Association?—There are some in the employ of the railways.

A-8541. Most of the Railways train a percentage of their workers with the St. John Ambulance Association?—Yes.

A-8542. Do you not think it would be a good plan to have a certain percentage of your men trained in the same way?—Yes, I do most decidedly. As I explained before, the necessity is greater on a railway system than on a Dock system where you have trained men at a very short call. I quite agree that it would be a very good idea.

A-8543. Would you therefore arrange to train some of your officers under the St. John Ambulance Association, so that the men might be trained later on?—Yes, we could do that.

A-8544. *Mr. Cliff*: In the introductory to your memorandum you say: "Temporary (including dock labour) 10,000". What is the figure of dock labour included in this 10,000?—(Mr. Rich). The dock labour averages about 3,500. It varies from 2,000 to 5,000. About 80 per cent. of that is casual.

A-8545. You have an average of 6,600 men employed in the Engineering Department, an average of 3,500 in the Docks department and some more men in the Railway and other departments. In this connection you say that 20 per cent. of the men employed in the Docks Department are permanent. Do they get any preference for employment?—If these men turn up, they are taken up regularly throughout the year.

A-8546. Are they employed on any labour covered by *toliwallas*?—No, they are more or less on miscellaneous jobs off the quays, for instance, tidying up cargo, making room, re-stacking and all that sort of thing.

A-8547. Would there be 20 per cent. of 3,500 employed on that class of work?—Yes, including the scavenging side.

A-8548. With regard to the 10,000 workers, is there any specific reason why more of them have not been put on the permanent roster?—I can only speak for the 3,500, that come in my department. As far as I can see, there is no point in making them permanent. (Mr. Bennet): They are on the Provident Fund after three years' service. They practically get all the benefits they would get by being permanent. They get 14 days' leave in the year, provident fund, sick benefits, medical attendance and so on. There are no further privileges they would get by being on the permanent register.

A-8549. Are these daily rated men paid monthly?—(Mr. Neilson) The workshops are daily rated paid monthly. The others are paid monthly. "Permanent", you notice, is in inverted commas.

A-8550. Is there any specific reason why they are not on the permanent staff?—(Mr. Bennet). The labour is floating. We take on men as we require them and dispense with them.

A-8551. I notice that you have a good number of men offering for employment. Do you keep a register of the men offering for employment?—No.

A-8552. What will be the approximate number of men offering for employment on the docks?—I am afraid I cannot give an approximate idea.

A-8553. It appears that in the different departments the demands for labour fluctuate very considerably. Have you any suggestion with regard to the under-employment that should consequently be the result?—(Mr. Neilson). No. I do not think we have. We want a certain amount of labour and we are able to get them. We cannot employ men unless we have work for them. There is the seasonal work generally in the Port Trust. We do not take on so many men in the monsoon months.

A-8554. Have you any suggestion for making an allowance in case of unemployment?—No, it is for Government to do that.

A-8555. Have you any suggestion for payment during sickness, other than the 14 days in the year which is for all purposes?—No.

A-8556. Dealing with the labour turnover in the Docks department you say: "When age prohibits heavy manual labour, the majority retire to their village holdings giving way to younger men who take their places. Their old age is, therefore, automatically provided for by the custom of the country." Has your Board taken any active interest in this majority who retire to their village holdings?—No, once they retire, our active interest ceases.

A-8557. And you could not give us any information as to their condition after they retire?—No.

A-8558. You answered a question of Mr. Clow about control over the stevedores' gear?—Yes.

A-6559. In dealing with safety you say : " The precautions already adopted in the Port Trust docks have been compared with the regulations detailed in the section of the English Factory Act which is applicable to dock workers and it is found that, with the exception of (1) compulsory chain sling testing and (2) the provision of first-aid outfits, at various centres in the docks, this Administration is observing the English rules in all essentials." Do I understand that your Board proposes to control the stevedores' gear ?—You will find it set out in this letter that we were quite willing to do that. It is for Government to legislate that it should be done.

A-6560. Have you any power under the present Act to enforce certain rules ?—Not in regard to the compulsory chain sling testing of stevedores' chains.

A-6561. Could you make that a condition at the moment ?—No, not without legislation.

A-6562. Is it desirable that it should be done ?—We have already said yes.

A-6563. In your letter to the Under Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Marine Department, you say : " It will also be observed that in respect of certain processes, principally those connected with the handling of cargo, the trustees through the medium of their bye-laws have powers and exercise those powers to ensure a reasonable factor of safety." I read that as giving you the necessary power ?—(Mr. Rich). Stevedores are licensed by the trustees before they are allowed to operate on the Docks. Presumably under the terms of this licence we could enforce some regulations on them. We are now enforcing some regulations on them in the Docks by-laws. Our opinion is that we cannot enforce further regulations without legislative assistance.

A-6564. When I was in the chain testing shop the other day, I looked at the register and I found that the chains of a contractor had been tested.—Practically all the stevedores send their chain slings to be tested voluntarily.

A-6565. I noticed that you tested yours after three months' service, but that was not the case as far as the stevedores were concerned. They took longer periods. I was told that you proposed to compel them to do that earlier.—Yes, but not until legislative assistance is given to us.

A-6566. *The Chairman* : Are you asking for this legislative assistance ?—(Mr. Neilson). Government asked us whether it would be advisable, and we said, " Yes, distinctly."

A-6567. Dealing with first-aid and medical relief you say that " City ambulances are obtainable within 15 minutes of the occurrence of accidents in the Docks." That is 15 minutes if they come promptly ?—That is the maximum.

A-6568. Is it not possible for you to have motor transport for that purpose ?—Motor ambulances are maintained by the Municipality and we pay them a contribution towards that. We cannot both pay for the motor ambulances and keep one ourselves, any more than we can keep a fire brigade.

A-6569. In dealing with the hours worked per day and per week in the Railway Department, you set out the various percentages of workers who work, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 14 hours a day. You say that the " workers are not normally on call after doing the above hours of duty until their turn again falls due." Do these, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 14 hours include the actual working time or do they include the spread-over also. Or in other words, is the work fairly completed in one spell, or is it spread over ?—I do not know what that means. If the work is of a long spell it would be of a light and intermittent nature.

A-6570. Are the hours referred to actually the hours of work ?—I think they are the actual hours of working time.

A-6571. As regards the days worked per week in the Railway Department you say that " 7 days are normally worked per week." Have you power to alter the conditions of work on the railways without the permission of the Railway Board ?—I do not think we could. Under the Railway Act, the regulations that are passed by the Railway Board also apply to us.

A-6572. You say further on that " the application of an International Labour Convention is still under the consideration of the Government of India and has not yet been applied throughout the Railways." Have you the power to alter the conditions on your railways without reference to the Railway Board ?—I suppose we have, but we would not do it.

A-6573. Have you made any recommendations to the Railway Board ?—We do not correspond with the Railway Board.

A-6574. May I take it that for all practical purposes the power to alter the 7 days lies with you ?—We might have the power, but it would not be possible for us to do it unless the Railways themselves did it.

A-6575. Why do you say that ?—We get all our wagons from the railways. They work 7 days and we have to work in with them.

A-6576. I understand that some railways are in process of altering and others have altered ?—Yes.

A-6577. Surely the schedule of duties is a matter for your Board and not for the Railway Company ?—We have to consider the traffic, if the Great Indian Peninsula and the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railways work 7 days and put in wagons, they come under demurrage, and if we are working only 6 days, it means a great expense to us.

A-6578. The question of meeting the traffic is a question of adjusting the schedule of duties to meet the traffic ?—Yes.

A-6579. The question of clearing up traffic and the question of 7-day week surely depend on the supply of a sufficient number of crews to clear the traffic ?—That does not affect the principle of a 7-day week. It might mean increasing your yards to hold the stuff that comes in which you do not clear on the day you do not work.

A-6580. If you are going to deal with the traffic that you are dealing with to-day, on a 6-day week, you would either have to increase the hours of daily duty or increase the number of men employed. That has nothing to do with the capacity of the yard at all ?—(Mr. Bennet) Do you mean to say that we could actually work 7 days in the week without making every man work 7 days ?

A-6581. That is the whole point ?—We could get additional gang of men, so that each man does 6 days in a week, while work goes on all the 7 days in the week.—(Mr. Neilson) That could be done.

A-6582. Have you the power ? Are you considering the question of reduction of the 7 day-week ?—No.

A-6583. With regard to the men employed in the Port Department, do they work seven days a week ?—Yes.

A-6584. Are there any statutory regulations with regard to their employment and conditions of work ?—No, they come under our own regulations.

A-6585. Do they not come under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act ?—No.

A-6586. In regard to prevailing rates of wages of dock labourers you say, "From inspection of some of the *toliwallas*' wages accounts, it appears that the dock labourers' earnings (including overtime) are about Rs. 32 per man." With regard to their hours of work, if cargo is being loaded or unloaded do the men go straight on from day to night work ? Do they work overtime in loading and unloading ?—(Mr. Rich) Yes, casually, but not regularly.

A-6587. With regard to the 20 per cent. of the staff, it appears that the men work 6 days a week, plus 1½ nights a week giving 6 nights a month. Do men engaged in loading or unloading go straight on working overtime or is there any limit to the time that they may work ?—There is no limit laid down. They have their own limit. If a ship is working continuously day and night, the ordinary amount of work that a gang coolie does is a day, a night and a day ; and the next night he takes off.

A-6588. How many hours does that work out to ?—About 25 working hours not including breaks.

A-6589. Are there any added rates for overtime ?—No, they get the same rates as for day wages.

A-6590. What period of rest will follow a period of work of that character ?—They probably come on to work on the third day after having a night off. But it must be remembered that working at nights, they put in a certain amount of rest while the work is supposed to be going on. In other words, the gang is much larger than is absolutely required for the work. One or two men are off having rest, while the others are on. They work round in a sort of cycle.

A-6591. How many *toliwallas* do you employ at the port ; what does your register of *toliwallas* show ?—(Mr. Rich) We have got about 40 or 50 *toliwallas* on our register.

A-6592. Do you control the *toliwallas* employed by the stevedores ?—No.

A-6593. You employ 40 or 50 *toliwallas*. Can you tell us how many gangs those *toliwallas* have ?—As I have already answered, they vary from two gangs to ten or twelve gangs under each *toliwalla*.

A-6594. Is it possible for you to give us a list of the piece-work rates that you pay to *toliwallas* ?—Yes.

A-6595. Can we see three examples of rice, and of cotton and of sugar loaded, with the rate you pay and the time it takes to load them ?—Yes.

A-6596. Do I understand that it is a 30 days month that you operate on the engineering department ?—(Mr. Neilson) Yes, for the purpose of working out the pay.

A-6597. For the purpose of calculating over-time in the case of monthly-rated staff, you divide the monthly rate of pay by 30, though they work for less than 30 days. Therefore it would be underpaying the man for over-time by dividing the pay by 30 ?—That is what the trustees decided upon.

A-6598. Is that to discourage over-time or to encourage it ?—No, not to discourage it.

A-6599. Are they on call for 30 days in a month ?—Yes, if they are required.

A-6600. Are they actually required ?—Not always; we make every endeavour to work a six-day week.

A-6601. My point is that though these men are paid monthly they really work for 26 days, but when you pay them for over-time you divide the pay by 30 and not by 26, thus giving them less ?—I think that 30 is quite a fair division.

A-6602. In your memorandum you deal with representations from the unions. May I ask whether the union representatives are present during the investigation ?—They ask permission to put before us what they want to say, and they come and see us; we listen to what they have got to say and argue it out; but they are not present during investigations.

A-6603. With reference to Trade Disputes Act you say: "The Trustees have expressed to Government the opinion that the Major Port Administrations should be included in the category of Public Utility Services." If there is a dispute over the dismissal of one of your employees, will you be in favour of referring it to a third party ?—If we consider that we are right, we do not think it is necessary to refer it to a third party; but if there is a likelihood of a strike or there is a strike, we have no objection to refer the case to a third party under the Trades Disputes Act.

A-6604. We cannot take your opinion as to the rightness or otherwise of a dispute because you would be one of the parties. Are you prepared, in the event of a dispute over a dismissal, to refer to the decision of a third party ?—If the party wishes to refer we would not object.

A-6605. Are you prepared to say, in conjunction with this demand, that they shall be referred ?—If we think we are in the right in dismissing a man, for instance, if his work is unsatisfactory or we have no work for him, we consider the matter as finished. If the other party in such cases wants to act under the Trade Disputes Act, we would object because there is no matter in dispute.

A-6606. That is not my point. If there is a dispute arising not on account of the actual stoppage of labour but on account of the dismissal of a member of your staff, are you prepared to get this power for reference to a third party ?—Under the Trade Disputes Act ?

A-6607. No, not under the Trade Disputes Act, but if you ask for a new clause as a corollary to your demand ?—In every case ?

A-6608. No; let us take two cases. Firstly, in the case of a dispute with regard to the dismissal, and secondly, with regard to the conditions that might be the subject of application for improvement ?—We will agree to the latter in that particular case.

A-6609. In the case of a dispute arising out of a dismissal, are you prepared to refer the matter to a third party ?—Not if we consider that we were justified.

A-6610. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say: "For work done beyond the ordinary working hours the crews are paid over-time." Do you keep a register ?—We have got to keep a register.

A-6611. Do you pay them daily or monthly ?—Monthly.

A-6612. Do you give them any provident fund or gratuity ?—We pay them what is due under the rules.

A-6613. Suppose a man leaves you after 20 years' service; do you pay him any pension ?—Our service is non-pensionable.

A-6614. Do you give them any leave ?—Yes, 14 days' leave with full pay.

A-6615. Besides these 14 days, do you give them Sundays ?—(Mr. Bennet) We have already said that they have one day off in seven days according to the actual work that has to be carried out.

A-6616. Do you maintain a register of those men who work over-time?—(Mr. Neilson) All over-time is marked down, otherwise you would not know how much to pay.

A-6617. You say in your memorandum: "There are no fixed hours of work for the crews of the vessels comprised in the Port Department flotilla. They are called for duty at any time during the day or night as required but in the ordinary course their working hours in the aggregate do not exceed 8 hours per diem." Do you mean to say that a man working in the port department does not work more than the scheduled hours of work?—If we take it all round he does not.

A-6618. I understand that sometimes they work for 16 hours; is there any register maintained showing how many hours they work?—No.

A-6619. As they are called for duty at any time during the day or night, it follows that sometimes they work more than the scheduled hours?—May be, but certainly they are not over-worked; as we have said in our memorandum, their working hours in the aggregate do not exceed 8 hours a day.

A-6620. But sometimes they work longer than 8 hours?—Yes; but sometimes they do not work at all.

A-6621. Are the men who work in the port department paid monthly or are they daily-rated men?—They are paid monthly.

A-6622. Do men who are on daily rate system get the benefit of 14 days' leave?—In the workshops the daily-rated men get 14 days' leave with full pay.

A-6623. When a worker leaves your service do you give him a testimonial?—Yes, if he is a good worker and has worked for a certain time.

A-6624. Do you keep a record of service?—Yes, certainly.

A-6625. Can you send us a statement showing how many men worked for how many years and what amount of provident fund or gratuity you allowed them at the time of their leaving service?—I think it will be a fairly expensive investigation.

A-6626. In your memorandum you say: "Suitable accommodation is provided as necessary on Dredging Craft. Rations are not provided but cooks, cooking utensils, stoves and fuel for cooking are provided." Can you tell us what the cost of accommodation is?—You mean the cost of accommodation on board a dredger?

A-6627. Yes?—I can tell you the cost of a dredger but not the cost of accommodation on board the dredger.

A-6628. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When we were at Karachi we found that the stevedores supplied men on board the ship and were paid by the shipping agents; the stevedores also supplied men on the docks for whom they were paid by the dock authorities. In the course of the discussion it was suggested that those stevedores' men on the docks should be paid departmentally, that is, by the Trust. I think it was said that is what is being done in Bombay, but, as I understand it, 80 per cent. of your dock labour is recruited through the *toliwallas*?—(Mr. Rich) Dock labour is entirely separate from the stevedores.

A-6629. At Karachi the stevedores supply men both on the ships and on the docks, and you do not do that here in Bombay?—In Bombay, the stevedores supply men on board and the Port Trust does the whole of the shore work.

A-6630. Who recruits the men on the docks?—The Port Trust labour is recruited through *toliwallas*.

A-6631. You do not take the men on your register?—No; we only have the *toliwallas* on our register.

A-6632. Do you pay the *toliwallas* any retaining fee or are they paid on contract?—We pay them on the tonnage basis.

A-6633. Quite true, but supposing they are doing no work?—They may not be doing manual work but they have to supervise the gangs; they have to drive them, so to speak, to see that they do work properly.

A-6634. What I am trying to get at is this: You pay on piece-work to the *toliwalla* who has a certain number of men under him; supposing the *toliwalla* does not get work, you do not pay any wages at all?—No.

A-6635. So that, really as far as you are concerned, the *toliwalla* is a contractor who supplies men to you and you have no control over the rate of wages he pays to his men or the period he makes his men work?—We have a certain amount of control, because if he grinds his men down we interfere.

A-6636. How can you know that?—Because the men in that case will complain to us.

A-6637. In your memorandum you have suggested certain amendments to the Trade Unions Act, 1926; you say: "It seems desirable to lay down that before a Union can be officially registered it must show that its membership constitutes an adequate proportion of the class of workers whom it purports to represent." As far as the labour working under the *toliwallas* is concerned they may or may not be members of the union at all?—(Mr. Neilson) There are at the moment 2,000 or 3,000 well-contented workers.

A-6638. But they are not your employees and you can have no control over the men either through the union or otherwise?—If the *toliwallas* have any dispute amongst themselves they come to us to help them in settling their differences; the men particularly come to us.

A-6639. With regard to trade disputes you say: "The Trustees have expressed to Government the opinion that the Major Port Administration should be included in the category of Public Utility Services." But can the Government do that under the Trade Disputes Act?—They can notify us; it takes 3 months to do it.

A-6640. Provision is made in section 2 (g) of that Act for a railway service being notified, but do you suggest that because you do a certain amount of railway work that would be a sufficient excuse to get you included for all your departments as a public utility service?—We pointed out to Government that we considered all the ports were public utility services; but I see that under the existing Act we cannot be classified as a public utility service except as regards our railway service.

A-6641. Therefore you depend entirely on the same law as the ordinary employer so far as that is concerned?—Yes.

A-6642. Appendix I to your memorandum, which deals with conditions of recognition of labour unions, contains nothing that would entitle the *toliwalla* men to come to you and ask for recognition of their union?—No, we can only recognize unions of men who are actually on our paysheets.

A-6643. I suppose the *toliwallas'* men come to over 2,000?—Yes, fully.

A-6644. The work of your port is entirely dependent upon their being available, and yet you have made no provision for recognizing any union in the event of any trouble arising?—No, we have not, but if they formed a union amongst themselves and came to us with any dispute, that union was registered, we would deal with it.

A-6645. If the *toliwallas'* men go on strike or there is any trouble with regard to them, there is no provision for regulation of that. In paragraph 6 of Appendix I you say: "All representations should be submitted in writing to the Chairman. Should it be mutually agreed that a discussion is desirable, the Chairman or the Staff Sub-Committee of the Trustees will meet a deputation." That means that if you do not choose to agree, the union as a union cannot come to you in that connection?—That is right; we must have that discretion; as a matter of fact, in all cases where they ask for an interview it is granted to them, but there might be cases where their contentions were absolutely incorrect. The rules are framed on the rules adopted by the Railways.

A-6646. Who dismisses a man on your railway service?—The Railway Manager.

A-6647. What right of appeal has a man in the event of being dismissed?—He can appeal direct to me.

A-6648. If a man is dismissed in the workshop, what is his right of appeal?—Any man in the Port Trust can appeal direct to me after he has left the service.

A-6649. Suppose the manager makes up his mind to dismiss somebody, has the man a right of appeal to you before he is dismissed?—He can, provided it comes through the proper channel, that being through his department up to me. Anybody has the right to do that.

A-6650. In your memorandum you say: "No victimization or intimidation of employees who are not members of the union shall be countenanced by the union." Does that imply that victimization or intimidation of employees who are members of the union shall be countenanced by the union? I mean if they consider there has been victimization, whether it has been the case or not, can the union come to you about it?—As a general case, yes, always.

A-6651. As an individual case?—As an individual case, it is at my discretion.

A-6652. Do you not think it would be advisable in the case even of individuals who had been dismissed that you should allow the union to help the man to prepare his case,

and, if necessary, allow a union official to accompany the man before you?—Yes, if I thought it necessary, but the man if he is dismissed is dismissed for very good cause, and his reasons are given either by a pleader or by the union; he does not draft them. It comes up to me, it is investigated thoroughly and a reply is sent.

A-6653. You do not allow a personal interview?—If the man wants a personal interview I should certainly give it.

A-6654. If a man wants to be accompanied not by a pleader but by an officer of the union, would you allow it?—I do not think so, not if there was a clear case; if there was any doubt about it perhaps I might.

A-6655. But if you allow the man to have the right to have his case prepared by a pleader or a union, and allow the man as an individual to come before you, why not equally allow the man to be accompanied by the officer of the union when he comes before you? Are you afraid as to your case, or what?—No, I am not afraid of anything; it is a very much larger question. The difficulty is that he may be accompanied by a trade union official who knows nothing about the work or service.

A-6656. Then what is the kind of thing you will allow the union to do for the men?—The union can always represent a grievance which concerns a class of employees.

A-6657. You also allow them to help to prepare individual cases?—We cannot prevent that.

A-6658. Why do you not go a stage further and allow the union official to accompany the man when he appears before you?—We probably will later on, but in the present state of composition of the trade unions it is neither feasible nor practical.

A-6659. Do you not think that is the type of thing which would enable the trade union officials to show their men that they are getting some value for their money?—I do. I would welcome it if it were possible, and I would welcome it if I could deal directly with the men themselves without the intervention of the trade union officials who are outsiders. If the trade union officials were our own men, I would deal with them every time.

A-6660. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you not think the weekly system of paying wages would be of help to the employees?—No.

A-6661. Have you any reasons for that opinion?—Only practical reasons.

A-6662. You say: "The Chairman will supply the union with a copy of the Port Trust rules regulating the conditions of service, leave, gratuities, Provident Fund and such other subjects as may concern the interests of the members of the union." Are such rules printed or typed?—Yes, of course we have printed rules.

A-6663. Have you supplied them to the union?—So far as I know, yes.

A-6664. *Mr. Cliff*: What are the grounds of your objection to your union being allied with similar classes of workers, say at Karachi?—We are only dealing with our own men; there is no object in dealing with members of the Karachi Port Trust.

A-6665. Will you look at Appendix I, paragraph 2?—Yes, that conforms with the registration of this union.

A-6666. *Mr. Ahmed*: With regard to accidents, you told Mr. Clow you had a technical investigator to look into the cause?—Not our technical adviser; I said the Police technical adviser.

A-6667. Who is he?—The Police medical officer. In the case of a fatal accident the Police surgeon sees to the cause of death.

A-6668. The *toliwallas* are recognized persons?—Yes.

A-6669. It is they who bring the labour to work at the docks?—Yes.

A-6670. You know they have a certain fixed rate of percentage which they obtain from the workers?—I do not understand.

A-6671. What do they get out of the workers?—I do not know; you had better ask them.

A-6672. But you know he does not do his work without any remuneration?—Would you do your work without remuneration?

Mr. Ahmed: That is the reason why I say that. Then you admit he gets something, but you do not know what that is.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
THIRTY-FIRST MEETING
BOMBAY

Tuesday, 3rd December 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KAMIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col., A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
(*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOOSMINBHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C. }
Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } *Lady Assessors.*
Mrs. K. WAGE. }
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
Mr. A. DIBDIN. }

**Mr. F. STONES, Superintendent of Mills, E. D. Sassoon
and Co., Ltd., Bombay.**

A-6673. *The Chairman* : How many mills do you control ?—Fourteen in all, two of which are up-country.

A-6674. How many workers are employed ?—Including the up-country [mills, about 25,000. In Bombay 22,000.

A-6675. I gather that you are the Superintendent generally of the work of the whole of this group of mills ?—Yes. I am directly responsible to the Board of Directors and Agents of these mills. Under me I have a staff of Assistant Superintendents who are individually responsible for small sections of the plant, but they all come to me for orders. The Directors' orders and instructions are passed to them through me.

A-6676. Those Assistant Superintendents are one in each mill, are they?—No. There are five Assistant Superintendents—two Spinning, two Weaving and one Chemist.

A-6677. That is the Technical Division, I take it. Is there, in addition to that, a manager in each mill ?—There is a Manager and also an Assistant Manager in each mill.

A-6678. And the Manager in each mill is the person responsible for the general conduct of the mill, apart from technical questions ?—Yes.

A-6679. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How long have you been in Bombay ?—Twenty years.

A-6680. How long have you been in your present position ?—Nine years.

A-6681. Before that how long were you with Messrs. Wadia ?—Ten years.

A-6682. Will you tell us how our new system compares with various other systems in other parts of the world ?—As far as our own firm is concerned the new system is merely a development of old ideas put into practice. We found we were in intense competition with Japan. We had to meet that competition. We found it was much easier to raise wages than to lower them. My own personal opinion was that it was almost impossible to lower wages in Bombay. We therefore studied the problem with a view to raising the standard of living and raising the pay of the operative, asking in return the operative to do a little more work, we making the work easier. We found, after about two years, that similar movements were going on in Japan and in the United States, also latterly

in England. An interesting article appears in the *Manchester Guardian* (Commercial) of October the 31st, page 515. This article describes the scheme, which was conceived twelve months ago, and, strange to say, it adopts practically in toto the same methods which we have adopted in the weaving sheds of the Manchester and Apollo Mills. In this English scheme they raised the number of looms from 4 to 8; they raised the employees' wage from 42 s. to 50 s. less $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and they provided the same type of help. I understand that has been successful. It was conducted in association with trade unions, with their consent and under their supervision. Whether it will be extended is a matter for further consideration, but the extension of that system at Burnley is under definite consideration. The conditions in Burnley were the same as existed in Bombay, namely, that the industry would simply have gone out of existence unless something had been done.

A-8683. Can you give us some idea as to the comparative wages, in actual rupees, of a spinner and weaver on the old system and on the new system?—On the old system a spinner received about Rs. 26 to 29. To-day he is getting from Rs. 38 to 40. A weaver on the old system got from Rs. 48 to 52. On three looms to-day he can go up to Rs. 64 or 65 and on four looms he can go up to Rs. 72 or a little over.

A-8684. In your memorandum you give comparative figures of Japanese costs and various systems in Bombay. How much advantage per pound of standard cloth would you say the Japanese have over the present Bombay system?—The table mentioned refers purely to weaving. In this connection I think it would be very useful for the Commission to have a list similar to this, amplified with the latest information. With the permission of the Commission I propose to tender later a list showing a standard mill of 30,000 spindles and 800 looms, giving the Japanese production and wages as shown by the report of Mr. Pearce. It has been very difficult in the past to get really accurate information about Japan. My firm sent me to Japan in 1923, but I could not get any really honest authentic information on which I could base any practical results. Since then we have had the Reports of the American Trade Commissioners; we have had the Report of the British Trade Commissioner; we have had a report compiled by a lady who was sent by the *Manchester Guardian*. We have had the Report of the Fine Yarn Association; and finally we have had the excellent report of Mr. Pearce. The figures in this report before you have been compiled from the various sources available. But they ought to be brought up-to-date on the lines suggested, using Mr. Pearce's information about Japan as the basis. Alongside that I propose to put the present Bombay standard, that is to say, as the average Bombay mill is working to-day; as the new scheme is working to-day; the Bombay scheme under the amended standardized list; the new scheme as amended by the standardized list, the Ahmedabad mills, and a typical up-country mill in an area where wages are notoriously low. If it will be of any use to the Commission I will have all that worked out. The biggest factor is not the wage but the wage rate itself. We often find that where we are paying a higher wage rate we get a low output through our own fault. On the other hand, a lower wage rate may mean a good output if the material is satisfactory.

The Chairman: I think your suggestion would be most helpful if you will prepare that information for us.

A-8685. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You might also in that statement put down the comparative costs of the finished article, both yarn and cloth, including the Japanese cost of freight and present import duty?—Would you prefer Bombay or Calcutta in that connection. Calcutta is the most intensive market which we have to meet?

A-8686. Yes, Calcutta. You are of the opinion that it would be feasible to arrange for payments after a delay of only six days instead of from ten to fourteen. On what grounds do you say that the delay should only be six days, and is that under present conditions or subject to the standardization scheme going through?—Frankly, I think I am overstating the ability of the industry when I put it at six days. I think eight days would be better. It will be easier if the standardization scheme goes through, and when there is a consolidation of the dear food allowance. The trouble is that we have so many columns. We have the base wage, the number of days and so on, the allowance on that, deductions for *chawl* rents, grain allowances, and similar deductions. Altogether it makes a very big task of what in England is a matter of two hours' work. Personally I would rather recommend the 10th, with this proviso. It often happens, when a big Native holiday falls somewhere near the date for payment, that we are requested to *ante-date* the wages one or two days. If we put down the 8th, and if there is a holiday on the 5th, it is fairly certain that we shall be asked to pay on the 4th. Therefore in suggesting the 10th, I am allowing for a margin of two days for the wage to be *ante-dated* in the event of a national holiday.

A-6687. *The Chairman* : Would you agree to a provision that, if the wages continue to be paid monthly, the law should be not more than ten days ?—Yes.

A-6688. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do you think that could be done by all the mills ?—It would necessitate extra staff in the case of one or two mills, but if it is considered an advantage, I personally would offer no objection. Quite a number of the mills would be able to do it and the small mills would have to follow suit.

A-6689. There is a certain amount of support given to the principle that the industry should be responsible for certain benefits to labour. It is suggested by some that there should be inaugurated, if not now in the end, sickness benefit, unemployment benefit and welfare work generally; and that at any rate part of the cost should be paid by the employers, if not all the cost. What are your views on that ?—Every one desires to ameliorate the lot of labour, but unfortunately I am placed in charge of a group of mills situated in an industry which is really in a terrible condition, and I do not think it is possible for the local industry to maintain employment to-day at the enhanced wage rates and at the same time pay these charges for insurance, welfare and similar work. The industry is in a really bad way, and all these "littles" make a lot. Given a decent working margin between the cost of production and the selling price, there would be no objection to putting these schemes into force experimentally or in a small way, bearing in mind the conditions which exist in India as compared with those which exist in other countries. My feeling is best expressed by an article appearing in the *Manchester Guardian* of 8th November. It is an extract from the Ludwig Mond Lecture by Mr. J. M. Keynes. Referring to these various improvements for the bettering of the working classes in the shape of additional welfare work as compared with higher wages it reads as follows :—

"In the decade before the war a movement began in this direction in the shape of insurance, free education, and so forth. Since the war that has gone a great deal farther, particularly in the increase of pensions, increased insurances, subsidies to working class houses, and so on. He suggested that the working classes should be given these things out of taxes. In short, we ought not to starve the goose that laid the golden eggs before we had discovered how to replace that goose. We must tax the eggs of that goose instead."

My feeling personally is that in Bombay we have been the goose. We have had our eggs taken from us before we have had time to hatch them, and we do feel that in regard to these schemes a burden is being put upon us without any response from the other direction in assisting us to tide over what is a most critical and difficult time.

A-6690. Generally speaking, you think that this welfare should be paid for out of the general taxation of the country and should not be made a burden on the industry ?—That is so.

A-6691. What are your views on the development of the relations between the employers and labour in that industry ?—The outstanding necessity undoubtedly in Bombay is the organization of a trade union in which labour will recognize its responsibility, and which will be as responsive to public opinion as the highly organized employers are. I would work might and main for the establishment of such a union. When I was in Lancashire running mills there I had my little disputes with the union; but what happened? A telephone message came through; "Hello Bill! I want to discuss this wage with you." Bill came along and we had a little confab. If we could not settle the matter it went up to the masters. There was never any ill feeling. The work-people had means of access to me and I had means of access to the work-people. It would be one of the proudest moments of my life to see established in Bombay a trade union on that basis; but I do stress the point that whatever trade unions are organized they should assume responsibility for reducing the cost of labour and increasing the individual wage at the same time. That should be done by organizing the members with a view to eliminating from the industry practices restrictive to output in the organization. Day by day the jobber is being eliminated. We have been quietly making experiment in our own mills. There is hardly a mill in which I have not eliminated a jobber here and there. I cannot do too much. I have to let the man leave and not fill his position. Jobbers are going out. Their power is being broken. Their power still exists, and exists even worse in the way of bribery to-day than it has been for some time, because the amount of unemployment is greater, and bribery is creeping back. But the jobbers are going definitely. We have got rid of at least 15 to 20.

A-6692. Out of how many ?—Out of more than 1,000; but we are replacing these jobbers. We are studying two methods of doing so. The first is by utilizing a clerk in the Department seeing whether we can make him play the game with the work-people and with us and assume the responsibility which the jobber has hitherto taken. Secondly,

we are trying in two of our other mills to train young work-people. We have taken children of the lower middle classes or of the middle classes and trained them as work-people. We have paid their wages for six or eight months and made them into workmen and have then promoted them. Whether either or both of these two methods will be successful in eliminating jobbers, I do not yet know. But we are making the attempt. I may be a dreamer, but I do think the day will come, if you postulate a union like that, when we shall be handing out economy dividend tickets to the work-people, in regard to which 50 per cent. of the saving in stores will be given with the wage each month. That is the line of development, which I personally would like to see continue.

A-6693. All these changes can only come very slowly?—Too slowly for me. I am getting to the end of my tether and I want to see the result, but I am afraid I shall not.

A-6694. How long, for instance, did it take to bring in the new system?—We were fully 2½ or 3 years experimenting. I remember coming out to India 22 years ago with the enthusiasm of youth, and I said to myself "My fortune is made. I will have them weaving jacquards within six months." But it took me 20 years to see one thousand jacquards working in India. It is very slow progress.

A-6695. When did we first recognize trade unions?—The question of the recognition of trade unions never really came up as such. Whenever we had a letter either from the people or from a trade union or from a man posing as a workmen's self-help society we have always met them. Even the admittedly Bolshevik trade unions have had access to me, and also to the Managing Directors of the firm.

A-6696. Have you ever had any objection to seeing a workman who appeals to you with the trade union official?—None whatever.

A-6697. You have no objection to the trade union official acting as the advocate of the worker?—Personally I prefer it.

A-6698. What are your views with regard to the formation of works councils?—I was in favour of it, but I have always feared that the lack of education would be the biggest bar to their success. The crying need is education, and it is the lack of education which is in the way of a successful works council. I watched the working of the works councils in the Standard Mills, when I was Manager of the Textile and Spring Mills, and I noticed that they developed very quickly into nothing else but councils demanding higher wages. I remember one instance in 1920. I received information that a strike was due to take place on the following Monday at the Standard Mills. I went over to my friend, the late Mr. Welsh, and I said "Jim, you are going to have trouble on Monday." He said "I do not think so. I had a meeting with the works council in this respect yesterday and they did not say anything about it." Nevertheless the strike started like a spark. Not a man turned up. It was all organized. The works council in that case afforded no help whatever. Then at a later date these councils have developed into nothing more or less than Soviet councils, and usurped the functions of the management. While I am willing to look with a very favourable eye on any experiment which anybody else would make in this connection, I prefer to wait for them to make the experiment, and if it is successful I will jump in with both feet.

A-6699. But your own view is that we should work closely with the trade union?—I prefer the trade union every time.

A-6700. When you were in the Bombay Dyeing Mills you worked shifts of 8 hours. Those mills were the most efficient in Bombay?—Yes.

A-6701. What was your experience in the matter of production when the hours were reduced from 12 to 10, and then from 10 to 8?—When they were reduced from 12 to 10 we lost production in direct proportion. When we dropped from 10 to 8 we lost production in direct proportion again.

A-6702. In other words, you got 8/10ths of your previous production?—That is so, due to the fact that the mill was working at peak even on 10 hours.

A-6703. *Mr. Clow*: But you were working two shifts?—Yes, two shifts of 8 hours instead of one shift of 10 hours.

A-6704. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Was there any difference between your night shifts and day shifts with respect to production?—To commence with a good deal, later on very little.

A-6705. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Was that spinning and weaving?—Yes.

A-6706. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In most other mills the big drop in production was in spinning and not in weaving, whereas in these two mills the drop was in both?—Yes.

A-6707. Can you say why your experience differed from that of other mills in Bombay where they got a drop in production on the spinning but did not get it on the weaving?—The point was that that mill was working from 82 to 84 per cent efficiency, not even allowing for cleaning. We had the best weavers in Bombay and they were working right at peak.

A-6708. So you would say that where your efficiency is great you would expect a drop in production, but where your efficiency is low it might be caught up?—A great deal of it might be caught up, particularly in the up-country mills.

A-6709. Do you allow money-lenders in the compounds of your mills?—Never.

A-6710. Did you find that that has interfered with your getting labour? It has been suggested that if money-lenders are not allowed in the compounds of the mills there is difficulty in getting labour?—I have deliberately driven these money-lenders outside the gates, and the workers have expressed their thanks to me.

A-6711. Can you make any suggestions as to how to break the power of these money-lenders?—We have experimented with co-operative credit societies. We have assisted in the matter to the best of our power. Unfortunately they always tend to get into the hands of a clique, and we have had to take more control and get in outsiders. That is one method. Then we have had under consideration the question of granting loans, after the workman has worked eight days after pay day to the extent of $\frac{1}{3}$ of his pay. The interest would be what is now standard in Bombay, namely, three pies per rupee, but such sums obtained from interest would be earmarked for welfare work.

A-6712. So that the profits that you would make from making advances of wages would come back to the workers in the shape of welfare work?—Yes.

A-6713. *Mr. Cliff*: How long have the millowners been demanding a strong and efficient trade union in Bombay?—I am not appearing for the millowners. I am only appearing for the Sassoon Company. My own mill went the length, mistakenly in my opinion, of trying to organize a trade union in 1922. Whatever the views of other mill-owners are, my particular firm has had very definite ideas with regard to trade unionism for the last 8 or 9 years.

A-6714. You put rather a novel proposal in your memorandum relating to trade unionism, and I am wondering how long your firm has been making such a suggestion; that is, the suggestion with regard to the Government considering the question of bringing out trade unionists from England in order to train individuals here. Is this quite new to your firm?—This is something of which I never dreamt of until the Fawcett Committee sat. I had always hoped that, from the Mahratta community particularly, we should get two or three capable men who would be capable of handling labour and understanding the technical problems. Unfortunately I have been disappointed in that. The experience of the Fawcett Committee brought out the difficulties of the situation. This was their suggestion and not mine. But I took up their suggestion, and I have backed it for all I am worth.

A-6715. It is following upon the Fawcett Committee enquiry?—It is following upon the experiences of the Fawcett Committee enquiry.

A-6716. The experiences into which they had to enquire were rather difficult experiences, were they not?—Yes.

A-6717. The impression left in my mind is that it is not until the cotton mill industry has got into a very difficult position that they have asked for the services of trade unions?—Let us split the two things up. They asked for trade unions, and they asked for the services of trade union officials. It was only when the bareness of the ground was revealed that the difficult position arose.

A-6718. In answering Sir Victor Sassoon you illustrated what would be done in Lancashire. That is Lancashire to-day, or Lancashire 15 or 20 years ago. It is not Lancashire 70 years ago, is it?—No.

A-6719. Are you not expecting from a new trade union organization here in Bombay a standard of efficiency equivalent to that now obtained by trade unions in England?—But why cannot we benefit by the experiences of the past.

A-6720. At the moment it is admitted that there is a great difficulty in establishing trade union organizations in Bombay following the last strike. Would you be prepared to give sympathetic consideration to the establishment of statutory works committees on the lines adopted by Germany?—Unfortunately I have not studied that. If they are organized on really sound lines they would provide a *via media* until trade unions are soundly organized, but I would not commit myself until I know more of the basis on which they are organized.

A-6721. One of the fundamental things in connection with this system is that if an employee represents his fellows in a mill he does not have the same fear of being victimized and of losing his job. If he is dismissed, he has an opportunity of reference to a fairly impartial body. One of the difficulties with which you are faced, as I see it, is that the people, if they are to create a strong trade union, must be assured that victimization will not occur. Therefore would you be prepared to agree that cases of dismissal (I am not talking of all cases but of those which really deserve enquiry) should be referred to a body before the dismissal becomes operative?—How would that body be constituted?

A-6722. It would be so constituted as to give fair play to the employer and to the workman?—Then I am for it. We want a square deal.

A-6723. You say in answer to a question that the cost of the provision of social and welfare amenities should be borne by the State. May I take it from that answer that you are not opposed to an extension of welfare services for the work-people?—Not at all.

A-6724. With regard to the figures given in your memorandum as to the rates of wages of operatives in the mills, can I take it that under the headings "Japanese Mill" and "Bombay standard" (with 840 looms in each case), the total number of operatives is 465. Is that the whole of the operatives in the mill?—That is the total number of operatives in the mill for that occupation. That is actually inside the weaving shed within the four walls of the shed. This particular mill is a new mill starting up, so that the answer might be misleading when I say, for example, that 318 more men have been employed.

A-6725. Taking the Manchester Mill, 800 looms, if we assume the Bombay standard of 840, approximately how many men would have been employed in Manchester. What I am concerned with is the reduction that takes place?—It would be 334 as against 465.

A-6726. If the Manchester Mill was on the Bombay standard there would be approximately 450 men?—Yes.

A-6727. If you had three looms, would the approximate reduction be from 450 to 250?—It is a reduction from 450 to 320.

A-6728. But you show 249?—That is on the basis of four looms; we are not on four looms; there is only a small proportion on four looms.

A-6729. Am I clear that there were no discharges when you started?—In the weaving there were a certain number of transfers. We did not start it on the weaving immediately as in the spinning. A portion of the weaving started on three looms, and it was only gradually extended. There was no discharge there.

A-6730. In Appendix VI, you give a column for average wage per operative per day. Is that the average rate of wages for operatives?—That is so.

A-6731. Is it your view that the efficiency system you have got in the Manchester Mill should be applied generally to the industry in Bombay?—It cannot be applied generally to the industry in Bombay. In our own mills I can only apply it to the Manchester Mill, the Apollo Mill and small sections of the other mills. It is the utmost I can do, because it means a new reorganization in the plant.

A-6732. How many operatives and how many spindles it is possible to cover?—There are two separate problems, weaving and spinning. In the spinning there is no reason why 95 per cent. of the spindles in Bombay should not run on the new system. In the weaving it is not possible for more than 2,500 looms out of 70,000 to run on the new system without practical reorganization. The problem as far as weaving is concerned is a *fait accompli*; such looms as can be transferred to the system have been already transferred, with the exception of 600 or 700 looms in the different mills here and there.

A-6733. You must have reorganization if you want to get the efficiency system in the large proportion of the weaving sheds?—Yes.

A-6734. What can the employees do to help the employers in those particular sheds before reorganization takes place?—The employees might meet the employers this way: "If you are prepared to set up this standard then we are prepared to co-operate with you on the basis of 50 per cent. of the savings to go to us and 50 per cent. to go to you to meet the cost of reorganization."

A-6735. Supposing your proposals were applied to the Bombay mill industry, may we take it that the reduction of employment would be on the same percentage that you have shown in Appendix VI?—May I again stress the necessity of differentiating between the spinning section and the weaving section? In weaving it would take 15 years to change one-half of the number of looms; the other half would not change because they are on fancies in which two looms would be quite sufficient. In the spinning at least 80 per cent. could be changed within a short time. So that, the rate of progress in the weaving is almost not worth worrying about.

A-6736. What is the prospect of this industry without reorganization?—I cannot prophesy, but the prospect, with reorganization, is not very hopeful.

A-6737. So that, it would not be fair if the whole burden of responsibility for the position was laid on the work-people?—The position is there; the facts are that the industry will pass out from Bombay. With reference to the sharing of the burden you have got innumerable committees sitting on it.

A-6738. And now this Commission?—Whatever it is, the industry is in the position of dying out, as far as Bombay is concerned. The fact is that while we sink the operatives will sink with us.

A-6739. In your memorandum, dealing with the question of unemployment you state that it is a national problem and one that cannot be handled by individual mills. That is assuming that there is unemployment. Is that a problem which can be dealt with by the State with reference to the particular industries concerned, or should it be spread over a larger area?—I think it ought to be spread over a larger area, following the lines of the quotation I read to you from Mr. Keynes' speech, namely, give capital a return and take from it as much as you like when it has a return, but do not individualize and say this particular industry shall bear the burden. If you are not going to allow capital to get a return in any particular industry it will rapidly vanish from that industry.

A-6740. What have you got to say about the help and co-operation you are getting from the work-people in the Manchester Mills?—Certainly. I am getting more help and co-operation than I had.

A-6741. Is it a fairly appreciable improvement that has taken place?—No; I could not measure it; but there is a sign of it.

A-6742. Can you tell us what you are doing to get increased co-operation, increased efficiency and increased output?—On the technical side we have conducted experiments; we have put up improved machinery.

A-6743. At the moment I would like to know from the point of view of labour itself?—Individually, we have one of our assistants who speaks *Marathi* fluently to look into the why, when and wherefore of the problems. That is the only way to get personal contact. This was adopted by us when we started this system.

A-6744. *The Chairman*: What position does he hold?—He is assistant superintendent in charge of weaving; he also looks after the personnel.

A-6745. Was he appointed because of his qualities for dealing with the personnel?—That is his greatest qualification. He was trained as an apprentice from Ra. 15 a month under me right up to his present position. He is a passed student of the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, and has extraordinary tact, and ability in translating the workmen's *Marathi*.

A-6746. *Mr. Cliff*: An impression has been formed, I think, that one of the difficulties in the Bombay mills is due to the fact that the supervisors are not able to understand the men in the way in which you and I, two Englishmen, could understand one another. Is it because of that difficulty that you appointed this man?—That difficulty did not exist in this particular mill, because every man in charge of that mill from the manager downwards, was an Indian; we chose Indians with the idea that there would be more personal contact if it was at all possible. We did not find it worked out so, but we did choose them with that idea. All the officers were Indians and the appointment of this man was simply to strengthen the hands of those already employed.

A-6747. The Manchester Mill was started after it had been closed for some time and you took the complement staff necessary for weaving and spinning?—Yea.

A-6748. Following upon the efficiency system being operated, have you been able to increase the numbers employed?—We increased the numbers employed, for example in the weaving section by the introduction of universal winders. Under the system in force previous to that, the weft went straight to the loom; but now we re-wind the weft on to special large-sized bobbins and then send it to the loom. This is an additional process. As you will see, there are 60 or 70 extra workers in this department. So that, it is not all loss in the way of employment.

A-6749. You want to extend this system to one or two other mills. Looking at it from the point of view of the spinner and the weaver, after two or three years' experience, is it beginning to be demonstrated that their increased output is giving them increased employment?—The output of that mill can be sold freely when the other mills cannot get a buyer for their production. The technical side in combination with the management has enabled us to say that we challenge comparison between that quality and any similar quality produced in Japan.

A-6750. That is the cloth you referred to as selling at a slightly lower price ?—No. It is selling at a premium to Japanese cloth both in Egypt and Basra.

A-6751. Can you tell the Commission that as a result of these experiments you have in fact increased employment ?—No. What has happened is, I have demonstrated to my directors that this is sound economy, and it is the one way to keep the Bombay industry together. They agreed. In the meantime, we had two strikes, and I have hesitated to go forward and advise more money to be put into the industry until I see something static about the industry, until I know that there is security for the utilization of that money. The result has been that any expansion we have made has been up-country and not here.

A-6752. Suppose you are going to try the system in any mill ; that means a reduction in the number of employees. Are you putting it to the directors that there should be some scheme by which the men displaced can get some form of allowance ?—I have never put that up. I have seen mill after mill closing down in Bombay. I have treated it somewhat in this way—instead of closing down the mills completely I have conserved employment for a number at any rate.

A-6753. Could you give us, in reference to your Manchester Mills and another mill under the old system within your group, the cost of raw material, and the cost of manufacture, separating labour from other costs ?—Here is a chart which will explain it. If you will indicate this is the type you want, I will bring it up-to-date. I can give you figures for the Manchester Mill as it exists to-day and for another mill of the same size as it exists now, and split up all the charges in this form.

A-6754. There is reference in the memorandum to the stoppages which took place when you wanted to introduce the efficiency system. Were they for long periods ?—No ; the longest period was 1½ months.

A-6755. That might occur anywhere ?—The strikes that we have suffered from in Bombay have been intensely worse and worse conducted than anywhere else.

A-6756. Have you ever looked, in introducing the efficiency system, at the question of reducing the hours of work ?—I have actually experimented with that. We reduced the hours from 10 to 8.

A-6757. That is in 1926 ?—No. But some did not work 7½ hours.

A-6758. Out of the 10 hours, some people tell us that they do not work even 8 hours or 7½ hours. Is not that a matter of organization ?—It is the same, however much you organize. Since I came to India I have been working at it for the last 22 years, but with no improvement. It is deep-rooted in the habits of the people.

A-6759. We had some managers who feel that they must not change the custom of the country ?—I have been trying, but I have grown grey without getting any result.

A-6760. I gathered from your answers to Sir Victor that you referred both to the jobbers and the money-lenders as people whom you ought to keep out of your mills ?—Yes.

A-6761. Have you made any advances against wages in your mills ?—No ; we have not. We have a system under contemplation ; I am fifty and fifty, if I may use a common expression, in regard to it.

A-6762. Is it not one of the ways to help the people to break the system of money-lending, to pay them more frequently ?—When I went out to Calcutta 22 years ago, they used to pay there weekly, but I found them just as much on the books of the *marwaris* as they were when I came over to this side and paid them monthly.

A-6763. Do you think that is borne out by close investigation ?—Perhaps Sir Alexander Murray will be able to enlighten us in that direction. If it will do them any good, I do not mind paying weekly.

A-6764. That is a question of what is best for the people concerned ?—Yes. So long as sixteen years ago we introduced the system of paying fortnightly, and there was a strike against that.

A-6765. *Miss Power* : Would it be possible for us to have some sort of statement with regard to the Sassoon group of Mills showing how much extra it would cost to pay wages on a weekly and on a fortnightly basis instead of on a monthly basis ?—The difficulty consists not in paying but in estimating the amounts. About 8 or 9 years ago we introduced the system of paying money in packets ; at first all sorts of objections were raised to it, but we persisted in that practice and we now find that we save time by paying in that way. When wages are paid monthly, the pay day tends to be a gala day and it may be that we lose more time on account of the pay day being a gala day, than we should

if we paid once a week or a fortnight, in which case the pay day would become a matter of habit to the worker, as it is in England where I used to pay the whole of our mill in less than 15 minutes. I could give you figures as to the present loss of time in paying wages, but I think those figures would be unfairly weighed against paying weekly or fortnightly.

A-6766. Speaking of welfare in the larger sense, if you think that Government rather than the individual employer should undertake any additional welfare work, what specific forms of such larger welfare do you think are essential to increase the efficiency of the Indian worker?—That is a big problem and it is a problem which is not so easily solved here as in a European speaking country where the people are all of one race. For instance, we have the *pardeshi*, a man of very frugal habits to whom Rs. 15 a month is a living wage. On the other hand we have the *julaha* Muhammadan living in Bombay to whom Rs. 50 a month would be a very poor wage. Having regard to the varying standards of life of the workers the problem of sickness insurance, for instance, is a very difficult one.

A-6767. But surely, the problem of varying standards of life is not peculiar to India; for instance, in London the East End emigrant worker in the tailoring trade has a standard of living which is quite different from that of the English West End worker in the same trade?—Yes.

A-6768. Looking at the matter entirely from the point of view of efficiency, what form of welfare do you think would increase the efficiency of the Indian worker, assuming that Government, the industry and the worker, all contributed their fair shares?—I would rather think it over. Of course any man is pleased when he gets something as it were falling from the skies.

A-6769. Do you think sickness insurance would increase the efficiency of the Indian worker?—With a few exceptions the worker is not sufficiently educated to appreciate it; for instance, we have maternity benefits in Bombay to-day, but half the workers do not know about it.

A-6770. If you inaugurate efficiency methods here as you say you must, that involves temporarily throwing out of employment a lot of men?—That is so.

A-6771. You propose to inaugurate efficiency methods with a view to recovering the market which you are losing?—Yes.

A-6772. That means that you are hoping ultimately to re-absorb those men?—Yes.

A-6773. Will the efficiency of those men increase if in the meantime nothing is done for their support?—The answer is they must suffer and therefore suffer in efficiency; if a man is left to starve or be in want, he is bound to suffer in efficiency. But I am prepared to work the Manchester Mill on double shift, so that the men will not go out of employment. Then assuming that a man when he is working saves money, when he is temporarily thrown out of employment he can return to his village and live much more cheaply than he can in Bombay. The problem of unemployment in India is not the same problem as it exists in England. In India the unemployed industrial worker can return to the land; there are avenues of employment open to him which do not exist in Western countries.

A-6774. Not everyone can go back to the land?—The number that cannot go back to the land is very few.

A-6775. *The Chairman*: Do you mean that as many as 90 per cent. can return to the land?—Fully 90 per cent.

A-6776. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you refer to certain big issues having been explained to the workers; for instance, the efficiency scheme, the question of weekly as opposed to monthly pay, and so forth. What exactly is meant when Bombay employers say that something has been explained to the workers; how is it explained?—I send one of my assistants and tell him to explain a certain matter to the workers; he then explains to each jobber in turn exactly what the order or the explanation is and that is then handed down by the jobber to the workmen. But if it is thought necessary the whole of the workmen are gathered in various sections of the mill and the point is explained to them.

A-6777. Your system of explaining things to the workers in your mills seems to be one in which a complicated piece of economic theory is passed through a string of three or four people in order to be explained finally to a body of workmen who are completely illiterate. In what garbled form do you think it emerges in the end?—I was speaking of the method of explaining an order to the workers; a difficult economic theory would be explained to the workers by my superintendent personally. In the Manchester Mill, this particular economic theory was explained by Mr. M. D. Rubens personally to the work-people.

A-6778. That I take it, is an exception to the general rule?—Yes.

A-6779. When we are told that things of the kind I mentioned are explained to the workers, do you think in general the method of explanation is a satisfactory one when dealing with a large number of completely illiterate workers?—I do not; there are work-people to-day who do not understand the safety first posters which we put up.

A-6780. Do you think the Bombay mill-workers would have declined fortnightly payment which works admirably in Ahmedabad, if they had fully understood all the pros and cons?—It all depends on what you mean by "fully understood." If they had been educated to the benefits of fortnightly pay, I do not think they would have refused it.

A-6781. Is it not the duty of the better educated section of the community, that is to say, the employers, to explain this point to them when so important an issue is before them?—In my view the crying need of the Bombay worker is education, but whether that is the responsibility of the individual millowner is another point.

A-6782. Is it enough at this juncture to say: we stick to our monthly method of payment although it involves the worker in debt when he first comes into Bombay, because when the fortnightly method was first put to him he did not want it; is that sufficient?—I am willing to pay them fortnightly or weekly.

A-6783. Do you think it would be in their interests to be paid fortnightly or weekly?—It is doubtful; they live monthly and they have the monthly mentality. The crying need is to educate them first.

A-6784. Apart from habit, is not their main objection the fact that they pay their rent monthly?—They send money to their people up-country by the month, Government live by the month and everything goes by the month. Sir Victor and I have had workmen brought before us; for instance there is a workman to whom we have done some favour and he is therefore chatty. We ask him, "What do you do with your Rs. 45?" He answers that he sends Rs. 15 to his wife and family. He splits up the money monthly; he has got into that monthly habit.

A-6785. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have had evidence that one of the reasons for the millowners adhering to the monthly system of paying wages is that by that means they keep a hold on the workers?—I admit that theory was tenable in the past, but it is now absolutely untenable. In Lancashire where wages are paid on Saturday morning, they are paid only up to the previous Thursday evening or noon; in Lancashire the employers have money in hand.

A-6786. *The Chairman*: It is quite clear that in paying wages there must be two or three days' delay for making up the books?—Yes.

A-6787. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Was it at one time the practice in Bombay that if a man wanted to leave his employment he had to give one full month's notice from the 1st of the month?—That has been the practice in Bombay for many years and the men actually gave one month's notice.

A-6788. Does not that give you a big hold on the worker if he cannot leave you without giving you a month's previous notice?—Yes. In the past that was perfectly true.

A-6789. So that there has been justification for the statement that monthly payment gives you a bigger hold on the worker?—It did; it is obvious it was so.

A-6790. As a result of this strike that has been altered?—Yes.

A-6791. With the result that now if a worker wishes to leave he can say: "I want to leave at once."—He does that in effect. Officially he cannot do so; he has no rights under any rules or regulations, but what actually happens is what you say. What actually happens to-day is that a man can go at once. In my opinion that is merely because there is a surplus of labour available. Under the Fawcett Rules he is bound to give a fortnight's notice.

A-6792. Therefore to-day the hold on the worker instead of being a month is only a fortnight?—Yes.

A-6793. That would modify the legal position according to which the monthly worker is not entitled to recover his wages if he leaves without giving notice?—Yes.

A-6794. In Calcutta it is the practice for the workers to be paid weekly and therefore in Calcutta the hold on the worker is only one week. One week's wages are kept in hand?—Then there is one week's hold.

A-6795. Therefore there is a greater hold on the worker in Bombay than there is in Calcutta?—That is so.

A-6796. If a man is paid a lump sum every month, does it not put him in a more independent position than if he is paid weekly?—Mr. Joshi himself told the Fawcett Committee that the practice of the millowners of holding a month's pay had the effect of financing the strikes, because it put the workers in a strong position. There would not have been these strikes in Bombay if we have been paying weekly.

A-6797. If that is so, do you not think that is a cheap enough price for stopping strikes in Bombay?—The strikes have cost us more than that.

A-6798. It has been suggested to us that some of the strikes in Bombay have been more or less engineered by employers who were carrying large stocks?—I can only speak for my own firm and in my own case the strikes cost me a tremendous amount. We do not hold large stocks; we only hold about 3 days' work. A millowner in Bombay mistakenly decided to ask one man to work two slobbering frames. That cannot be done in England; it was obvious that it would cause trouble and there was trouble. At that time offers for our cloth were coming forward at woeful prices and I had to seriously consider whether we should close certain mills down.

A-6799. The suggestion which has been made to us cannot apply to your mills, because you do not carry stocks?—We do not carry stocks. The position when the strike began was such that if there had not been a strike, half the looms in one area would have been stopped.

A-6800. Then it would appear that there is some foundation for the statement that it was the policy of the managing agents and the millowners which contributed directly or indirectly to the last strike?—There is no confirmation for that statement; there is suspicion for that statement. Believe me, there was no deliberate provocation of the strike to clear stocks.

A-6801. In your memorandum you say that it is the experience of most Bombay mills that higher wages mean a higher percentage of absenteeism. Is your new system of working going to result in higher wages?—Yes.

A-6802. Will it result in an increase of absenteeism?—It did at the beginning, but we have told the workmen:—"If you do not want to work a full month except cases of illness, quit; let someone work on the mills who wants the money." We are now getting the type of man who wants to work every day.

A-6803. Is it your experience that higher wages do tend to increase absenteeism?—I have seen it happen, but there are men who would be glad to work night and day for the sake of their children. I do not think those men to whom higher wages would lead to absenteeism come to more than 16 per cent. of the whole.

A-6804. You say that the weaving section is a department in India which is terribly backward?—Yes.

A-6805. Do you mean that the weavers in India are more backward than the other workers?—I am speaking from the point of view of cost of production. I will guarantee that some of our weavers will stand alongside English weavers, but I will not guarantee that they will produce as economically as the Japanese weaver minding 5½ looms.

A-6806. Then it is the system on which you are working which is backward?—The system is backward. In 1912 I would have backed my shed at the Spring Mills against an equivalent shed in Lancashire with a 5 per cent. in my favour.

A-6807. In Calcutta in the Jute Mills when we were extending our mills and there was a scarcity of weavers, we found that their production was comparatively poor; but after the War, when we ceased to extend, production increased, because there were more trained workers?—That is what we find.

A-6808. Therefore the relatively poor production from your weaving sheds may be due to the fact that the extension of looms has been more rapid than the training of the weavers?—That is so.

A-6809. I suppose the *badlis* are not skilled?—There are two kinds of *badlis*; one kind of *badli* is learning and is semi-skilled, while the other kind of *badli* is a very skilled worker, but only wishes to work 6 or 7 days a month, because, for instance, he is helping a brother who keeps a *pan* shop or something like that.

A-6810. Do you know of any other country where there exists this practice of debiting damaged cloth to the weavers?—Yes, that practice obtains in Lancashire.

A-6811. Mr. Clow: Will you give us an indication of the proportion in the Manchester mill and the Bombay mills between the cost of wages of the operatives and the cost of the finished article?—I have that in another chart which I will send on to you.

A-6812. When you were working two 8-hour shifts you got a substantial reduction in over-head charges?—That is so.

A-6813. Why was the system abandoned?—Because the loss from 8 hours to 10 hours more than compensated the over-head charges by the margin that we obtained; we were obtaining a margin of eight annas per pound of cloth produced after paying 6 annas for making that cloth.

A-6814. Did you pay higher rates for 8 hours than for ten?—If in 10 hours he got 8 pies per lb., in 8 hours he would get 10 pies per lb.

A-6815. It would not be possible to work two 10-hour shifts in Bombay now?—It would be possible and also economic, and in my opinion it would have to be one of the solutions.

A-6816. As regards the question of fents, your experiment is very interesting. Could you give us any figures to show the quantities of fents produced?—I think they are already given, but if they are not, I can give you an exact copy of the figures.

A-6817. *The Chairman*: You were speaking just now about the response from the men in the mills where you have your new system working with increased wages, and I think you said that you were experiencing less of what is called absenteeism under the new system than you did under the old system; is that so?—That is so; not only that, but men who had for one reason or another left our service have come back for work on this system.

A-6818. I want the benefit of your experience in this matter. It is commonly said in India that if you raise the actual earnings of the workmen there will be no response in their standard of living. I take it that your experiment has shown that that is true only in the case of a few men but not with the general body of workmen?—That theory holds good in almost all phases of life. There are certain men who will never go forward but the bulk of them do go ahead; while I say that the Bombay worker has not taken the fullest advantage of the advances that have been given to him, I must say that the bulk of them have and that many men have a better standard of life.

A-6819. They actually do attend more regularly to the work in the case of your new system than they did when they were drawing smaller earnings under the old system?—Yes, but I would not like to say exactly why.

A-6820. In the case of those whose salary has risen on account of the new system, have you any evidence at all to show whether they give the appearance of being more prosperous than they were before?—I do not think I notice that, but I would not like to dogmatize from whatever I have seen.

A-6821. You were asked one or two questions by Miss Power on what in the West is called social insurance as applied to the Indian condition. Is it, in your experience, one of the factors of the Indian situation that the joint family system in effect is a spreadover both for benefits and liabilities, which has the effect of sharing prosperity and also sharing misfortune?—Yes, that was very much demonstrated by the last strike. For instance, on inquiry I found that one worker during the strike lived with his brother who was employed under Sir Joseph Kay and another lived in the police *chawls* with his brother who was a policeman.

A-6822. The only point that I want to know is that that is a special factor in the Indian situation and it does not apply to other countries?—That is so.

A-6823. There is a surplus of textile labour in Bombay at the present time, and if the new system expands there may be a larger surplus than there is now. As you say, at least 90 per cent. of the people have attachment to their villages. Have you as an employer ever considered a system whereby those persons would be registered, so that they need not crowd themselves in the city of Bombay but they could be ready for employment when there was employment at the mills for them?—I have not considered it. But if we did that I am afraid they might resent our interference in what might be called their private affairs. I want to explain the position a little more clearly. A man, rightly or wrongly, looks upon the employer in Bombay with a great deal of suspicion. I remember going round the weaving shed to compile a list of voters and found that after some time the men refused to give me any information. When I asked them the reason for their refusal they replied that they thought that perhaps the information was required by Government for the purpose of increasing the income-tax. They are very touchy on our interference in what they call their private affairs.

A-6824. I am not suggesting anything in the nature of compulsion; I am suggesting the possibility of registration which would be of substantial advantage to the worker and also to the employer?—If such a system could be worked, there is no doubt that it certainly could not do any harm, and there is a very big possibility of doing good.

A-6825. Because the would-be worker would be living in much happier and also cheaper conditions during the time he was waiting for work?—Yes.

A-6826. You tell me that a scheme of that kind has never been considered?—No, not to my knowledge.

A-6827. Will the employers be willing to consider the possibility of such a scheme for the people in the country districts?—Acting on your suggestion we shall probably think it over from now onwards and see what can be done in the matter.

A-6828. With regard to the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee, can you inform us exactly what has happened to them?—The Fawcett Committee's report has been adopted *in toto* by the Committee of the Millowners' Association and it has to go before their members for final approval. The Committee, as an experiment, wants to put into force all the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee; the question with regard to standardization and the terms of employment has been agreed to, but the unfortunate part of it is that there is no one on the side of labour with whom the question of the possibility of putting the suggestions into practice could be discussed.

A-6829. I am aware of one factor being lacking, but still there are many of these recommendations which it would seem might go ahead, and should go ahead, even in the absence of the other party being ready to discuss them?—May I say that the millowners have agreed to put those standing orders into practice, for example, they have agreed to restore the proposed out of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the weaving. But we have to consult labour as to the exact way in which that restoration might be effected. If we go forward and say we accept the Fawcett Committee's report and shall put those recommendations into practice, we would be promptly told that we did not consult the labour. On the other hand, we are worried as to whom to consult and when to consult. Speaking privately, we have consulted certain leaders of labour but they have frankly admitted that they are not in a position to deliver the goods. We shall be condemned if we put forward those suggestions into practice without consulting the labour, but as I say we are not in a position to consult the labour. Of course, there are certain minor points which are left to our discretion, but the whole scheme is blocked on that account. There are things that the Fawcett Committee have given us and there are things that the Fawcett Committee have bestowed on labour. We know full well that if we go forward some progress can be made. For example, it has been suggested that we should forego under definite understanding the right to search; also that the weavers should put in tickets like every other operative. If you put into practice the recommendation with regard to tickets which the Fawcett Committee found to be just and reasonable you would have a strike in certain areas within 24 hours of putting that in. On the other hand, are we to give up every right that we possess which we are asked to give up? The problem is not an easy one, and no progress is possible unless there is definite understanding between the employer and the employee. There is a report for good or bad by three men who honestly gave their best to study the problem thoroughly, and there is no doubt that it represents an advance of anything that has ever been done before; they have given that free gift but there is nobody to take full advantage of it, and the whole thing therefore stands a chance of lapsing.

A-6830. One further question on the question of registration of labour in the mills which you superintend. Did I understand you rightly that at one period you had attempted a proper system of registration of labour and it was resented on the side of labour?—Yes.

A-6831. How long ago was that?—Before I joined the firm—it must be over ten years ago.

A-6832. There has been nothing recently done in that respect?—No.

A-6833. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What is the feeling of the labour in that respect?—They are very bitter against it.

A-6834. *The Chairman*: They are suspicious that anything which involves their photograph or thumb-print has some sinister motive?—That is their firm belief.

A-6835. I want to ask you whether you are aware, at the time you made this experiment, there was any definite advantage to the worker in the system such as an increment after a certain period of regular service?—I think there was nothing; it was a mere bald registration.

A-6836. We were told that in most of the mills the labour turn-over was as much as 50 per cent. per annum. Would that apply to the mills under your control?—It is difficult to say because of the strikes during the last two years, but I should not put the figure so high.

A-6837. Your new system with higher earnings is likely to give greater continuity of labour?—I am convinced it will.

A-6838. You would agree, I imagine, that nothing would be better for the efficiency of the industry than a greater continuity and stabilization of labour?—Yes; it is one of the causes of weakness of the industry.

A-6839. Even accepting the custom of returning to the village at the time of the monsoon if the men came back to the same factory, and very possibly to the same machine, after finishing their work in the village, you realize that it would be of benefit both to the mill and to the industry?—It is bound to be.

A-6840. Therefore you would be in favour of any method that could be devised to encourage greater stability and the diminution of that turn-over?—We have ourselves thought out a scheme for that; for example, the extension of the provident fund to the lowest paid operatives and things of that sort, but we have not given effect to them; much of our work is held up by these constant strikes and troubles; we do not feel like going ahead with things like that.

A-6841. If we accept that the average turn-over at present is 50 per cent. per annum whereas in a Lancashire mill it probably is not more than 5 per cent. per annum, and if you could reduce the turn-over even from 50 to 25 per cent. per annum in the case of Indian labour, it would add considerably to the benefit of the industry and out of that benefit a proper inducement might be given to the individual labourer to give his services for a longer period not only to the same industry but also to the same mill?—Yes.

A-6842. *Divan Chaman Lal*: You have had great experience of the mill industry in Bombay, and I would like to ask you whether it is your definite opinion that it will take 15 years for the industry to rationalize itself?—I did not say that it will take 15 years for the industry to rationalize itself. The question is does the weaving need rationalization? Rationalization as you have termed it, or the higher pay system as was suggested by a friend this morning, naturally involves grades; you cannot rationalize the manufacture of complicated patterns; but on grey goods it is necessary to take all the looms suitable for that particular style of cloth and marshal them into sections; as I say, it would take 15 years for this to be done in the weaving, or purchasing automatic looms.

A-6843. The difficulty that is facing the industry in Bombay as I take it, is first of all competition with Japan. If you take the question of competition with Japan, then you have to put your industry right, I take it, not from one point of view but from three points of view, namely, the question of machinery, the organization of the industry and the efficiency of labour. When you are considering the question of machinery—which I understand the millowners are considering—are you along with that considering the question of improvement from the workers' standpoint?—The Manchester Mill was organized to demonstrate the three factors mentioned by you. If I have raised the pay I have not done it with the idea of giving any free gift; it means that I want to raise the standard of life.

A-6844. Since we are considering the question of Japanese competition, let me give the figures of imports. I find that it has gone up from 7 per cent. in 1913-14 to 16·4 per cent. in 1926-27?—It is much more for the last two years.

A-6845. In Japan I was studying some of the major group of mills there; they give various concessions to their workers: for instance, if a worker falls ill he is paid for the period that he is ill; thereafter, when he is recuperating, he is given as much leave as 300 days sometimes, according to his illness, on full pay. He is provided with loans practically free of interest; then the necessities of life, such as cloth, food, etc. are provided for him either at or below cost. There is a system under which if a man is to be punished, his case first goes up before a committee of discipline which is elected by the workers themselves, which reports to the head of the department. Are you considering giving amenities of that description to your workers also?—Firstly, with all due respect, there are one or two things there of which I have never read in all my reading of the industry in Japan, or heard of when I visited that country; I would like to check your references with you.

A-6846. I will send you the name of the mill; it is a mill which controls a capital of £6,000,000 sterling?—We do give certain facilities here as has been demonstrated, but I have explained our financial position.

A-6847. You have said you want to see the time when you can hand out economy dividend tickets?—Yes.

A-6848. The suspicion in the mind of labour is that when you were in a position to give these economy dividend tickets, you did not do so?—But we did.

A-6849. For instance, did you institute a system of sickness insurance in the time when you could have afforded to do so?—When we could have afforded it, how many people knew of sickness insurance? The only country in which it existed was England.

- A-6850. You did not do so?—We did not.
- A-6851. At that time did you consider the question of unemployment insurance?—We did not. At that time we had no unemployment; we had more employment than people for that employment.
- A-6852. Or old age pensions?—We did not consider it.
- A-6853. Or the question of security of employment?—There was in fact security of employment because there was more employment than the people could fill. We did not consider those matters, but we put sums aside for welfare work. One does not feed an invalid on strong meat.
- A-6854. But the man was not an invalid in those days?—He was an invalid so far as education is concerned; he is to-day.
- A-6855. I am referring to the industry; it is an invalid to-day, but it was not in those days?—But you would not expect us to give the worker the Works of Shakespeare when he could not even read *Marathi*.
- A-6856. But he would have appreciated a little more food?—What he appreciated was to get more wages and still more wages and a bonus. When we offered them cinema tickets and that sort of thing, they said: "No, we want more money."
- A-6857. Do you mean to tell us that any worker of yours in those days would have refused sickness insurance benefit if you had provided it for him?—No, he would not, but we were not giving them something else when we were giving them wages.
- A-6858. I do not think you can withstand world competition with rationalization coming in all over the world, but the point is you will have to have a body of workers who are as well treated as workers are in other countries and for whom the amenities of life are as well provided?—What standard of life are you taking? Have I to provide the amenities that are provided to the family of a motor worker in Oxford or have I to supply some amenity which is useful. We have the *Pardeshi* who is willing to live here on as meagre an existence as could be simply to have a longer holiday in his native country. We claim that we can do more for those people not by being father, mother and godfather to them, but raising their wages so that they can themselves raise their standard of life.
- A-6859. I am not in disagreement with you as far as that goes. For your industry you must have a healthy and efficient worker with the new machinery that is being put in; suppose you are asked to contribute, along with the State and the worker, to a sickness insurance scheme, do you not think that would be a desirable thing?—However desirable, it is incapable of fulfilment owing to the position of the industry to-day. Some of the mills find the greatest difficulty in borrowing money to pay wages, never mind paying for additional charges.
- A-6860. You are now competing with Japan?—We are.
- A-6861. You are not only competing machinery with machinery, organization with organization, but worker with worker?—That is right.
- A-6862. That being so, do you not think the efficiency of your worker should be equal to that of the Japanese worker, if not better?—I maintain if the average worker in Bombay gets down to it, he can equal the Japanese worker.
- A-6863. Can he equal him in efficiency?—Yes.
- A-6864. The Chairman asked you if when you were paying Rs. 64 instead of Rs. 48 to your weaver you noticed a different look on the weaver's face?—And I had to say I could not dogmatize.
- A-6865. But it is generally accepted that if a man is getting more wages and therefore releases himself from debt, he automatically becomes a better worker?—That is one of the ordinary theories of life.
- A-6866. That is why I am asking you, since you have to compete with Japan, do you not think the millowners should discuss with Government and the workers what measures could be adopted to improve the standard of life and efficiency of the worker?—No, you are putting the cart before the horse. The first thing is to provide the money to do these things.
- A-6867. Your Manchester Mill, you say, is producing a certain quality of cloth which is selling at a premium as compared with Japanese cloth?—Yes.
- A-6868. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is the premium you are getting enough to make up for the difference in cost of production between your mills and the Japanese mills?—Not by a long way.

A-6869. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you think that with these new methods you will be able to put the Manchester Mill on a sound financial basis, that is to say, that it will be working at a profit?—I am hoping so. The money to purchase the Manchester Mill was borrowed from the managing agents. That was far beyond any contractual obligation into which the managing agents had entered. It was done in order to demonstrate whether it was possible in Bombay to make a mill pay. We have come through a period of great trial and we have proved that, given standard conditions, that mill can at least do appreciably better than any other mill in Bombay. We have not proved that it will pay equivalent to the Japanese; the best we can say of it is that we have got to a position where it might return 6 per cent. on the money. There is no more money to convert the other mills; we have been financing losses from strikes. Mr. Sasakura's evidence before the Fawcett Committee is before you. He said he was charging no managing agent's commission, no fee for buying the cotton, no fee for himself as manager, he has been bringing to bear on the problem all his Japanese knowledge and he cannot make a mill pay which he bought at about one-third its block capital value. I beg of you to put the industry in a position to do these things before you ask the industry to do these things.

A-6870. I have a figure here which shows that the Japanese make 1 per cent. on grays?—Yes. The turnover is well inside a month, which means they will actually make 12 per cent. in a year. It is the profit of the shipping house; it is not the profit of the mill.

A-6871. I am thinking of when they cut out the middleman.—The shipping house who sell a Japanese shirting get 1 per cent. We actually sell our goods at $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. We are delivering the goods from our mills to the dealer in Bombay with $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on it, whereas the merchant house who take the goods from the mills in Kobi and Asaki and transfer them to Bombay get 1 per cent.

A-6872. That bears out my argument that since you are rationalizing the machinery rationalize your method of placing your produce on the market?—I should rationalize my humanity. I am doing that so far as is possible at present by paying the worker a higher wage which will permit him to get out of debt and to have a house, not that I have provided for him, but where he wants to go and where he can tell his landlord what he wants. We are paying a higher wage to the weavers in the Manchester Mills than is paid to the weaver in the Japanese mills where they look after an average of 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ looms.

A-6873. Do you anticipate that with these changes the industry will be on its feet soon?—No, not in Bombay. Unless we are nursed over the next five years by generous help from Government in the form of de-rating or whatever you call it, the Manchester Mill will leave Bombay.

A-6874. Supposing during this period it is shown that it is absolutely necessary for the mill worker in Bombay to get some sort of provision of the type I have mentioned, for instance, sickness insurance, would you still wait until the industry is on its feet before asking the Government to step in?—I am afraid I would. I have not got the money. Government should take charge of these things to-day.

A-6875. Then you have no objection to any of these measures of social welfare if the State take the responsibility?—I am part of the State. I have no objection to the State evolving suitable schemes for the provision of any benefit, provided I am put in an equal position with the rest of India to be able to pay that.

A-6876. Your complement in the Manchester Mill is how much?—1,100.

A-6877. Would Rs. 500 or 550 a month be a very great burden for the Manchester Mills?—Yes; when you are losing Rs. 5,000 a month, then another Rs. 500 is a great deal of money. At the present moment in the Manchester Mill I am making money, but I am carrying burdens that are placed on it which it will take me three years to pay off, owing to the stoppage. If we were making money in the wonderful way we were making it in the past, Rs. 500 would be a cigarette.

A-6878. In the Manchester Mill, taking that as an example, could not retrenchments be made to release the sum of Rs. 550 a month?—Retrenchments are being made to release Rs. 5,000. It has to be financed to-day by the mill agent who has already advanced more money than the property is worth in a place like Bombay.

A-6879. Would you agree that the first charge should be insurance benefit rather than a return to the shareholders?—Capital is entitled to a fair return and the labourer is worthy of his hire. I am giving a fair return to labour in increased wages. I maintain that to-day I am giving the labourer more than he deserves.

A-6880. Do you mean to say he is not giving you an equivalent value in his production?—I do not think so, compared with his confrere in other countries.

A-6881. But then that is no comparison. A Japanese weaver minds more looms than a Lancashire weaver, but gets exactly half. Are you giving your worker more wages now than you were giving him before and getting less work from him, or are you getting more work from him and giving him less wages?—Just about as he was; that is to say, he is doing about the same work; he is minding a little more machinery but it is made easier for him and for that he is getting a rise in pay.

A-6882. The main factor in Japanese competition is price?—Absolutely.

A-6883. Do you think these new methods of yours are going to decrease your cost?—The new methods are going to bring nearer the cost of production and the price, but they are not going to save the industry.

A-6884. *Mr. Ahmed*: You said you do not allow money-lenders to come into the mill compound; do they wait outside?—Yes.

A-6885. Do you see many of them?—Yes.

A-6886. Then I take it there is indebtedness among the workers?—Yes.

A-6887. Have you many co-operative credit societies?—Yes; we have co-operative societies and we are endeavouring to raise the standard of the worker by these methods, but unfortunately we are losing money. I do not see how I can stand outside and buy off every marwari who stands outside the gate.

A-6888. You are in favour of raising the standard of life of the workers?—Yes.

A-6889. I suppose if you pay them a little higher wages, they will get better food and clothing and their efficiency will be increased?—I get many benefits by paying them higher wages if I can afford to do so. It is obvious that if they have more wages they spend more money; that is good for the man who sells them food, and then he in his turn can afford to buy his wife another *sari*, and business is good all round.

A-6890. The standard of life of the workers in Lancashire and Japan is higher than in Bombay, is it not?—I would not say Japan; the standard in England is higher, but not so very much higher than the standard of a good *Julaha* Mahomedan weaver.

A-6891. Do you mean that he spends the same amount of money on his living as a Lancashire weaver?—No, but his standard of living is nearer that of the Lancashire weaver. For instance, he eats meat.

A-6892. And I suppose if his standard of living were brought up to that of the Lancashire worker, his efficiency would increase?—I have *Julaha* weavers in Bombay who are as good as the average Lancashire weaver.

A-6893. If you paid wages weekly as they do in England, the indebtedness of your workers would be decreased?—That is the most comical argument I have heard, if you will pardon my saying so. I do not think the weekly or monthly payment of wages influences indebtedness to any appreciable extent.

A-6894. The Lancashire weaver is paid weekly and he is prosperous?—He is not prosperous to-day though he is paid weekly.

A-6895. Apart from the night school, have your mills helped Government to do the needful with regard to education of the children of your workers?—We have paid rates and taxes for a long time.

A-6896. That is not enough; we have heard that story many times.—The other part of the story is that we have not got any money.

A-6897. And the Government say they have not got enough money either?—That is right.

A-6898. As you want to improve the condition of your workers, are you taking any step in that direction?

Sir Victor Sassoon: No, we do not propose to.

A-6899. *Mr. Ahmed*: Are you in favour of weekly payment?—I will pay whatever suits the worker; I make daily payments at times. I have no objection to paying weekly if it suits the workers better.

A-6900. *Mr. Asale*: Under "Welfare" you set out the different amenities which have been provided by you, such as a reading room and library, cricket, and other things?—Not provided by us but provided by the welfare fund.

A-6901. You say that the welfare fund comes from the restaurant. Who takes the profits from the restaurant?—In this particular case there is one restaurant, which is let out at a profit, which profit goes to assist the cricket club and the library.

A-6902. Do the workers, other than heads of department, or clerks, make use of these amenities?—The heads of department do not bother with them. These things are worked by clerks in the mill.

- A-6903. Use is not made of them by the mill workers?—No.
- A-6904. After the Fawcett Committee's report was published did not representatives of labour as well as millowners meet to discuss that committee's recommendations?—Prior to the strike we had several meetings with the Joint Strike Committee.
- A-6905. Do you not think those meetings were going on very well?—Excellently.
- A-6906. What was the hitch?—The hitch was the strike.
- A-6907. Who made the strike?—I do not know. Suffice it to say that the strike occurred in spite of the goodwill on both sides.
- A-6908. Were not the discussions stopped owing to the strike at the Spring Mill?—No. Discussions were stopped owing to labour, as represented by the Joint Strike Committee or a portion of it, and capital as represented by the millowners, falling out. There was a dispute at the Spring Mill which resulted in a general strike.
- A-6909. Is it a fact that whenever work-people leave their jobs in order to return to their villages they come back to their jobs on their return?—They generally come back to their old jobs.
- A-6910. You refer in your memorandum to improved methods being necessary on the weaving side. In how many mills have the methods which you enumerate been adopted?—In two the Manchester Mill and the Apollo Mill.
- A-6911. Do you not think that unless you have an improved system on the spinning side also it will be very difficult for the people to continue working smoothly?—We have made it very plain that good work has to be given right through from the beginning. In any case I do not think more than another thousand workers could be put on to three or four loom working in Bombay for many years.
- A-6912. In your opinion this improved system cannot be worked out in other mills until the whole machinery has been changed?—That is so—until the old machinery has been re-organized. That is as regards weaving.
- A-6913. Is it not a fact that the weaver is sometimes fined for the fault of the spinner?—We endeavour to avoid that. It is not generally the fault of a spinner. It is generally the fault of an intermediary between the spinner and the weaver. It may be a warper with crossed ends or a sizer running his beam damp. It is possible for a weaver to be fined for a fault which is not his, but we endeavour to avoid that. We can generally locate the origin of a fault.
- A-6914. Is not one of the reasons why some weavers leave the mill that they are fined when the fault is not theirs?—I can only speak of our own group of mills. We endeavour to examine all cases of complaints of a man being illegally fined. Prior to the last strike I was arranging with one of the trade unions to have one of their representatives there when every piece which was booked to a weaver was examined. It is a difficult problem but we do try to stop complaints of wrongful fining.
- A-6915. Do you think trade unions can be conducted by the workers themselves at the present stage without the help of outsiders?—I hardly think so.
- A-6916. *Miss Cama*: Would you be in favour of a group of mills having a welfare secretary. I am not referring to your own group of mills, but to the whole industry. Would you have a welfare secretary for each mill, or a welfare secretary for each group of mills?—I can only speak for our own group of mills. We are working on two lines. I am trying a personnel officer, and I am also trying a welfare worker.
- A-6917. Would you say that a welfare secretary is necessary in connection with the other mills in Bombay?—I have not proved it yet and I would rather withhold my judgment. I am inclined to think that a welfare secretary is advisable, but whether in the form of a personnel officer or a welfare worker I am not quite sure.
- A-6918. *The Chairman*: I want to put one further practical question to you on the statement you have made in your memorandum and which you have amplified already this morning, referring to the necessity of soundly organized unions. You say "in the absence of other means"—(that is in the absence of soundly organized unions)—the Government should take the matter in hand at once, and if necessary bring out expert from England to organize and train trade union officials from the ranks of the workers." Have you further considered the exact nature of that suggestion?—I have not done so, but I understand it is under the consideration of the Government of Bombay.
- A-6919. I am anxious to be clear as to what your idea is. You mean an experienced and skilled trade union organizer to act as labour advisor to the Labour Office?—Yes, a man who is conversant with the cotton trade and who is prepared to learn Marathi. That is essential, because it is no use a man telling Jim to tell John to tell Willie to tell Fred. He has to explain it to the men himself.

A-6920. When you say "bring out experts from England" does that mean that you cannot see at the present stage of development in India an Indian up to the standard which you have in mind?—I cannot, but I can see the possibilities. There is Mahomed Rajab, a young man, a very capable weaver; he is a Muhammadan. He did not know English a short time back. He has taught himself to speak English, and he is one of the few men from whom I can get intelligent answers on the question of standardization. He shows such promise that it would be a pity to let him slip back when a trained organizer from England could make him the trainer of further men.

A-6921. You think that as a temporary arrangement a skilled man from England would soon result in a number of Indians being qualified to take the lead in trade union work in negotiation with the employers?—Very quickly.

(The witness withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
THIRTY-SECOND MEETING
JALGAON

Wednesday, 4th December 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. Mr. JOHN CLIFF.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C., <i>Assistant Commissioner</i> . Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA, <i>Lady Assessor</i> . Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } <i>Joint Secretaries</i> . Mr. A. DIBDIN. }	

Mr. P. J. ARJARIA, Agent, Khandesh Mills, Jalgaon.

A-6922. *The Chairman* : You have been good enough to come to-day to give us the benefit of your experience as the Agent of the Khandesh Spinning and Weaving Mills. How long have you been connected with those mills ?—Since 1895.

A-6923. I understand that the Mills began their work 57 years ago ?—Yes, in 1873.

A-6924. I notice that you yourself live amongst your people within the compound of the mill. You have, what one does not find everywhere, close contact with all those who work for you. Can you tell us anything about the turnover of the labour in your mills ; how far it is regular and what percentage each year represents new labour ?—We have had in our service for over 20 years 175 men and 20 women ; for over 10 years 450 men and 40 women, for over 5 years 575 men and 80 women ; and for under five years 125 men and 15 women. Generally the turnover is more in the spinning department. In the spinning department boys, who are half-timers, are transferred to full-timers and when they are efficient as full-timers they generally go on to the weaving department.

A-6925. Do your work-people live within reach of the mills, and do their wives and families live with them ?—Yes. Seventy per cent. are local men.

A-6926. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : From the city itself ?—From the city and the district.

A-6927. *The Chairman* : To what do you attribute the greater regularity and stability of your labour as compared with the cotton mills in some other districts ?—I attribute it to the better treatment which the workers receive in our mills. We give them bonuses and other amenities ; we help them in their personal difficulties, and we give them opportunities to improve their positions.

A-6928. They do improve their positions the longer they stay ?—Yes.

A-6929. Have you any regular system of promotion or increment, or does it depend on individual merit ?—It depends on individual merit.

A-6930. I understand that you have had some experience in freeing your people from indebtedness, to the money-lenders. It would be interesting if you would tell us something about that ?—In 1908 I found that money-lenders used to stand at the gate on pay day, and on making enquiries I found out that my work-people were paying more in interest than the amount they had actually borrowed. I spoke to the men about it and I got details from them of their indebtedness. I then called the Pathans in and settled the cases amicably with them. These Pathans well knew their difficulties in going to court about the matter, because the court officials would order the debt to be repaid in instalments of from 4 to 8 annas for so many years. The Pathans were very ready therefore to settle the cases with me.

A-6931. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How much interest did they settle for ?—Not less than 6 per cent. and not more than 12 per cent.

A-6932. *The Chairman* : In that way you got your people completely discharged from their debts to the money-lenders and then you yourself advanced the money to be paid off through the pay-sheet without interest ?—Yes, that is so.

A-6933. Since you have freed them from the money-lenders, have you found that they have continued to keep themselves free ?—Yes, most of them, but as these people spend money in marriages and so on they are always in need of money.

A-6934. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : From whom do they borrow money now ?—From us, without interest.

A-6935. Do you advance money for marriages ?—Yes. If they come to us and explain the reason why they want to borrow it—for marriages or for sickness—we lend it to them.

A-6936. Would you give a man earning Rs. 20 a month two hundred or three hundred rupees for a marriage ?—No. We would advance him six times the amount of his monthly wage—Rs. 120. In some cases we might advance a little more.

A-6937. From where does he get the difference between what you advance him and what he wants for the marriage ?—I advise him to manage with what we advance him and not to borrow more.

A-6938. They are spending less on marriages ?—Yes. We take trouble for our people and we find it pays us very well. We help them in their private difficulties and they have a sort of parental love towards us.

A-6939. *The Chairman* : That depends very much on your own personality ? It is not in the form of regular co-operative credit. It is just what you yourselves have done on behalf of your people and it is entirely in the control of the firm ?—Yes.

A-6940. Your experience in this matter has been that the people appreciate being free from the money-lender ?—They do.

A-6941. We have been told sometimes that every Indian likes to be in debt to a money-lender. You do not agree with that ?—No, I do not.

A-6942. You think if he is given the opportunity he would rather be a free man ?—Certainly. It is human nature.

A-6943. Can you tell us what is the rate of wages in your district, taking spinners and weavers. I suppose the cost of living is much less here than in a city ?—Yes, it is.

A-6944. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Can we have a complete list of the rate of wages for all classes of work-people employed ?—I will send it in. We have 367 men earning from Rs. 15 to 20 a month ; 116 women and 151 children. From Rs. 20 to 25 a month 307 men and 9 women. From Rs. 25 to 30 a month 97 men and 7 women. From Rs. 30 to 40 a month 48 men. From Rs. 40 to 50 a month 186 men. They are weavers. From Rs. 50 to 60 a month 64 men. From Rs. 60 to 100 a month 32 men, and Rs. 100 and above 11 men.

A-6945. *The Chairman* : Have you any information as to the rents they pay ?—They can get a one-room tenement from about Rs. 1-3-0 to Rs. 2.

A-6946. That is to say the rents here are about one-third of what they are in Bombay ?—Yes.

A-6947. Have you any members of trade unions in your mill ?—No. When there was a strike in the other mill the trade union men came to me and said that they wanted to organize a union. I said that I had no objection if the men wanted to organize themselves. They then asked us to help them. But I said " How can we help you. If the men want a union I am prepared to agree." Our people told these trade union men that they were quite happy, and that in any of their difficulties they could go straight to their employers and talk to them about their difficulties, and they asked why they should form themselves into a trade union. During the last month these trade union men have been trying again for a special purpose, but have not been successful yet.

A-6948. *Mr. Ahmed* : What do you mean by a special purpose ?—Because your Commission was coming here. They wanted our workers to boycott your Commission. Just after you left this morning they came and said " Boycott the Whitley Commission. Nobody should go and answer questions there." These men are not of this district even.

A-6949. *Mr. Clow* : Are your weavers Mussalmans or Hindus ?—I have Hindus as well as Mussalmans. I have 17 per cent. Muhammadans.

A-6950. Your weavers are mostly Hindus ?—Yes.

A-6951. Can you give us any idea of what an ordinary worker eats during the day? What meals does he have?—He has a light meal at about 8 o'clock in the morning.

A-6952. He has nothing before he goes to the mill?—I do not think so.

A-6953. What does he have in the mill?—*Jwari* and *dal* and chillies, and then at 12 o'clock he goes home to his dinner. If he happens to live in the village which is about two miles from here he takes his food inside the mill.

A-6954. What does the ordinary spinner have for his dinner?—*Jwari* and *dal*. That is the staple food.

A-6955. Does he have two or three meals a day?—Generally two chief meals, and a light meal in the morning. Now-a-days they have taken to have tea two or three times during the day.

A-6956. Do they have any vegetables?—Yes.

A-6957. Regularly or only sometimes?—Sometimes, because there is a scarcity of vegetables during the summer here. During the winter they dry their vegetables and then utilize them in the summer.

A-6958. Do they get any mangoes here?—Yes.

A-6959. Do they get any milk?—Yes; but whether they take it or not is another question. They have their own buffaloes at their homes and they sell milk to others.

A-6960. Do they get any *ghee*?—Yes, but not often. They use oil more than *ghee*.

A-6961. How many of your workers have fields of their own?—Almost all the jobbers have, because they are saving every year. I remember one jobber who was always spending his money in drink. I gave him some good advice, and he left off drinking, and now after ten years he has accumulated ten thousand rupees.

A-6962. Where did he get that money from?—He saved it.

A-6963. What are you paying him?—Rs. 125 a month.

A-6964. Surely he must have some other income?—Ordinarily among the people you will find that the man has to work not only for himself but for others who depend upon him; but here every soul works, and their expenses are not great. Not only does the jobber work but his wife and children. So it is not only a matter of Rs. 125 a month.

A-6965. Do the jobbers' wives work?—Yes. Why not.

A-6966. You do not think the jobbers get money from the people in the mill?—No.

A-6967. You are sure of that?—I am sure of that. There was a complaint made to me that a jobber was taking bribes. I enquired into the matter and dismissed him on the spot.

A-6968. *The Chairman*: You have daily personal contact with your work-people?—Yes. Everybody is allowed to see me at any time.

A-6969. *Mr. Clow*: Have you any managing agent here, or do the Directors manage the business directly?—I am their representative.

A-6970. There is no firm of managing agents?—Not here.

A-6971. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: There is a firm of managing agents of the mills, and you are the managing agents' representative?—Yes.

A-6972. But your mill is run by managing agents?—Certainly.

A-6973. *Miss Power*: How is your labour taken on at the mills? Who brings it to you?—The people come of their own accord every month and we take on whatever we want.

A-6974. They come individually. They are not brought by the jobber?—No; they come individually.

A-6975. Who makes the selection?—The departmental heads.

A-6976. The jobber has nothing to do with the selection?—No.

A-6977. You state that some of your work-people are saving. Have you any thrift society which you run or which the people themselves run?—No.

A-6978. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can they put their savings with you?—If they want to, but we do not give them any interest. They generally put it into the land or buy gold.

A-6979. *Mr. Clow*: Or buffaloes?—Yes; they do side business like that.

A-6980. *Miss Power*: You tell us that one of the causes of the good feeling between you and your workers is that they can discuss their difficulties directly with you. What

sort of machinery has been set up for that purpose. You do not discuss these difficulties with each individual worker, do you?—When he has any difficulty an individual worker comes straight to me and I enquire into the matter.

A-6981. Any worker of any grade?—Yes.

A-6982. But supposing the workers have a grievance which is common to a whole lot of them?—If there is a common grievance they go to their jobbers and the jobbers report it to the departmental heads, and the departmental heads report it to me; but an individual worker can come and see me at any time.

A-6983. How long has that system been in operation?—From 1908. I also started a provident fund but it had to be given up.

A-6984. Are there any sort of educational facilities for the half-timers?—No.

A-6985. Is there a municipal school?—Yes, just near our mill.

A-6986. Are your half-timers getting any education at all?—No.

A-6987. *Miss Cama*: How many women do you employ?—132.

A-6988. Do they all live in the city?—Yes.

A-6989. They go out for their meals in the afternoon?—Some do; others take their meals here.

A-6990. What happens to their children? Do they bring them to the mills?—No, they do not.

A-6991. Do they give them opium in order to keep them quiet at home?—I do not think much opium is given here.

A-6992. There is in the Deccan?—Yes, but not here. The women here are of a little higher caste than those in the Deccan.

A-6993. Would you be in favour of having a crèche?—Yes; we are thinking of establishing one.

A-6994. *Mr. Asavle*: You say that you always give a hearing to any worker who thinks he has a complaint?—Yes.

A-6995. Have you received any general complaint since you have taken over charge?—Yes. At the time of the strike there were many complaints but they were without any foundation.

A-6996. In what year was that?—About 1920 there was a dispute. They wanted to have their wages increased. What we wanted to give them was actually more than what they were asking. It was really a misunderstanding and not a complaint.

A-6997. Where do your Muhammadan workers come from?—Generally they are local men and men from the United Provinces.

A-6998. You say you have nearly 151 children?—Yes; half-timers.

A-6999. Of what age?—Between 14 and 12.

A-7000. When I enquired at your mill this morning one of the heads of the departments told me that some of the boys there were under 12 years of age?—If you had enquired of me I would have shown you their ticket and certificate. Unless a boy passes the doctor we do not employ him.

A-7001. What do you pay the half-timers?—From Rs. 5 to 6.

A-7002. Do you say you are intending to provide crèches for the children of your women workers?—Yes, we intend to do that.

A-7003. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say you are in favour of releasing your workers from the clutches of the money-lenders, and you say that you charge 6 per cent. on the money that you lend your workers?—No, I did not say that. We do not charge them any interest.

A-7004. I think you mentioned from 6 to 12 per cent?—I was referring there to the cases which I settled with the money-lenders.

A-7005. Did the money-lenders agree to that?—Yes, because they saw the difficulty they would have in getting their money. The court would order repayment of the debt by instalments of from four to eight annas.

A-7006. You think the example which you are setting should be copied by other employers?—I think so. I do not know how far it would be successful in Bombay, because there are so many enticements to the worker there. Here we are simply living our own village life.

A-7007. Since you are so kind to advance money to the workers without interest in order to free them from their indebtedness, I suppose you are in favour of providing more

housing accommodation for your workers?—We provide *chawls* for them. We charge Rs. 1-4-0 for accommodation for which they would have to pay Rs. 2 outside.

A-7008. Have you provided sufficient accommodation?—Up to two years ago we had to allot these *chawls* to outsiders, whom we charged Rs. 2, but since then all the *chawls* are occupied by our own men. We intend to construct some more.

A-7009. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many rooms have you got?—120. Then again these people like to take a piece of ground. We charge them 12 annas a year for a piece of land 40' x 25'. They build their own huts on that land. They like these huts better because they can keep their own bullocks and cows.

A-7010. *Mr. Ahmed*: Have they time to go home to their *chawls* during the one-hour interval in the middle of the day?—Yes, these *chawls* are just behind our mills.

A-7011. Are you in favour of erecting a recreation ground for your workers in the same way as you have erected one for your higher officials?—We have given room for one in their *chawls*, on which they play wrestling matches, and so on.

A-7012. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What is the value of the land here?—For building purposes about Rs. 700 to Rs. 1,000 an acre.

A-7013. *Mr. Ahmed*: And by the side of the recreation ground you will probably build a small house for the education of their children?—I suggested that to one of our managers, but he said that education was the duty of the Government. I proposed in commemoration of our jubilee to build a maternity home, a hospital and a school for elementary and technical education, but the manager was against the school at the time and the Board did not pass it.

A-7014. Are you in favour of starting it?—The municipality is doing it. We spend Rs. 22 per boy per year for education, which is highest in the whole Presidency.

A-7015. *The Chairman*: You think it better that all the children of a district should be educated together rather than keeping the millworkers' children separate from the other population?—Certainly. We are going to have compulsory education now.

A-7016. *Mr. Cliff*: Is the cost Rs. 22 per child, or per head of the population?—It is Rs. 22 per boy learning at the school.

A-7017. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are a man of the world. The Government always says it is lacking in money for the purposes of education. You are the proprietor of these big mills. You are a patriotic man. Do you not mind starting a school?—You will find that most of the boys who have become engineers in the district area have come from our mills.

A-7018. You have a technical school?—No. We take those boys as apprentices, and eventually they pass their engineering examination.

A-7019. You train them in your mills and then they go up for their examination in order to become engineers?—Yes. When the High School was started I put forward a scheme to start a technical school at a small expense, but at that time it was not agreed to.

A-7020. You are in favour of this technical school?—Yes.

A-7021. You expect Government to help you with funds?—It cannot be done without the assistance of Government.

A-7022. In the meantime are you giving any facilities to your workers in order that they may become more efficient?—Yes.

A-7023. You have with you a number of workers who have worked for such long periods as 20, 30, and 40 years. Do you give them any pension when they leave your service?—Yes, I do.

A-7024. After how many years' service does a man become entitled to a pension?—When a man becomes unfit for work we give him pension.

A-7025. I saw a man in your mill yesterday. He was very old and he said he had worked 50 years. Why did you not give him a pension?—There are many men like that and I am willing to give pension to all of them. But they persist in working in the mill. They want to be given light work and we give them light work. The reason is: they would not get the same amount by way of pension as they would get by way of wages. Naturally they stay on doing light work.

A-7026. At what age does a man become entitled to pension?—When he becomes unfit for work.

A-7027. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Irrespective of age, even though he has been with you only for one year?—No. I would not give a pension if he had been with me only for one year.

A-7028. How long should he have served under you so as to be eligible for a pension?—At least 8 to 10 years.

A-7029. *Mr. Ahmed*: You would agree to give a pension to a man who has worked under you for 8 to 10 years. How much would you give each man? Would it depend on the number of years he had served you and the wages that he had been getting?—No. There is no fixed rate for pension. It depends on the needs and merits of the individual worker. In one case the pension paid to a widow is the same as the wages her husband was getting. In this case we saw that the widow could not do any work, so we paid her the full wages her husband was getting.

A-7030. If you had no fixed rate, would not the workers be at the mercy of the jobbers?—No. The work turned out by the labourers is on record and the jobber cannot do anything with it.

A-7031. Do you recruit men through the jobbers?—No.

A-7032. What then does he do in your mill?—He supervises the work done in the department and he is responsible for the upkeep of the machinery.

A-7033. Does he distribute the work among the workers?—No, even for such minor matters as the transfer of a worker from one department to another department, the jobber will have to come to me. He cannot do it by himself.

A-7034. Yours is the only mill probably here which does not recruit men through jobbers. Generally we hear that the mills recruit their workers through jobbers.—Yes, that is what happens when there is scarcity of labour. It was the case here before 1908 when the labour was imported from outside districts. Our jobbers brought them from other districts. Afterwards we began to train local labour and since then we have had no need to rely on jobbers.

A-7035. Has the supply of labour here been always in excess of your demand?—Yes.

A-7036. Therefore there should be much unemployment here?—No.

A-7037. Suppose you wanted to get 10,000 men to-morrow, would you be able to get them?—No, the total population is only 23,000 including men, women and children.

A-7038. Would you be able to get 500?—I doubt it very much. I could not get even 100.

A-7039. *The Chairman*: How many men wait at your gates for work every week?—About 40 to 50 every month. We make a selection from among them.

A-7040. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do not your weavers work 10 to 11 hours under the Factories Act. They are supposed to work 10 hours, but they actually work not more than 8 hours.

A-7041. Have you any objection to reducing the number of hours from 10 to 8½ a day?—Even then they would not be at the work for full 8½ hours. They would spend some time in going out. The same thing happened when we reduced the number of hours from 12 to 10. We introduced the ticket system, but that did not have the desired effect, and we had to abandon that.

A-7042. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Did they object to the ticket system?—Yes, they did. That was one of the grievances for which they went on strike.

A-7043. *The Chairman*: Did I understand you to say that even if the hours under the Factories Act were reduced to 8, there would still be the desire to go out during the morning and the actual working hours would be reduced to 7 or even less?—Yes, that is so.

A-7044. *Mr. Ahmed*: Your workers do hard work 10 hours a day in the ginning department, so that they might die 10 years or so earlier than others. Are you not in favour of ameliorating their conditions?—You saw many workers who had worked so many years. Some of them are older than me, but still they are able to do hard work.

A-7045. Are you not in favour of increasing their wages from 5 annas to 10 annas?—But the industry must be in a position to bear the expenditure. You have seen how the industry is depressed.

A-7046. But I understand that the managing agents make a profit of 20 to 30 per cent?—The managing agents have no magic wands to make such profits.

A-7047. *The Chairman*: I understood from you that there was no industry which had to face a greater competition within itself than the ginning. We were informed that there were more ginning factories than were requisite to deal with the crop. Is that your view?—Yes, that is the case. A ginning factory can be started with a small capital, so that even in small villages you will find two or three gins worked with oil engines.

A-7048. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Have some of these gins closed down?—When two or more gins work in a group, some close down in order that the others may have full work.

A-7049. So that there is not enough work for all the gins ?—No.

A-7050. *Mr. Ahmed* : Have you made any provision for the supply of pure drinking water to your labourers ?—Yes, we have. We take water from the Railway at Rs. 1-4-0 for 1,000 gallons and supply it to our workers. I am also the President of the Municipality here. At first the Municipality was not able to finance a water-supply scheme, so the mill has given a loan to the Municipality for this purpose. The scheme is now completed and people are being supplied with pure water from it.

A-7051. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How many men have you working in your mills ?—1,395 workers.

A-7052. *Mr. Ahmed* : Have you no dining shed for your workers ?—We have one, but they do not use it.

A-7053. *Mr. Cliff* : Has the total number of your employees been reduced or increased in recent years ?—It has been increased in recent years because our spindles were increased within the last two or three years.

A-7054. With regard to the women workers and the half-timers, have they been increased or decreased in recent years ?—They are just about the same number that were employed before.

A-7055. You said that the boys in the spinning shed are trained as weavers. Does the management of the mill train them as weavers ?—If a boy wants to transfer himself from the spinning department to the weaving department, he comes to us and says so. He is then allowed to work in the weaving department for an hour or two every day. All the while he keeps his job in the spinning department. He learns weaving in a month or so and is then transferred to that department.

A-7056. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : He helps a weaver in the weaving department and learns work ?—Yes.

A-7057. *Mr. Cliff* : Is he on time-work or piece-work in the spinning department ?—Spinners are paid monthly wages, while weavers are on piece-work.

A-7058. When the spinner leaves the spinning department to learn work in the weaving department for a few hours in the day, do you make any deduction in his wages ?—No, we do not make any deduction.

A-7059. Have you engaged any special weaver to train these boys ?—No. The boys generally go to some relative of theirs in the weaving department.

A-7060. You say that he learns work in a month or so ?—Yes.

A-7061. How many weavers have you trained in this way ?—We have trained many weavers. Half the weavers in the weaving department of our mill have come from other departments after having had this kind of training. That is why you find so many men in the weaving department who have been in the mill for many years.

A-7062. Have you found the weavers trained in that way to be quite satisfactory ?—Yes.

A-7063. Do they get on to the normal standard list as soon as they come in ?—In the beginning they do not. But after a few months, they are put on the normal standard list. There are very few who are not so put. There are a few who get Rs. 60 to Rs. 70 a month. They are some of the best weavers. I generally offer them the post of jobbers, but they would not accept it, because they get more as weavers than as jobbers.

A-7064. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How much does a spinner get ?—The ring boy gets Rs. 24 to Rs. 25 a month.

A-7065. Does he look after one side ?—Yes.

A-7066. What is your average number of counts ?—20's. We cannot try two sides here.

A-7067. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Does your ginning factory work throughout the year ?—No, it works only for the season.

A-7068. How many months in the year does it work ?—It begins to work in October or November and goes on till February.

A-7069. How many people do you employ ?—40 to 50 people.

A-7070. What happens to them when they are not under your employ ?—They must be working in some other industries.

A-7071. But you make no provision for them ?—No. The ginning is practically given on contract. We give the contract at so much per *palls* and the contractor employs his own men.

A-7072. With regard to the payment of wages, on what day do you pay them ?—On the Thursday or the Friday after the 20th of the month, next to the one for which the

wages are due. Because Saturday is a bazaar day here, and if the wages are paid on Thursday or Friday it would help the workers to buy their articles.

A-7073. So that a man has to wait for more than 20 days after his wages have fallen due ?—Yes, but if he wanted an advance he could take it from me.

A-7074. You say that there is a weekly bazaar here. The women generally make their purchases every week from the weekly bazaar. Would it not be helpful to the workers if you gave them their wages weekly ?—No, I do not think it will be helpful to the workers. If they got their wages on the bazaar day they would spend everything at once. On the other hand I am ready to give them advances whenever they want it. I give them advances for festivals. Suppose the pay-day is the 20th and *Dieali* falls on the 10th, I give them an advance for the festival.

A-7075. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Could they get an advance whenever they liked ?—Yes.

A-7076. Could they get it every week ?—Yes, if they wanted.

A-7077. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Suppose every man came to you for an advance every week. Would you give it ?—I would then have to consider my position, because it would complicate the pay sheets considerably and make it very difficult for me to pay them at the end of the month.

The Chairman : It would be more simple to pay them their actual wages every week.

A-7078. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you not think, as the Chairman has pointed out, that it would be easier to make up the accounts every week and pay your men weekly on the bazaar day ?—No, it would be difficult to make up the books.

A-7079. Is that all the difficulty and is there no other ?—There is no other difficulty. But I do not think it would be in the interests of the workers to pay them weekly.

A-7080. You do not think it would benefit them to pay weekly ?—No.

A-7081. There is a weekly bazaar here and the women make their purchases every week from that bazaar. Obviously would it not be an advantage for them to have their wages every week, instead of borrowing money from you ? Would they not welcome that system ?—I do not know whether they would welcome the change.

A-7082. Would that not clearly be an advantage to them ?—But there would not be any stability in their employment.

A-7083. Your objections to a weekly payment of wages are : you think it would not be an advantage to them ; there would be no stability of employment and that would be a disadvantage to you ; and lastly it would be difficult to make up your accounts every week. Have you any other objection ?—No. The main difficulty is one of making up the books.

A-7084. With regard to unions you would have no objection if your workers organized themselves into a union ?—I have no objection if they work on right lines under the guidance of those who have had experience of these things.

A-7085. If a worker in your mill had a grievance, what would he do to get it redressed ?—He would himself go to me and represent the matter. Sometimes I receive anonymous letters and I enquire into the matter.

A-7086. Is it a usual thing for you to receive anonymous letters ?—Yes, I get many anonymous letters and generally I enquire into the matter. It was from the reeling department that I got most of them.

A-7087. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : There is no regular system by which a grievance can be redressed.—There is no regular system, but anybody can approach us and have his grievance redressed.

A-7088. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : When did you last increase the wages of your workers ?—Since 1913 we did not increase the wages, but we began to give 75 per cent. more to the piece-workers and 61 per cent. to the time-workers.

A-7089. You are sending a statement of the wages you pay your workers. Would you also include in that statement the increases you have given since 1914 ?—Yes.

A-7090. You said that the workers should be given a pension according to their individual needs and that the work they had done was on record. Do you not consider that it would be a better system to standardize the rate of pensions ?—I have no objection to that, but even then you will have to consider cases on their merits.

A-7091. You said that you paid a pension to a widow, equivalent to the wages which her husband had been earning.—Yes.

A-7092. Did that man die as a result of an accident in your mill ?—No. He was very old and he was promised a pension. But he would not leave the mill. He always came

and sat in the mill and we had to pay him his full wages. When he died we gave a pension to his widow.

A-7093. You agree that it is quite a human thing to do that?—No doubt it is.

A-7094. *Col. Russell*: What medical facilities do you provide for your workers?—We have a dispensary.

A-7095. What staff do you employ?—We have a qualified assistant surgeon, one compounder and one dresser.

A-7096. Is he a part time doctor?—Yes.

A-7097. When does he attend the mill?—He goes to the mill one hour in the evening after 6 o'clock, when the mill closes.

A-7098. Is the dispensary kept open to enable the workers to take medicine after 6 o'clock?—Yes.

A-7099. Have you any maternity home?—No. We provided four beds for this purpose, but no one took advantage of that. Since 1926 there have been only 2 or 3 cases from the workers. All the rest have been from the clerical staff.

A-7100. Is there any medical ward in the local dispensary?—Yes, there is.

A-7101. Is it made use of?—I think about 30 to 40 cases go there from the whole town.

A-7102. Are there any trained midwives attached to the hospital?—We get their services from the Nursing Association.

A-7103. And you subscribe to them?—Yes, we give Rs. 600 a year.

A-7104. Have you any records as to the amount of absenteeism in your mill?—No.

A-7105. Have you any idea of the amount of absenteeism due to sickness?—There are only very few cases of absence due to sickness.

A-7106. Are there no diseases in Jalgaon at all? You must be having a certain amount of sickness among your employees.—I could give you the figures of sickness since 1924.

A-7107. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Among the absentees, could you differentiate between those who were sick and those who went on a holiday?—No, we cannot separate them. I shall give you the figures of the amount of sickness. In 1924 the number of workers who took advantage of the dispensary was 650 men, 13 women and 21 children. This does not show the actual number of men who attended the hospital. This only shows the number of visits paid by them. The same man might have attended more than once. In 1925 the number of workers was 1,772 out of which there were 1,486 men, 186 women and 120 children. Out of that number, 809 were relatives of our workers. There were 19 cases of venereal disease for which we gave six salversan injections. The number of minor operations was 40.

A-7108. I note from your figures that you have a very low sickness rate?—Yes.

A-7109. Are you in favour of introducing a sickness insurance scheme for your workers?—I do not think our workers will take advantage of that.

A-7110. Have you considered the question at all?—No.

A-7111. If a scheme for sickness insurance were introduced, would you be prepared to subscribe your quota?—We would have no objection.

A-7112. You say that many of your workers earn Rs. 15 to 20 a month. Have you any figures to show the amount they spend on diet?—I think that for the kind of diet they take, Rs. 15 to 20 is quite sufficient for a man, his wife and two children.

A-7113. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Would the amount be nearer Rs. 20 than Rs. 15?—I am only giving roughly what the average will be. I have not gone into details. During the War when the price of grain was high and the grains were difficult to get, we distributed grains free to the workers. We gave rice, wheat or *javari*, according as they were available. In addition we gave some salt and chillies.

A-7114. *Col. Russell*: How much were you giving?—We gave what was considered sufficient for one man.

A-7115. *Mr. Glow*: You did not give him all the grain he needed?—No. Suppose there was a family of five members including the worker. We gave enough grain for one worker free. And he was allowed to buy whatever was necessary for the other members of his family at cost price. But when the prices went down they did not want our grain and preferred to have payment in money. That was one of the causes of the strike.

A-7116. Could you give us figures showing what amount of rice, wheat, or *juari*, salt and chillies you considered sufficient for one man?—Yes, I will do that.

A-7117. *The Chairman*: I understand that during our visit to your mill one of our members was told there was a sweeper whose eldest son was just going in for the English matriculation, that the younger son who was with him, was learning in the vernacular school and was able to read and write *Marathi* at the age of 10 or 11 years. Do you know that case yourself?—Yes.

A-7118. It is very interesting, because it is sometimes said that these people have no desire for advancement?—There is a desire for advancement in everybody.

A-7119. You confirm that case from your own knowledge?—Yes.

A-7120. Do you find in many of your workers a keen desire to do the best they can for their children in the way of education?—Yes. In such cases we also give them scholarships. At present there is a water carrier's son who is reading in the high school. He cannot pay his fees and we are paying that for him.

A-7121. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Could you tell me what the prevailing rates of wages in the agricultural districts near here are?—I could not say.

(The witness withdrew.)

MARUTI MAIRAJI SINDHI, NARSU TUKARAM and KRISHNA TUKARAM, workers in the Pressing Factory at Jalgaon.

A-7122. *The Chairman*: You are workers in the pressing factory?—(Krishna Tukaram): Yes.

A-7123. How long has each of you worked in the pressing factory?—Narsu Tukaram and myself are working for the last ten years when the press is working. (Maruti Mairaji Sindhi): I am working for the last three years.

A-7124. When the pressing factory is not working, what is your occupation?—We work as daily labourers.

A-7125. Have you any land?—(Krishna Tukaram): Yes; I have lands in Satara district.

A-7126. Then you have come a long way?—Yes.

A-7127. I understand that you are a contractor?—Yes.

A-7128. You take a contract in the pressing factory for pressing so much cotton; is that so?—Yes.

A-7129. And the payment for pressing so many bales of cotton is made to you?—Yes; I receive Rs. 32 for 100 bales of cotton.

A-7130. And from that how many men do you pay?—I have 8 men on Rs. 1-2-0 each; 9 on Rs. 1-7-0; 2 on Rs. 0-15-0 and 7 on Rs. 0-12-0.

A-7131. *Mr. Clow*: Maruti Mairaji Sindhi, you said you are a worker in the pressing factory. What do you get per day?—(Maruti Mairaji Sindhi): My earnings are about Rs. 50 to 60 a month.

A-7132. But you told us this morning that you got only 9 annas a day?—The wage depends upon the work done in a day; the lowest wage that I earn in a day is 5½ annas and the highest is Rs. 1-7-0.

The Chairman: Even taking Rs. 1-7-0 as the earning per day it does not come to Rs. 50 a month. Perhaps the presence of the contractor prevents him from giving correct information. I think it would be better to examine these men separately.

(The witnesses were then examined separately.)

MARUTI MAIRAJI SINDHI.

A-7133. *Mr. Clow*: At what rate per 100 bales are you paid?—(Maruti Mairaji Sindhi): At the rate of Rs. 1-7-0.

A-7134. How many bales did you press yesterday?—112; and to-day I was able to press only 52 bales.

A-7135. Are you paid daily?—No; only on every Saturday.

A-7136. How much did you get last Saturday?—Rs. 3-15-0.

A-7137. And the Saturday before how much did you get?—Rs. 1-12-0.

A-7138. *The Chairman* : Is that for working full week or for part of the week ?—I got Rs. 3-15-0 for three days' work while I got Rs. 1-12-0 for two days' work.

A-7139. *Mr. Clow* : From what district do you come ?—From Ahmednagar.

A-7140. Who brought you here ?—I myself came.

A-7141. Why did you come here from Ahmednagar ?—To earn money to maintain myself.

A-7142. Are you living here with your family ?—Yes.

A-7143. *The Chairman* : Does your wife work ?—I am not married ; I have my mother and two brothers ; my mother attends to household work and does not go for any other employment.

A-7144. Do you do any other work when the press is not working ?—Yes, I fill up-bags with ground-nut cakes.

A-7145. You said that you earned Rs. 3-15-0 last week in the press for doing 3 days' work. How much did you earn in the last week in other work ?—Rs. 2.

A-7146. *Mr. Clow* : How long have you lived in this district ?—For about 12 or 13 years.

A-7147. What work did you do in the hot season last year ?—I was working as a labourer on Re. 0-10-0 a day in the Bhagirathi Mill.

A-7148. What work did you do in that mill ?—I was employed as a coolie in building work.

A-7149. When did you have your first meal to-day ?—At 6 in the morning.

A-7150. What did you have ?—I ate simply *bajra* bread with chutney and a chilly.

A-7151. When did you have your next meal ?—At 12 a.m.

A-7152. What did you have ?—*Bajra* bread with *urd* pulse.

A-7153. In the evening what will you have ?—I will eat *bajra* bread with some pulse or a little vegetable which I can get from the market.

A-7154. Do you get vegetables every day ?—I bring vegetables nearly every day but not pulse, grain and other things, I get them every Saturday which is market day here.

A-7155. Do you eat vegetables every day or only some days ?—Some days.

A-7156. How often ?—Every alternate day.

A-7157. Do you ever get any *ghee* ?—I eat *ghee* only when I am ill or on holiday.

A-7158. Do you ever get any milk ?—Yes.

A-7159. Every day ?—A quarter of a seer every morning.

A-7160. Where do you get it from ?—I get it from a seller.

A-7161. What do you pay him for it ?—1 anna.

A-7162. *The Chairman* : You said you had a brother ; do you and your brother live with your mother ?—Yes.

A-7163. In the evening do you share your meal together ?—Yes.

A-7164. What work does your brother do ?—He works with me in the press and also outside.

A-7165. Did you come all together, you, your brother and your mother, when you came to Jalgaon ?—Yes.

A-7166. You came because you thought you could do better here ?—Yes.

A-7167. Do you consider that you are doing better here than if you had remained in Ahmednagar ?—Yes.

A-7168. Have you any debts ; do you owe money to the *bania* or to the money-lender ?—I had some debts when the family was in Ahmednagar, but now there is no debt.

A-7169. *Mr. Asavle* : Supposing you work throughout the whole month continuously in the press factory, what will you earn ?—Rs. 60 or 70 maximum wages.

A-7170. *Mr. Clow* : Is that you and your brother ?—Alone.

A-7171. *Mr. Asavle* : Then why do you earn so little as annas 5 and 6 now ?—There is no work.

The Chairman : I imagine it very seldom happens that a press works for the whole of the week throughout the month.

A-7172. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Would you prefer this life that you are leading now, or the life when you had your lands in the village at Ahmednagar ?—I would like to be in Ahmednagar if I had my lands.

- A-7173. Has your brother a family ?—He is married but he has no children.
- A-7174. Are you all living together ?—His wife is with her parents, and we men are living together.
- A-7175. Do you think what you and your brother between you earn in the course of a week is sufficient for your purposes ?—Yes.
- A-7176. *The Chairman* : Was your land sold because of the claims of a money-lender before you came here ?—Yes, it has gone on account of an ancestral debt.
- A-7177. Why would you prefer to be back on your land instead of being here working as a labourer ?—If I get lands, of course I should go.

(The witness withdrew.)

KRISHNA TUKARAM.

- A-7178. *Mr. Clow* : You are paid Rs. 32 per 100 bales ?—Yes.
- A-7179. You pay 8 men Rs. 1-8-0 and you pay As. 12 per labourer per day ?—Yes.
- A-7180. Is it 12 annas per 100 bales ?—Yes.
- A-7181. You pay 2 labourers As. 15 per 100 bales ?—Yes.
- A-7182. Who pays you the Rs. 32 ?—The press man.
- A-7183. Last week how much were you paid ?—I got Rs. 85 last week.
- A-7184. For how many days did the press work last week ?—It was working 4 days.
- A-7185. How do you collect your labourers ; where do you get them from ?—I get them from Jalgaon.
- A-7186. Do you get the same men every press season, or do you get different men ?—I get different men every season.
- A-7187. Do you give them advances of money ?—I advance them some money so that they shall again come to me and work the following season.
- A-7188. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : What interest do you charge these men ?—I do not charge any interest.
- A-7189. This Rs. 85 last week was for all the 26 workers, *plus* your own profit ?—Yes.
- A-7190. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How much did you yourself make net last week ?—I got about Rs. 9 for last week.
- A-7191. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Do you go to the *bustis* and collect your labour ?—I do not go anywhere to collect my people ; they come to me.
- A-7192. Have you any difficulty in finding these men ?—No, I have not experienced any difficulty.
- A-7193. *The Chairman* : There are always plenty of men available ?—Yes, I get people.
- A-7194. Do you employ Narsu Tukaram ?—Yes, he is one of my labourers ; he is one of the class who are paid Rs. 1-7-0 a day per 100 bales.
- A-7195. Do you also employ Kriahna Tukaram ?—Yes, he is of the same class.

(The witness withdrew.)

SAINI, daughter of Roopla, and JANGLI, daughter of Lala, women workers.

- A-7196. *Miss Cama* : Do you work continuously in the factory ?—(Jangli) : We do not work continuously throughout the year, but two or three months as long as the press is open ; we work three or four days in the week, and if there is enough cotton we work for 6 days.
- A-7197. What time do you come to work ?—7 o'clock.
- A-7198. When do you go home ?—We return home at 6 in the evening.
- A-7199. What intervals do you get ?—We come to work at 7 ; the ginning factory stops at 12 for one hour and starts again at 1 o'clock.
- A-7200. At what time do you go home ?—Sometimes we finish at 2, sometimes at 4 and sometimes after 6.

- A-7201. Are you *naikins* or workers?—We are workers.
- A-7202. *The Chairman* : Does the machinery run after 6 o'clock?—No.
- A-7203. Have you children?—I have two daughters, one six years and one four years old.
- A-7204. Is your husband alive?—Yes.
- A-7205. Have you (Saini) children?—(Saini) : One daughter about 11 or 12 years old.
- A-7206. Where are the children during the hours that you are working in the ginning factory?—(Jangli) : At home.
- A-7207. *Col. Russell* : How many of your children have died?—I had 7 children. (Saini) : I have only one daughter.
- A-7208. *The Chairman* : Who takes care of the children when you are working in the ginning factory?—(Jangli) : My mother-in-law. (Saini) : I send mine home to my mother-in-law.
- A-7209. What wages do you earn?—As. 12 per 100 bales. We all work in groups.
- A-7210. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Are you engaged by a contractor?—The owner.
- A-7211. *Miss Cama* : What wages does your husband get?—My husband gets Rs. 18. (Saini) : My husband gets Rs. 12.
- A-7212. How many members are there in your family?—(Jangli) : 5 people in my family. (Saini) : Myself and my husband ; my daughter has been sent to my mother-in-law.
- A-7213. What did you earn last month?—(Jangli) : I get about Rs. 2 or Rs. 2-8-0 per week.
- A-7214. Have you any debts?—My husband may have debts ; I do not know. (Saini) : My husband has a debt of Rs. 200.
- A-7215. What interest do you pay?—I had borrowed Rs. 200, but with interest it was Rs. 250 and now I have been paying back Rs. 4 a month.
- A-7216. What is the sum remaining at present?—I have still to pay Rs. 200.
- A-7217. What do you give the *naikin*?—(Jangli) : We have no *naikin* but a *mukadam*.
- A-7218. What do you pay the *mukadam*?—We pay 1 pice for water and 1 pice to the *mukadam* per week.
- A-7219. *Mr. Asavle* : Do you pay only half an anna in a week?—Yes.
- A-7220. *The Chairman* : Do you pay that or is that deducted from your wages?—We pay it to the *mukadam*.
- A-7221. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Does the *mukadam* deduct it from your wages before you are paid your wages, or do you pay it yourselves?—No, we pay it ourselves ; the *mukadam* supplies us with drinking water.
- A-7222. *Miss Cama* : What food do you eat during the day?—*Jowari*.
- A-7223. What time is your first meal?—8 o'clock.
- A-7224. Do you have this meal in the factory or at home?—In the factory.
- A-7225. Of what does the first meal consist?—We have bread and chilly.
- A-7226. When was your next meal?—12 o'clock.
- A-7227. What did you eat?—*Jowari* bread and *dal*.
- A-7228. When will you have your next meal?—3 o'clock.
- A-7229. What will you eat?—We have rice and *dal* mixed at night. We do not have vegetables every day.
- A-7230. Do you have milk?—No, we cannot afford to have milk.
- A-7231. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you buy milk for your children?—No.
- A-7232. Why not?—There are 5 members in the family and I cannot afford it.
- A-7233. How long have you been in this district?—We belong to Jalgaon.
- A-7234. What rent do you pay?—Rs. 2 a month. (Saini) : I have got my own home.
- A-7235. How many *saris* and *cholis* do you purchase in a year?—(Jangli) : Two *saris* at Rs. 5 each and 4 *cholis* costing about Rs. 7-8-0.
- A-7236. Do you purchase *chappals*?—Yes ; two pairs in a year at Re. 0-8-0 a pair.

A-7237. When you are not engaged on ginning work, what other work do you do?—We pick grass.

A-7238. What was your total income for the last month?—Rs. 14.

A-7239. Are you paid weekly or monthly?—Weekly.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

PATHANI, daughter of Rahmat Khan, worker.

A-7240. *Miss Cama*: In what factory do you work?—I work in a gin factory the name of which I do not know.

A-7241. How long are you working in the factory?—I joined the factory only a fortnight ago.

A-7242. What work were you doing before you came to the ginning factory?—I was selling grass.

A-7243. What made you leave that work?—Owing to poverty I had to come to the factory.

A-7244. From which place did you come here?—I belong to this place only.

A-7245. What pay do you get?—I get 6 annas a day.

A-7246. Are you paid weekly?—Yes, on every Saturday.

A-7247. What work does your husband do and what are his wages?—When he works under a mason he gets annas 8 a day, otherwise he gets about annas 4 for selling grass.

A-7248. How many members are there in your family?—Three; my husband, my daughter and myself.

A-7249. How many children have you?—I had seven children of whom only three are living now; two of my daughters are married and one is living with me.

A-7250. Are you in debt?—I borrow a little here and there which I repay every week; I have no regular debts.

A-7251. Do you borrow because your pay is not sufficient?—In case I am short of money I borrow from others.

A-7252. How many hours do you work?—I go in the morning at 9 and work till 12; I then get rest for 1½ hours; I again go to work and work till evening.

A-7253. At what time do you leave your work?—At 7-30.

Miss Cama: I was told that there are two shifts in the factory in which the witness works. One shift goes to work at 7 in the morning and returns at 9 when the other shift starts working; the second shift works till 12 and comes back along with the first shift at 3 and continues working till 6 in the evening.

Mr. Cliff: That means that one shift works for 5 hours while the other works for 6 hours.

Miss Cama: That was what I found out.

A-7254. What do you pay the *naikin*?—I do not pay anything.

A-7255. Did you pay anything to the *naikin* for getting you your job?—No.

(The witness withdrew.)

ITALABAI, wife of Sakharam, *naikin*.

A-7256. *The Chairman*: How many women are working under you?—Twenty-four.

A-7257. Were you working at the gin before you became a *naikin*?—Yes, I was working as an ordinary worker and I know all the work.

A-7258. How long were you working, feeding the gin with cotton, before you became a *naikin*?—For three years.

A-7259. Have you any relations in the factory?—Yes, my husband works in the same factory.

A-7260. What work does he do?—He carries cotton to the machine.

A-7261. What pay do you get?—I get Rs. 16 a month.

- A-7262. What pay does your husband get ?—He gets Rs. 4-8-0 per week.
- A-7263. *Miss Cama* : Who pays the women who work under you ?—The manager pays them ; I do not handle money at all.
- A-7264. How many members are there in your family ?—My mother-in-law, my husband, two children and myself.
- A-7265. How much money do you save in a month ?—I am able to save Rs. 20 to 25.
- A-7266. What do you do with your savings ?—I buy jewellery.
- A-7267. *Miss Cama* : What do you spend for your monthly requirements ?—I buy 8 *pails* of *jowari* at Re. 0-12-0 a *pail*, and one *pail* of *dal* for Rs. 1-8-0 ; one seer of chillies for Re. 0-6-0 ; one *pail* of salt for Re. 0-6-0, one anna for vegetables every day.
- A-7268. Do you use *ghee* ?—No ; I use only oil ; every week I purchase half seer of oil for 3 annas.
- A-7269. Do you drink tea ?—No.
- A-7270. How many *saris* do you purchase in a year and at what price ?—Two *saris* at Rs. 7-8-0 each for myself, and two for my mother-in-law at Rs. 10 or 12 each.
- A-7271. What rent do you pay ?—Rs. 2 a month.
- A-7272. What do the women who work under you pay you ?—Each of them pays me one pice a week.
- A-7273. Do you supply them with drinking water ?—No.
- A-7274. That means that you get 6 annas extra every week ?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew and the Commission adjourned to Akola.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH MEETING
SHOLAPUR

Thursday, 20th March 1930

PRESENT:

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
(Medical Assessor).

Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C., *Assistant Commissioner*.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA, *Lady Assessor*.

**Mr. VAIKUNTHLAL S. THAKORE, General Manager, and Mr. K.
 R. RELE, Welfare Secretary of the Sholapur Spinning and
 Weaving Co., Ltd.**

A-7275. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I understand that you are the General Manager of the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd. ?—(Mr. Thakore): Yes.

A-7276. What has been your experience of cotton mill industry ?—I have been engaged in the cotton mill industry since 1906.

A-7277. Where were you all these 24 years; did you spend all your time at Sholapur ?—I was working in Morarji Gokuldas Mills for 10 years and I have been working in the present mills for the last 10 years. I was in Gujerat for 4 years.

A-7278. Mr. Lele, since when are you working here ?—(Mr. Lele): Since 1919.

A-7279. I understand that you are a graduate of the Bombay University ?—Yes.

A-7280. Were you in any other mill before you came here ?—I worked in one of the mills in Bombay for 3 months as a labourer. But it was in a different capacity that I worked there and I had nothing to do with welfare work.

A-7281. Who are the managing agents for this company ?—Messrs. Morarji Gokuldas and Co.

A-7282. Have you got directors ?—Yes, they are in Bombay.

A-7283. And the managing agents ?—They are also in Bombay; Bombay is our head office.

A-7284. Will you tell us how many spindles and looms you have got ?—We have 111,360 spindles and 2,223 looms.

A-7285. What is the highest count that you spin ?—100's.

A-7286. How many frames have you ?—Two frames.

A-7287. Will you please tell us how many weavers work on single looms and how many on double looms ?—Out of the total number of weavers, two-thirds are managing two looms per head and one-third are managing one loom. There are only 12 Northrop automatic looms which are managed by 3 weavers; that is to say, each weaver handles 4 looms.

A-7288. Since when have you introduced these automatic looms ?—Since the last 9 years.

A-7289. Why have you not increased the number of Northrop looms ?—Not only they are costly because of capital expenditure but our jobbers are not so experienced as to work them.

A-7290. You have started a new mill lately. Have you put in any Northrop looms into that ?—No, because we found them to be very costly.

A-7291. Down in Madras we saw one mill having all Northrop looms?—It will be very costly if we were to convert our present looms into Northrop looms.

A-7292. You are not having Northrop looms because they are costly and not because they are objected to by the jobbers and the weavers?—The weavers have got 12 looms now.

A-7293. Yes, but you are having only 12 looms for the last 9 years?—It is a matter for consideration whether by going on to 4 looms they will accept 2 looms wages or 3 looms wages.

A-7294. What wages are you giving the weavers who work on these automatic looms?—We give 3 looms wages.

A-7295. How do you pay a weaver who looks after 2 looms?—We pay him 2 looms wages.

A-7296. Will you please tell us what wages you pay to your weavers?—A double loom weaver gets Rs. 40 to 42 a month on an average, the number of working days being 26 of 10 hours each.

A-7297. What does a weaver on a single-loom get?—Rs. 22 to 23, because the piece-rates are the same in both cases.

A-7298. What does a weaver who works on the Northrop loom earn?—He earns about Rs. 65 to 70. These wages include the high price allowance of 35 per cent. on the actual earnings.

A-7299. Since when are you giving this high price allowance?—It was started in 1920.

A-7300. Do you give them grain allowance over and above that?—We give them 22 seers of grain for Rs. 2-8-0 which is deducted from their wages. In 1921 we had to suffer a loss per head to the extent of Rs. 5. The cost of the grain comes to Rs. 4 row-a-days.

A-7301. Do you give 22 seers of grain for every man, woman and child?—For men and women only; for children we give half the quantity.

A-7302. Will you please tell us what wages you pay to your spinners?—The ring siders get Rs. 20-0-9 including the high price allowance for managing one side of 328 spindles frames, i.e., 164 spindles; in the new mill they have to manage 400 spindles frames, i.e., 200 spindles.

A-7303. How is this Rs. 20-0-9 made up?—Rs. 13-8-0 is the basic rate, *plus* 30 per cent. high price allowance which works out at Rs. 4-0-9, *plus* a monthly bonus of Re. 1; it is really a fortnightly bonus of As. 8 for regular attendance; if he attends all the 13 days he gets As. 8; *plus* Rs. 1-8-0 which is the benefit to workers on account of grain concession.

A-7304. How many spinners have you who look after two sides?—We have 7 spinners who are in the C mill; they look after 400 spindles. The basic rate in the case of these spinners is Rs. 13-12-0 *plus* Rs. 5 extra.

A-7305. Why have you only 7 spinners looking after two sides?—In all on 60's we are hardly running 20 to 24 frames.

A-7306. Will you tell us how many men, women and children are working in these mills?—Out of a total number of 7,592 workers, 5,527 are men, 1,813 are women and 252 are children aged 12 to 15.

A-7307. Chiefly boys or girls?—Mainly boys; there may be about 40 girls.

A-7308. You employ your women mostly as reelers and winders?—Yes.

A-7309. What wages do you pay a reeler?—Reelers are on piece-work. Their average wage will be Rs. 14 for 26 days. As I said, this Rs. 14 includes all the allowances.

A-7310. What is the basic rate?—The average basic rate is Rs. 8-8-3 provided a woman works for 26 days. She gets a high price allowance of Rs. 2-8-0, which is 30 per cent., *plus* 1 anna a day for regular attendance, *plus* benefit on account of grain compensation which is Rs. 1-8-0. The total comes to Rs. 14-2-3. If you take the average absenteeism to be 3 or 4 days the average will be Rs. 11 or 12; on an average she works only for 22 to 23 days in a month.

A-7311. What wages do you pay for your winders?—A ball winder gets Rs. 8-8-0 for 26 days work, *plus* Rs. 2-9-0 as high price allowance, *plus* benefit on account of grain compensation which is Rs. 1-8-0; in other words, she earns Rs. 12-9-9.

A-7312. Does she not get any regular attendance bonus?—No.

A-7313. Why not?—The practice is to give only for reelers. A colour winder's wages are Rs. 2 higher than those of a ball winder.

A-7314. What do you pay for your half-timers?—The basic rate is Rs. 5, plus 30 per cent. high price allowance, plus grain concession which is As. 12, plus half anna daily bonus and As. 2 weekly bonus. The half-timers work for 6 days a week and for 5 hours a day.

A-7315. What does the total come to?—Rs. 8-9-0.

A-7316. I was told by a boy in your mills that he got Rs. 5-4-0 last month?—His basic rate is Rs. 5 and the 30 per cent. high price allowance would be Rs. 1-8-0, i.e., Rs. 6-8-0; out of this Rs. 1-4-0 was deducted for the supply of grain, leaving a balance of Rs. 5-4-0. We give the daily bonus and the weekly bonus in cash, the daily bonus being paid daily and the weekly bonus weekly.

A-7317. Will you tell us how you recruit your labour and where does your labour come from?—According to the statistics that we collected from October 1925 to June 1927, the percentage of work-people claiming to be residents of Sholapur city and suburbs is 33·7; 32 per cent. belong to Sholapur district and 34·3 have migrated from other districts, chiefly from Nizam's Dominions, Nagar, Satara, Poona and other districts.

A-7318. In which of these heads are the criminal tribes included?—They will come under "other districts".

A-7319. How many of them have you employed?—550, including men, women and children.

A-7320. On what work are they mainly engaged?—They are mainly engaged in the dyeing and the spinning section. We have few spinners among them, and women in the reeling department. In the spinning section they are mainly engaged on coolie work.

A-7321. Do you make any difference in the wages between the criminal tribes and other labourers?—No. On the other hand, we have to pay a capitation grant of As. 12 per month to the settlement; in addition, we are paying another As. 12 for the men who are residing in the colony.

A-7322. Is it compulsory on you to pay this amount?—Yes, we have to pay this to Government for every criminal tribe man or woman engaged in this mill. There are three colonies established for criminal tribes now. For carrying on work in those colonies the employers have agreed to pay As. 12 extra for each man or woman residing in the colony.

A-7323. Why have you agreed to pay Rs. 1-8-0 per person extra for the privilege of employing criminal tribes?—We have agreed because it is a form of welfare work.

A-7324. *Miss Power*: Did I understand you to say that a certain group of winders did not get the attendance bonus?—Yes.

A-7325. Why do they not get it?—That is the prevalent system here. You will see that on an average a winder gets more wage than a reeler.

A-7326. Is there any distinction made between winders and reelers?—No.

A-7327. A woman may be taken from the one department to the other as circumstances required?—As a general rule, the winders will not go to the reeling section nor the reelers to the winding section. Each section has entirely a different class of people.

A-7328. In either of these departments are you actually employing more people than you can employ full-time?—Not generally.

A-7329. During the period of trade slackness do they prefer to remain at work?—They do prefer to remain at work, but as we are likely to get complaints of a low wage, we have no other alternative but to reduce the number of women.

A-7330. Is that in fact what you do; you do not share out the work among all the women but actually dismiss some?—We give them one month's notice. If after some time we require them we take them if they come to us for work.

A-7331. Are they given any retaining fee during that time?—No.

A-7332. Do the women belonging to the criminal tribes work alongside the other workers?—No, they are segregated.

A-7333. Is that because the other workers prefer to work separately?—Yes. These women used to quarrel with the Marhatta women who were not able to face them boldly, and consequently they are separated.

A-7334. It is simply a question of discipline ; you find it more convenient to keep them separated ?—Yes.

A-7335. Are the wages the same for the criminal tribes women as for other women ?—In fact, as I have already told you, we are incurring more expenditure on workers belonging to criminal tribes.

A-7336. I believe you made some investigations with regard to indebtedness among your works. Could you tell us something of the investigations you made and what you believe the present position to be ?—About 50 per cent. of the actual workers may roughly be stated to be in debt, the amount varying from just a few rupees to some hundreds of rupees in some cases. A great proportion of these debts is either contracted by the workers themselves or their ancestors prior to the individual joining the mill service, and as such the indebtedness is not of the textile worker but mainly in his capacity as an agricultural worker. In order that any data with regard to indebtedness should serve as a criteria for indebtedness and the economic condition of the textile worker, all statistics regarding debts must be classified under different categories, the most important of which are : loans contracted prior to getting employment in a textile factory (some of these loans may not be worth repaying), loans contracted for purchasing or developing a piece of land or building a house, loans contracted for marriages, a part of which will be utilized for the purchase of ornaments, and loans contracted to meet family expenses. The rates of interest vary from 12 to 42 per cent. and in some cases they are as high as 75 and even 150 per cent. The rate of interest depends mainly on the economic status and the way of living of the individuals borrowing the loans. Those who pay 75 or 150 per cent. rate of interest are the people who cannot get a loan from an average *soukar* or money-lender, and the maximum amount borrowed at such a high rate of interest is somewhere about Rs. 100.

A-7337. Do you know what actual percentage of your workers are indebted ?—50 per cent. of the male workers are indebted. Whatever indebtedness there is it is considered as indebtedness of the family and not of individual workers.

A-7338. Have the mill authorities undertaken any system of lending money to the workers at a low rate of interest ?—We had a system of granting loans from 1919 till 1928. We were granting loans from the loan fund at 6 per cent. interest on the strength of two personal securities, and the highest amount granted during any one year was Rs. 25,000.

A-7339. Is that stopped now ?—Yes. In 1926-27, Rs. 25,311 were granted to 316 people, while in 1927-28, Rs. 23,850 were granted to 805 people. Every year we were recovering the loans by instalments. These systems have been stopped since 1928. Besides this we were giving loans from the provident fund to the extent of their own contributions.

A-7340. Can you tell us the reason why you stopped them ?—The union raised an objection to our right of withholding the wage of the debtors during the times of strike. Our contention was that ordinarily money will be recovered by instalments but if the principal debtor as well as his securities leave the mill after the strike we will have to go to the court for the recovery of the amount. As a result, during the strike we withheld the payment of these people to the extent of the debt taken by them. After the strike was closed and the men returned back to service, we used to take only the instalments. During 1928 we had issued loans to the extent of nearly 50,000, of which about 25,000 was from the provident fund.

A-7341. *Sir Alexander Murray* : How much of that had to be treated as bad debts ?—Nothing. During these 10 years we could not recover only Rs. 4.

A-7342. *Miss Power* : You have stopped both those schemes because of disagreement with the union ?—The provident fund was stopped due to the financial conditions of the trade. The Company's contributions came to Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 50,000, and if we had continued the scheme it would have cost us Rs. 70,000 by next year because more and more people were joining the fund.

A-7343. Can you tell us the effect of the Bombay Maternity Act in your group of mills ?—The Act came into force from 1st of July. From July up to now we have paid 130 cases and 30 more are pending. If this is any guide, we expect that for the coming year there will be at least 200 cases. We pay Rs. 24-8-0 for each case. Personally I find that the benefit that they draw cannot be utilized for the object for which it is meant. The Act mentions that the first payment ought to be made after the delivery within 24 hours or afterwards. An Indian woman cannot come even after 12 days after delivery, and she generally prefers that she should take the money herself rather than give it to her relations. Consequently, they get money after a month or so after delivery. If she had got money much earlier perhaps she would have utilized it for the object for which it was meant.

A-7344. Have you any other criticism of this Act you would like to make?—The law only restricts the period of service before a woman can be entitled to receive maternity benefits. But it does not put any restriction about the resumption of work. As such, when she goes on leave, giving notice of the expected delivery, if she is given at least the pre-maternity benefit, that is 22 days allowance, which is about Rs. 11 or 12, perhaps she might be in a better position to utilize that at the time of delivery. It is not likely that she will borrow money and utilize it in anticipation of getting this money. As it is, you will see them utilizing the money in buying gold ornaments for the child.

A-7345. Have you any views as to the advisability of payment being made in cash or in medical benefits?—We were running a maternity home prior to the Act, and were spending about Rs. 3,000 a year, but as the Act came into force and we had to spend about Rs. 5,000 by way of maternity benefits no matter whether we had a maternity home or not, we had to practically close down our maternity home and reduce our cost to that extent.

A-7346. What were you actually spending on the maternity home?—It was costing us Rs. 3,000 for establishment, etc. Besides that, we were giving the women free maternity benefits by keeping them for three months in the pre-maternity ward and giving light work, the light work being the opening out of the entangled yarn and giving them full wages.

A-7347. You have now stopped that?—Yes. She was also getting free treatment entirely and all the expenditure during the maternity period was being borne by the company; she was being fed free for 12 days; besides that, she was given three weeks' leave on half salary.

A-7348. If the amount that you have to pay compulsorily under the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act is less than the amount you paid under your own voluntary system, why did you completely shut down the maternity home?—It is not less. It was not possible for us to continue running the maternity home as well as paying the benefit under the Act. Rs. 24-8-0 must be paid no matter whether you have got a maternity home or not.

A-7349. *Colonel Russell*: Did the women protest against your shutting of this maternity home?—Those women who were coming to the home up till now will naturally feel the loss.

A-7350. Where are the cases confined now?—Some in their own homes, and some might go to the Dufferin Hospital.

A-7351. *Miss Power*: How many were annually going to the maternity home?—36 a year.

A-7352. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you any opinion to offer on the question of payment in cash or kind or free medical attendance to the woman worker?—I would not like to hit the poor, ignorant and the superstitious labourers by not making any payments whatever if they do not take medical help. For example, when they do not go to the maternity home they are used to get a maternity benefit allowance now. I would like a system by which the people who go to a maternity home started either by the employers or by the State get Rs. 10 allowance in addition to free medical treatment, while those who do not go to the home get Rs. 15 allowance instead of Rs. 24-8-0. The industry should not be taxed further because it may not be in a position to pay it.

A-7353. *Miss Power*: You did not consider an arrangement by which women if they came into the maternity home, would have paid over their maternity benefit to the home?—We had an idea of continuing the scheme on that basis, but women were not prepared for it.

A-7354. Would you tell us what is your practice in respect of fines?—During the year ending August 1927, 3,246 workers were fined Rs. 568; if a worker is fined twice it is counted as two cases. The fines were due to breach of discipline, negligence of work, loss of, or damage to, tools and machinery, and for renewals of tokens and tickets. During the same period Rs. 1,847 were recovered as fines from 7,053 weavers and jobbers for producing defective cloth. The loss sustained by the mills on account of the defective cloth, amounted to Rs. 23,840. The fines inflicted for absence without leave, or loss to the worker due to the double *khadda*, are not included in these figures. The system of double *khadda* in force is not exactly what it was understood to be. It is a misnomer. Weavers are fined annas 8 for a single loom or Re. 1 for a double loom if they are absent without leave and do not give satisfactory explanation, on their return, for such absence. It is not enforced every day. Supposing a weaver absents for 8 days he is not fined Rs. 4, but he is fined only annas 8. Supposing a weaver absents himself for 2 days and he explains his position to the head of the department he will not be fined, but if he

is a habitual absentee then he is fined. The double *khadda* is only existing in the spinning section. Supposing a spinner absents himself for the first time, he will not be fined at all. If, for the second time, he absents himself for 6 days or 8 days, he might be marked double *khadda* for one day or 2 days. The fining system is on a sliding scale.

A-7355. Are the workers ever suspended on account of absence without leave?—Generally not. It is only at the last stage, when they find that the man is frequently absenting himself, that they will dismiss him. Supposing a man absents to-day without leave, when he comes next day to attend to work he will be sent home for that day, in case of suspension.

A-7356. That is equivalent to suspension. Do you include in your total fines the loss in wages by such suspensions?—No; it will require a separate staff if we are to keep an account of the loss of wages due to suspension, etc.

A-7357. To what fund do the fines go? Are they returned to the firm, or do they go into the welfare fund?—Fines are not ear-marked for any special purpose. The amount of fines recovered is far less than the amount of loss sustained.

A-7358. Have the workers any appeal court within the works to go to if they dispute the fine?—Soon after the head of the department inflicts a fine the time-keeper makes a note of it and sends me a copy of the note. If the fines are heavy as compared with the wages, I see the head of the department concerned with a view to getting it reduced. If I find that he is not agreeable I approach the manager. Action is taken by me even though the person does not appeal. If he appeals, then it takes its regular course.

A-7359. Is it an understood thing that if a weaver wants to complain that his fault is due more to deficient material or machinery than to his negligence he should appeal to you?—He goes to the head of the department, in the first instance, and if his grievance is not satisfied by the head of the department then he comes to me.

A-7360. Do you get an appreciable number of complaints about fines?—I was getting 4 years before when the system was started, but now I am getting them very seldom because the officers concerned have found out that unless they investigate every case in detail and give less cause for complaint, they will have to answer the agents who have made it their personal business to look into every complaint.

A-7361. As a welfare officer, who should be able to feel the pulse of the workers, could you say that fines are not a grievance amongst the workers?—Every man will have a grievance if he has to lose money.

A-7362. Do you think that the workers feel that the system of fining is in itself an unfair system?—If you ask the workers whether they would be willing to be fined they would say, no.

A-7363. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What do you think a worker would prefer fining, suspension or dismissal?—He will naturally prefer fining either to suspension or to dismissal.

A-7364. Will you send us a statement showing the total amount of your welfare expenditure for the last three years?—Yes.

A-7365. *Mr. Cliff*: Can you give us also the estimate for the current year?—Yes.

A-7366. On the question of double *khadda* system, if a man is absent to-day and works to-morrow, do you, in any case, deduct his wages for the second day?—Yes. If he absents to-day he naturally loses his pay for to-day for being absent whether with leave or without leave. The second day's wage is deducted although he has worked, which amounts to a fine of one day's wage for absenting without leave. That is not necessarily for every day of absence.

A-7367. Take a specific case and explain what you mean?—Supposing a man has put in 25 days and has absented only for one day. He will not be fined for the first or the second time for his absence without leave. But if the head of the department is not satisfied with his explanation for absence and if he is a habitual offender, he will be marked double *khadda*; that is to say, he will be paid for 24 days although he has presented himself for 25 days.

A-7368. That is a case that actually occurs?—That is a case that occurs in a very small percentage of cases. Suppose a man absents for 6 days and works for 20 days; he will not be marked double *khadda* for 6 days; instead of paying him for 20 days he will be paid for 19 days, that is, one day's fine for 6 days.

A-7369. Do you say that what is called the double *khadda* system never operates so as to cause more than one day's fine?—Supposing in the first fortnight he absents himself for 2 or 3 days without leave and returns to work immediately after the double

khadda report goes and again after 8 days he absents without leave it is likely that he might be marked double *khadda* for the second time ; so that it is quite likely that a man's wage might be deducted to the extent of 2 days. But these are very exceptional cases where the man absents himself inspite of repeated warnings.

A-7370. In addition to the double *khadda*, is a man also suspended ?—The system of suspension prevails only in the 'C' shed where there is no double *khadda* system.

A-7371. Why have you made this difference ?—(Mr. Vaikunthlal Thakore) : Because the head of the department prefers it.

A-7372. Does the prevailing system depend on the discretion of the head of the department ?—Yes.

A-7373. So that if another head of the department wanted to suspend a man instead of using the double *khadda* system, would he be at liberty to do so ?—We would not object to that.

A-7374. You employ nearly 2,000 women involving approximately 36 maternity cases in a year. Was that number the capacity of the maternity ward ?—(Mr. Lele) We had 12 beds, but they were not utilized to the full extent.

A-7375. From your report I find that from 1924 onwards the number of pre-maternity cases has gone down from year to year. Will you tell us the reason for this ?—I will let you know after consulting the doctor.

A-7376. Has there been any change in the doctor or the staff ?—No.

A-7377. At one place of your report you say that you have 484 boys and girls, whereas in another place you say that the average daily attendance of the boys and girls at the school is only 304. Do you compel half-timers to attend your school ?—The children who attend the criminal tribes school are exempted from attending this school.

A-7378. Is it compulsory for the children who do not belong to the criminal tribes to attend your school as a condition of their employment ?—Not as a condition of their employment, but persuasion is made by paying the daily half anna regular attendance bonus at the school.

A-7379. Suppose a boy does not go to your school ; under the Free and Compulsory Primary Education Act operating in Sholapur, can that half-timer be compelled to go to school by the Municipality ?—No.

A-7380. Who determines what proportion of people belonging to the criminal tribes shall be employed in the mills ? Will your groups take any number ?—No. We will take only when there is a vacancy. Suppose 50 of them turn up and there are vacancies for all of them, then we will certainly take them.

A-7381. You said that at present you employed 550 of them. Can the figure be increased, for instance, to 700 ?—It may or may not ; if there are vacancies it may.

A-7382. There is no limit in the arrangement made between you and the settlement ?—No.

A-7383. You have given us rates of wages for certain occupations. Will you please send us a statement showing the actual earnings of your workers for the last month ?—Yes.

A-7384. You said that you receive from adults Rs. 2-8-0 for supplying them 22 seers of grain and Rs. 1-4-0 from boys for supplying 11 seers of grain. Is that deduction compulsory ?—No man will refuse to take Rs. 4 worth of grain for Rs. 2-8-0. Even if he does not utilize it, he will sell it in the open market.

A-7385. My question is whether it is a compulsory deduction ?—He can very well refuse it.

A-7386. If he refuses it, can he have the money equivalent ?—Yes, he can have only Rs. 2-8-0 and not Rs. 4 which is the value of the grain.

A-7387. If a man absents himself for 5 days in a month does he lose the grain allowance ?—Yes, except when he is sick.

A-7388. If he absents himself 4 days ?—He does not. If a man is certified as being sick we give him the privilege of getting the grain although he may absent himself for 15 or 20 days.

A-7389. Should your mill doctor certify or could any private practitioner certify ?—Any doctor from whom he will be taking medicines can certify.

A-7390. If you have a man who was on double *khadda* for one day or two days and he has been absent for 6 days, he does not get that privilege?—No. As I said, if a person is absent for 5 days he does not get that privilege. But let me make this point clear. Suppose a man absents for 4 days and one day is the double *khadda*. Although he will lose his wages for 5 days, he will not lose his grain compensation because he actually absented himself for only 4 days.

A-7391. Colonel Russell: Are all your houses in blocks?—Yes; we have several blocks.

A-7392. How many storeys?—All single-storyed buildings.

A-7393. What is the size of a room?—There are three different colonies. In one colony the size of one room is 11' × 10' with a verandah 10' × 5', and there is a second room 10' × 10'. If one wants to take up the first room he has to pay Rs. 2-8-0 as rent and for the second Rs. 1-8-0.

A-7394. When did you build these *chawls*?—The first one was built in 1900, which consists of 402 rooms. The second one containing 149 rooms was purchased from Government in 1919 and in 1921-22, 81 single rooms were converted into double room tenements. In the third colony, we have 94 double room tenements which were built in 1923-24. We also built 66 rooms quarters for the clerical staff in 1919.

A-7395. The last block of houses you have built was in 1923-24. Have you any proposals to give additional housing accommodation?—No, not now. We hardly get one per cent. return from these quarters.

A-7396. Are these *chawls* supplied with water pipes?—Yes.

A-7397. Is there any provision for bathing and washing arrangements?—The two-room tenements built in 1923-24 have a bath room attached to each of the rooms.

A-7398. Are there bathing and washing facilities in the mills?—We tried but we did not succeed. We provided rooms both for male and female workers, but in course of time we found that they were not using those rooms for the purpose for which they were meant, and consequently we had to close them down.

A-7399. A suggestion was made here that you might employ a lady medical officer. Has the management ever considered that matter?—No.

A-7400. You employ a large number of women?—Yes.

A-7401. Do you not think that they would prefer to go to a lady doctor than to a man doctor?—We have not come across cases of women resenting to go to our present doctor for treatment.

A-7402. Mr. Asvale: You said that you have stopped your maternity home. Do you know whether there are any maternity homes in other mills?—I cannot speak for other mills.

A-7403. You also said that very few women took advantage of your maternity home. Is that not due to the fact that these women, whose villages are close by, go to their villages for delivery?—You may know that Sholapur is entirely on a different basis as compared with Bombay or Ahmedabad. The cost of living here as compared to the villages is not high, and it is not therefore necessary for them to go to their villages for delivery.

A-7404. I take it that by the introduction of Maternity Benefit Act your mill has been benefited?—No. We are paying more now.

A-7405. You said that you have stopped your provident fund. What made you stop it?—Trade depression. If one mill has to compete with another mill it cannot go on paying annually about Rs. 70,000. If the mills had been making not the boom profits but even the ordinary profits we would have certainly continued the system.

A-7406. What became of those people who had joined the fund?—We stopped the fund from the 31st of January. The amount is invested in Government promissory notes, and the workers will be paid double their contribution plus interest on the whole amount.

A-7407. Are you paying any gratuity to your workers?—Yes. The gratuity system was started in fact before the provident fund came into force. We were giving gratuity for those who had put in more than 10 years' service, except in the case of death. After the provident fund system was instituted we stopped giving gratuities to those who got the benefits of the provident fund; those who did not join the provident fund were entitled to the gratuity.

A-7408. You say that you have a gymnasium. May I know how many workers take part in it?—About 75; only those who are nearer go to it.

A-7409. You said that the average wage of a reeler is Rs. 12 to 13. Supposing a reeler is a widow and has 2 or 3 children, do you think that she can maintain herself and her children within Rs. 12 ?—No.

A-7410. You said that you pay As. 12 per head as grant to the settlement. Can you not pay the same As. 12 to the other workers also ?—We are giving this grant purely from the point of view of welfare.

A-7411. As regards fines, do you enquire from the man concerned whether he was responsible for spoiling the cloth ?—The fine is never inflicted in his absence ; it is inflicted only after calling him and giving him a chance to explain.

A-7412. Supposing the yarn is not good, how is the weaver responsible if the cloth is spoiled ?—If the yarn is bad, the weaver is not fined at all.

A-7413. How many complaints have you received from the weavers that though they were not at fault, still they were fined ?—We do not get such complaints here.

A-7414. *Mr. Cliff* : I notice from your report that a considerable number of people are either under 5 years' or under 10 years' service. Can you tell us why they do not keep long service in the mill ?—It is due to broken service. Supposing after 6 years a man wants to go home for 7 or 8 months, he takes a voluntary discharge because he cannot get leave for such a long period ; he might serve a notice or might not serve a notice. He goes to his native place for 6 months and returns after 6 months. We take him to be a new man because he has a broken service.

A-7415. Are we to take it that a considerable number of those people who have been under 5 or 10 years have actually got more than one period of service that is longer than that ?—If I were to take into account the unbroken service, the number of people who have got 20 and 30 years service will be very much more than is given in the report.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. H. H. STRUTTON, Criminal Tribes Settlement Officer, Dharwar,
accompanied by Mr. HIEBE, Manager of the Sholapur Industrial
Settlement, American Marathi Mission, Sholapur.**

A-7416. *Sir Alexander Murray* : What is the population of the Settlement at the present moment ?—All told it is 4,425, but the actual number of registered settlers for which Government pays a grant is 2,525.

A-7417. How many are men, how many are women and how many are children ?—I will supply those figures.

A-7418. How does a member of the criminal tribes come into the Settlement ?—At present there is a rule that the husband must have had two previous convictions, one of which must have been within the last five years.

A-7419. How long do they stop in the Settlement before being allowed out on probation ?—The rule is 6 years since the last conviction before a magistrate, or 3 years since the last departmental conviction ; that is a fine or a punishment for breaking the rules of the Act while they are in the Settlement.

A-7420. After those 6 years or 3 years as the case may be, are they at liberty to go wherever they like ?—Their case is supposed to come up for cancellation of registration or else for probation on license. If it is a case where the criminal tendency has been marked, the man is given 6 years on probation either, in the case of Sholapur, on the adjoining Settlement, or if he has a village to which he wishes to go we find out whether there is any reasonable means of employment there, or whether he possesses land, in which case he is sent there and he is visited for the first year three times by the probation officer. There are certain rules by which he must abide. Apart from non-committal of crime he has to send his children to school and to keep the general law of the place.

A-7421. So that you might have a man or a family on your hands for 12 years ?—Yes, counting the probation period.

A-7422. Who are actively in charge of the Settlement ?—This Settlement has been handed over to the American Marathi Mission for control—to staff the Settlement and generally to conduct the work and the educational policy. This Settlement was handed over as an experiment about 13 years ago. The Settlement Officer considered that such settlements could be better controlled by voluntary agencies more paternal than judicial and Government agreed to take the Sholapur Settlement as an experiment and, if it were a success, to hand others over to other agencies, which has been done.

A-7423. What are the duties of the criminal tribes settlement officer, Mr. Starte ?—General supervision. He sees that we comply with all the rules applying to the Settlement and that we conduct the work practically on the same lines as Government officers would conduct it.

A-7424. Who has taken Mr. Starte's place ?—I have taken over his duties since last Saturday, and Mr. Hiebe has taken my place as manager of the Settlement.

A-7425. Do you find, as between your people and other workers in the mills, that there is any discrimination of any description ?—None has been brought to our notice.

A-7426. Who regulates the allocation of your people to the mills ?—We have had a voluntary agreement for several years with all the mills that they shall maintain a regular number of our people.

A-7427. We understand that the same wages are being paid, and the same privileges are being given, to your workers as to the other workers, and that over and above that the mills contribute to the Settlement in respect of each criminal tribe worker As. 12, and that another As. 12 for another purpose ?—That is true. When labour was scarce the mills agreed to pay Government a capitation grant of As. 12 for those who work a whole month's working days, less 4. The reason for the other As. 12 is that there is an agreement that for those settlers who are no longer registered they would pay me for each worker double the amount, because the Government grant has ceased for those people.

A-7428. You make a reference to the wages that were received in 1920, and to the increases which have been given since. You say there are no complaints, and that many families are obtaining from Rs. 40 to Rs. 80 in wages ?—That means for more than one member of a family. The average highest wage are for weavers and jobbers—anything from Rs. 40 to Rs. 55. When I say Rs. 80, in many cases there is more than one member of the family working in the mill, and their total income amounts to that figure.

A-7429. It would not cost as much as that to keep a family in your Settlement. What do they do with the surplus money ? Have you a savings bank ?—Yes, but it is not very well patronized for saving. But it is used more for loans. We do not make them save compulsorily in the Settlement.

A-7430. What do they do with the surplus ?—They buy land. A lot of these people were originally land-owners, but their land was forfeited to Government when they committed dacoities. In many cases we have been able to get the land back again, or they have bought land on their savings. The consequence is that many who become probationers are allowed to go and live on their lands.

A-7431. You make an interesting reference to the comparative working ability of the Ahmedabad mill-worker as against the Sholapur and Bombay mill-worker. Is that based on actual experience ?—Yes.

A-7432. Do you put it down largely to the *Gujerati* as against the *Marathi* ?—Yes. The *Gujerati* is a born weaver.

A-7433. *Mr. Clow* : Are the wages drawn by the persons in your Settlement paid to them individually ?—Yes. We do not touch their income at all. The only charge we make on them is for ground rent for their houses, ranging from As. 8 to a rupee.

A-7434. How are people transferred from the Settlement to the free colony ?—Instead of leaving Sholapur, as other probationers do, they may leave the Settlement to go to a place outside where they are more or less expected permanently to reside and to continue as mill workers.

A-7435. Is there any restraint on them in the free colony ?—There is a weekly roll call, but it is not taken by the police. It is taken for the purpose of probation work—knowing that the people are there, and also knowing that they do not introduce some undesirable relatives. The roll call is mainly for statistical purposes. We have to give a monthly return to Government of every one in the Settlement.

A-7436. Are your men and women taken by all the mills ?—Yes.

A-7437. Is there about the same proportion in each mill ?—Yes.

A-7438. *Mr. Joshi* : You say that you do not allow your people to choose their mills. What danger do you apprehend by allowing them to choose their own mills ?—We do allow them to change their mills, if they do it in the regular way by giving a month's notice, and if they do it through the inspector who is appointed. We found that a lot of our people would have a row with the jobber, or with some one else and change without a word to another mill ; or they would find that in another department they can get more in any mill and would change without any notice. That meant that we could not keep track of them. We do not allow our people to choose their own mills mainly so that we can know where each man is. But

if they represent to our inspector, and through him to me, that they consider that they are not being paid properly in a mill, I do allow, on a month's notice, a person from that mill to join another mill.

A-7439. Do you ever represent to a mill management, when you find that they are paying a little less than other mills that the wages should be raised so as to bring the wages of all the mills into line?—I do not know that I would do it in a general way. Sometimes I have taken individual cases to the departmental managers. If the man can get a better job somewhere else he is allowed to transfer, if he gives the required notice.

A-7440. *Mr. Cliff*: How many men have been allowed to transfer in the last two years?—I suppose there are one or two cases a month.

A-7441. Would there be 20 changes in the year?—Possibly; not more.

A-7442. *Miss Power*: What percentage of the workers in each mill are criminal tribe people? Is there an agreed percentage with each mill?—It is agreed at present. At first the mills were hard up for labour and were willing to take every one we had. Later on, when the Sholapur labour market was over supplied, we had to come to some arrangement for our own safeguard.

A-7443. When there is a scarcity of work do the mills shut down on your people before they shut down on the other workers?—No. They take the average. That is a thing which we watch.

A-7444. *Mr. Joshi*: You say "One of the benefits that the mills have derived from the employment of the Tribes people is that they can count on the number as being regularly maintained, no matter whether the local labour market is disturbed on account of strikes, virulent epidemics or bountiful harvests." Have the employers an advantage in engaging your people, in that during strikes they can depend upon a certain number of people always working?—I do not think that has anything to do with the employing of our people, but it is a fact. Also during plague epidemics the average mill-hand clears out of Sholapur. We do not allow our people to clear out. We inoculate them. It does refer to strikes in the sense that these people are always on the spot. Whatever happens to the labour market we cannot let them leave Sholapur. During the two strikes which have occurred here I have had put out to the strike leaders that if it was a case of these people being idle they would be a menace to the safety of the public.

A-7445. Do your people sometimes like to join a strike themselves?—They have not done so. There have been a few cases where they have caused trouble and have been involved in the beginnings of a strike.

A-7446. What do you do if some of your people join a strike?—If we thought they had been inciting we would probably transfer them to another settlement where there is no mill work, but only as a matter of discipline.

A-7447. Suppose they have a real grievance for a strike?—Then they have an opportunity of having their case represented to the department through the officials.

A-7448. And if the grievance is not removed, even in spite of the opportunity, what happens?—They generally go back to work.

A-7449. How do you compel them to go back to work?—There are ways of doing it. According to the Criminal Tribes Act, every member of the Settlement must engage in the work which is provided for him. He can be sent to jail for 6 months if he does not.

A-7450. Do you keep any statistics about absenteeism on account of sickness?—Yes.

A-7451. Can you give us those statistics?—I will send them for the last two years.

A-7452. You express your ideas about trade unions. Will you explain those ideas a little more clearly?—I think it would be a necessity here, in regard to any unions that are started amongst people such as mill hands, to have more comprehensive rules, or different rules, from those in vogue in Home unions.

A-7453. In what respects should they be different?—Mainly because of the lack of education among the workers.

A-7454. Tell me in what respects you want the rules to be different? Have you formulated a set of model rules?—No.

A-7455. What sort of union do you want? Do you want a union organized on the lines of a Criminal Tribes Settlement?—No. Speaking of the average mill hands, they would need something more on paternal lines than on hard and fast trade union rules.

A-7456. You want a union managed by the manager of the mill?—No. I want more of an arbitration court idea.

A-7457. What is your idea of an arbitration court? How is it to work? Who is to represent the workers on it?—I have said here an officially recognized labour expert.

A-7458. You want the workers to be represented by an expert to be brought here by Government?—Not necessarily by Government.

A-7459. Then by whom is he to be paid?—By whatever organization controls it. I have not the plans worked out in my mind. I merely fear for the trouble created by an unorganized or an improperly organized union.

A-7460. I take it you feel some discontent with the present trade union?—I have a discontent in the sense that most other people have a feeling that the present labour conditions need changes, and need organizing, so that there shall not be severe friction between the two sides.

A-7461. I would draw your attention to this phrase in your memorandum: "Too often the type of union representative which Bombay Presidency has had experience of so far has not been of the kind that will eventually serve the best interests of labour, or get for it any concessions worth while." Will you tell us more clearly of the type of men you want for this kind of work?—I want an expert, not necessarily appointed by Government, who knows the mill conditions and who knows the mill employees side of it.

A-7462. How many labour representatives have you come in contact with?—One or two in connection with the strikes here. I feel that the average man with the glib tongue can carry the ordinary mill crowd with him anywhere.

A-7463. I know the Secretary of the branch union of the Textile Labour Union. Is he a man of glib tongue?—I do not think so. It is open to anybody who can get up and speak in a crowd to take the crowd with him, and there is a danger of labour being very much disorganized in that way.

A-7464. Are your people allowed to become members of the union?—None have asked to be. I am afraid the union would not ask them to be.

A-7465. Why would be your attitude if your people asked you to allow them to become members of a union?—I think, if the union was recognized to be an efficient union, there would be no objection at all.

A-7466. That is, a union which secures something, and not a union which finds itself in strikes?—No, a union which is really for the benefit of both employers and employed.

A-7467. Have you any knowledge of any labour representatives having ruined the interests of the workers?—Not in Sholapur; not any who are here now.

A-7468. You are imagining that there will be some kind of labour representative who will exploit the movement for his own benefit?—I am not saying that. I am only speaking of one or two who had been here in previous strikes. I do not want to mention any names. It is common knowledge in Sholapur what they did.

A-7469. *Miss Power*: You say that there has been appreciably less bribery in the last 5 years. What has happened in those 5 years to improve the situation?—A much better type of jobber.

A-7470. Was it a deliberate endeavour on the part of the employer to obtain a better type of jobber?—Yes.

A-7471. Do these jobbers, in the majority of the mills, take on the labour, or not?—Not so much as they used to do. They do take the opportunity of taking on men when they are needed. The men apply to them. But they do not canvass now to the extent they used to for outside work.

A-7472. Are the workers taken on by the managers or sub-managers or by the jobbers?—Generally by the departmental manager. The jobber may recommend a man.

A-7473. Would you say that bribery is still in existence here, both in respect of giving a recommendation of employment to a manager and in respect of promotion within the mill?—Some bribery still goes on, but nothing like the extent to which it went 5 years ago. My people positively refuse to give bribes.

A-7474. They are in an exceptional position?—Yes. I have been told in the past that in certain cases our people could not get good jobs because others had paid to get them.

A-7475. Do you think that a labour exchange catering for the textile workers in this city would be a feasible proposition?—I think it would, if it could be worked along the lines which would ensure the confidence of the worker and of the mill management.

A-7476. Should it be a private exchange run by the combined mills, or should it be a Government exchange?—I doubt whether a Government exchange would be a success. I feel that if the mills get together, and if some representatives of the workers get together, such an exchange could be evolved. It would be a question largely of having officials who would command the confidence both of the employers and of the work-people.

A-7477. Has the matter ever been mooted among the mill managers?—No.

A-7478. You deal with the question of welfare and you pay a tribute to the managers in respect of their welfare work. Has there been any alteration in the volume of welfare work done before and after the strikes?—It has largely come into prominence since the first strike of 1920. There was very little done previous to that. Whether it was because of the strike, or whether it was because of the general feeling in all the mills that were taking an interest in it, is an open question.

A-7479. The bulk of the welfare work dates from 1920?—Yes.

A-7480. Has it been cut down of late?—Yes, in some instances because of financial stringency.

A-7481. You say: "In every mill in Sholapur I would say that 20 per cent. more women can be found each week than the actual work calls for." This was denied by the management of the mill we visited this morning, where we were told that they stood off people when they had not enough work. On what do you base your statement?—I base it on my own women's records. Some of my women will earn from 10 to 12 and others go down to as low as 4 and 5.

A-7482. Is that because they themselves are putting in irregular time, or because there is not enough work?—Mainly because there is not enough work to keep them fully employed. They will go to the mill in preference to staying away and losing their wages and also losing the grain bonus.

A-7483. Is the reason for there being more women employed than are actually required a feeling among the management that they cannot rely on regular work from the women?—Partly that, and it is due partly to the departmental managers, the ones in charge of the reeling and winding. They will let the women stay on doing half day's work rather than pay them off. They are thinking of the days when there will be a rush in their departments and when they will need 40 women on the job instead of the ordinary 20 women.

A-7484. Do the women raise any objection to waiting time without pay?—They used to much more before the grain bonus was given than they do now. A woman knows that she can get Ra. 3 or 4 easily and can also get her grain bonus; the average grain bonus is nearly enough to keep her and her children in grain food for the month.

A-7485. You refer to the very poor type of forewomen employed. Has there ever been any attempt made to evolve a better type of forewomen?—It ought to be possible, but there would have to be a general removal of the present type. We could not introduce one or two at a time.

A-7486. You talk about lack of discipline being conspicuous among the women. Do you think that, if a mill were prepared to pay a slightly higher rate to its forewomen, it could get the type of women who would have the capacity to compel discipline among the women workers?—Not unless that type of forewomen was made a reeler herself. She would have to know reeling.

A-7487. It is not a very complicated process, is it?—She has to become efficient in it. You cannot introduce an educated woman suddenly into the job of a forewoman.

A-7488. You comment on the deficiencies in the Bombay Maternity Act. What do you think is specifically wrong with the Act, and what amendments would you suggest?—The Act is certainly going to do the women a lot of good, but I do not think it can continue. I think it will have the effect of increasing the maternity records in all mills, because I can quite understand the men of Sholapur wanting to put their women into the mills where there is an opportunity of getting a bonus such as this. The mills will find, after a while, what they are actually going to pay for themselves.

A-7489. Your complaint is that the allowance is too high?—I think so for Sholapur. The average woman does not earn that.

A-7490. Has there been any desire apparent in the last few years to eliminate women from the mills?—They are just marking time and paying the bonus. But eventually there will be a reduction in the number of women employed. This would not come from the mill managers but from the departmental heads who will have to do a certain amount of work at a certain cost. If they find that the employment of women

increases their working expenses by 20 per cent. they will consider whether it is a business proposition to employ them.

A-7491. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that the average woman does not earn Rs. 12 a month?—It is not that the average woman could not earn that; it is simply that the mills are not aiming at efficiency in women's work.

A-7492. *Miss Power*: You suggest that if the woman's earnings in relation to the man's is lower in Sholapur than in Bombay and Ahmedabad this should be taken into consideration in fixing the amount of maternity benefit?—I think it is only fair if it is to be a general bill for the whole Presidency.

A-7493. Do you suggest that the amount of the benefit should be in proportion to the woman's earnings?—Yes. I have already explained that if we suddenly aimed at efficiency in the women's department there would be a reduction of their number by 25 per cent. They can certainly earn higher wages but it would be at the cost of reducing their present strength by 25 per cent.

A-7494. *Miss Cama*: What medical aid is available to the people in the settlement?—We have two doctors. One is resident in the settlement and the other visits it frequently. One doctor is doing children's work. In addition we have a trained nurse and a compounder.

A-7495. Are there no women doctors?—There are no women doctors except Mrs. Hiebes who is a qualified nurse. We have a good midwifery nurse in the settlement.

A-7496. How many hospitals are there for treating women in Sholapur?—There is the Dufferin Hospital and the Mills have their own arrangements for maternity cases.

A-7497. But there are no women doctors; they are all men doctors?—I think so, except in the Dufferin Hospital.

A-7498. Would it not be better if all the mills joined together and appointed a woman doctor?—If the combination could be made I think it would certainly be of great benefit.

A-7499. *Mr. Asavle*: Are the people in the settlement allowed to drink?—Of course a few habituals drink but it is much less now compared to early days. When we took over this settlement we had a great deal of trouble in checking this habit. We had a system of issuing passes for drink by which we came to know who are the persons addicted to this habit and who are to be watched and controlled. During the past 5 or 6 years drinking has practically been reduced to 50 per cent. Even now a few castes drink but the majority of the people do not drink.

A-7500. Are these people in the settlement allowed to go to any amusements such as cinemas and dramas?—Those who are in the settlement have to be on roll call at 8 o'clock. They can get out on special occasions. Occasionally we arrange for parties to go out and we send a guard to see them back at night. But it is a common thing for these people to attend the early session of the cinema shows at 6-30 in the evening.

A-7501. Have they been able to make any savings out of these earnings?—They have a certain amount of savings but it must be admitted that they spend more than they used to do in their homes. We do not find that they put much in the banks. They have their savings in other forms. We never allow them to borrow more than Rs. 60 for a wedding. In connection with savings we had an interesting experience in one of the settlements where we had an excavation work going on. The manager in charge of that settlement got the people to agree that those who were earning more than annas 6 a day on the excavation work should put half the balance into deposit. They took it up although they were loth to do it at first. In the end the savings on that one job alone amounted to Rs. 15,000. Some of them have come to Sholapur settlement with several hundreds of rupees in cash. It was not a forcible saving; it was agreed to by the majority and all of them had to come in line. Some of the deer hunters have come back with a saving of Rs. 200 each which they had never in their lives seen before.

A-7502. Are there any lectures given to them as to how they should improve their condition?—We have a body of welfare workers who speak to the people on matters, concerning their improvement. We ourselves talk to them often about such matters.

A-7503. Would not the introduction of compulsory primary education help these people?—We have had compulsory primary education for years. I have been a member of the school board here and we have tried to introduce compulsory primary education in Sholapur. I believe it would be to the advantage of the people.

A-7504. Why do you refuse admission to tribes from other settlements and relatives of present settlers who try to get in?—The main reason is in the one case we

are not allowed to have beyond a certain number. We could not take half the people who wish to come in on account of the limited capacity for employment. We have to recognize that. Secondly the relatives of registered people are not allowed to live inside the settlement unless they themselves are registered and restricted by section 16.

A-7505. Have you brought this to the notice of Government that there are so many people who want to come into the settlement and that they cannot be admitted on account of this rule and that they should provide them somewhere else?—We often put up cases to the settlement officer for admission and he has had to refuse admission on these grounds. He has to keep out many people who would like to get in in order to get the benefits of the settlement.

A-7506. In your memorandum you say that you allowed your workers to be employed during the strike. Do you not think that you would be standing in the way of the strikers getting their grievances redressed?—I think I have explained the reason for our doing it. Our settlers are too few in each mill to affect the balance of the strike. These people are generally employed not in the departments in which they were working but in essential work outside the mills.

A-7507. Is there a sufficient water supply in the settlement and for the mills generally?—I think so. The general municipal supply is reduced by 50 per cent. for the hot weather.

A-7508. *Col. Russell*: With regard to housing you say that there has been difficulty in obtaining house sites except at the highest possible market rates. Is that a difficulty under the Land Acquisition Act?—One of the Mills wanted to buy some land for housing its workers and it was arranged that the land should be sold at the same rate at which it was acquired by Government. But some one in the Revenue Department discovered that the Mill was not going to grant any special concessions to the workers in the matter of housing and that therefore the lands should be sold at the highest possible market rates. The price which was originally about Rs. 6,000 rose to nearly double that amount.

A-7509. You suggest that the employer who is prepared to house his workers should be given lands at the lowest possible rates?—Yes, at the lowest possible rates at which they were acquired.

A-7510. *Mr. Cliff*: How many probation officers have you in the settlement?—We have one for district work to visit the probationers who have gone out and another probation officer to look after the welfare of the people in the settlement.

A-7511. Are they Government servants?—They are paid by the Mission but the Mission receives grants-in-aid from the Government in respect of their payment.

A-7512. Who exercises the statutory powers in the settlement?—Settlement officers exercise those powers. Certain powers are given to the managers. The manager is empowered to fine departmentally up to Rs. 10 and lock a person up for 4 days. He can also award other punishments which are meant to meet the departmental cases. For instance, if a theft of yarn takes place in the mills the Mill manager sends that case to the settlement to deal with. The Manager uses his discretion. If any theft takes place in the town and if it is traced to one of our people and if the amount involved is less than Rs. 10 the Police has the option of sending it to us. We have also the option of asking them to send such cases over to us. Anything over that value is taken up by the magistrate.

A-7513. Do I understand that the men are compelled on penalty to work daily?—We do not take any steps if a man has been absent for one or two weeks occasionally. But suppose a theft takes place and it is traced to a man who has been habitually absent from his work we find that he is not a desirable person to stay in Sholapur, we transfer him to a settlement where some non-industrial work such as earth-work is going on for one year. Every man is allowed four holidays in addition to the five mill holidays which are allowed by the mills. It is only when they attend for all the rest of the days that they will be entitled to the grain bonus. If a man earns his grain bonus we do not think we have got much to do to compel him to work.

A-7514. With regard to the children that are taught in these schools is there any policy in regard to housing?—There is a policy with regard to those who have become probationers. We allow them to build their own houses. We give them a loan if they want one for that purpose. The children or the parents that have gone to the outer part of the free enclosure have built better houses, wear better clothes and have generally a better appearance than some years ago. Education has spread among them in the same way. We have now begun the fifth standard in the settlement. Many of the boys and girls of 10 and 12 have gone through the fourth standard even before they are qualified as half-timers.

A-7515. In your memorandum you say: "I would suggest to the Commission that they should not condemn too readily on the score of health the huts in which some of the industrial workers live." If these children are being brought up in the way they are in the schools are they to be condemned to live in the houses in which we saw them live this morning? Is there any policy of encouraging them to build better type of houses?—These children automatically go out of the settlement as they grow up. They are only dependents of the settlers up to the age of 16. As soon as they marry we cannot allow them to stay in the settlement. When they become independent settlers we more or less insist that they should have a better type of building. The buildings in the enclosure are necessarily temporary and every one expects to go out in a short time. These people have been wandering from place to place all their lives and they have not had even a roof over their heads. Compared to that their present huts are certainly healthier.

A-7516. I am thinking of these children below 16 who are in the most formative period of their life; has that aspect of the question been considered?—I believe it is necessary to take into consideration the improvement in the dwellings themselves. The policy has been in the past to let the people build their own types of huts but now we have started a co-operative building society and it has come to a stage at which the title of the land will be handed over to the people in a short time.

A-7517. With regard to the workers in the settlement I believe they draw their wages monthly. With regard to purchases, do they obtain credit?—We seek to prevent it because we find that they have all got money stored somewhere. They do not need to go into debt; they are more often money-lenders to others even though it is a thing which we try to stop. We have found them on special occasions in no difficulty whatever to advance Rs. 50 to 100 as surety for good behaviour. They have this money in the shape of Government Bonds. They would rather do that than allow one of their number to go to jail.

A-7518. Generally speaking the practice on the settlement is that the people pay for their goods in cash?—I think so. They have their grain allowance from the Mills which is the main item of expenditure. The grain comes from the Mills for practically every member of the family. There are also shops in the settlement controlled by the officers and if any person is owing much we would readily come to know of cases of credit which are not good. Generally they do not buy from the shops in the town.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. P. G. BEKE, Secretary, Bombay Textile Labour Union,
Sholapur Branch.**

A-7519. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Beke, what are you by profession yourself?—I am an employee on the daily vernacular newspaper by name *Dyan Prakash*.

A-7520. What is your experience of labour matters?—I have been a social worker among the labouring classes during the past few years. For the past two years I have been working in connection with the Sholapur Union. Previous to that I had no experience of trade unions.

A-7521. You have given us a memorandum on behalf of the Sholapur branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. What is the constitution of your Union and in what way is it directed and controlled by the Bombay Union?—Dr. K. B. Attrolkar is the president of the Union, Mr. Shah is the vice-president, Mr. Lalit the treasurer, Messrs. P. G. Beke, Sumant, and Kurban Hussain are the secretaries. We have a managing committee of 10 members. We use the constitution of the Bombay Textile Labour Union which makes provision for branches in other parts of the Presidency.

A-7522. It does not say anything as to how the branches should be run. Have you any local rules?—We have not framed any local rules.

A-7523. How many members are there?—500 to 600 now.

A-7524. Do you get subscriptions from them and how much?—The subscription is annas 4 a month for men and annas 2 a month for women. We collect about Rs. 75 a month.

A-7525. Have you been recognized by the employers?—No.

A-7526. *Mr. Cliff*: In your memorandum you say: "One of those Mills went on strike on account of the severe beating to a worker at the hands of one of the superiors of the staff." Is that correct?—Yes.

A-7527. Was any action taken against the superior?—No. The matter was only reported to the manager of the Laxmi Mill and he never paid any heed to our representations.

A-7528. Would it not have been possible to proceed against him in a court?—At that time we thought it was quite impossible to proceed against him in the court.

A-7529. In your memorandum you say that "in some cases the roofs of houses were forcibly removed". How many roofs of houses were forcibly removed?—In one place the roofs of two or three houses were removed. We have taken a statement from the persons who were living in those houses.

A-7530. By whom were they removed?—We cannot say who removed them.

A-7531. To whom did those houses belong?—To private landlords.

A-7532. Does it mean that the private owners removed the roofs of their own houses?—On account of pressure from the millowners they might have done that. In some of the millowners' *chawls* they removed the roofs of two or three houses and cut off the water supply.

A-7533. What millowners were these?—I refer to the Vishnu and Laxmi Mills.

A-7534. You say that the manager of the Vishnu Mill "delegated all his powers over the *chawls* to a Muhammadan contractor who took a prominent part in breaking the strike." In what way did the Muhammadan contractor take a part in breaking the strike?—In the Vishnu and Laxmi Mills there is a large percentage of Muhammadan workers. There was a Muhammadan contractor by name Hasrat Khan. He had a great influence with the workers and the manager thought that by delegating all his powers to this contractor he would use his influence to make the workers resume work.

A-7535. You say further that "even one of the superior of the police had to suffer for his silly words." What was that about?—One of the Sub-Inspectors abused me on the spot for inspecting the picketers. I wrote to the District Superintendent of Police and the Sub-Inspector had to apologize to me for having used silly words.

A-7536. Does this mean that a police officer was reproved by his superior officer for his conduct during the strike?—Yes, it was so.

A-7537. You have referred to civil suits against the Union Officials here. Does it mean that the Sholapur Union which is a branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union is under an injunction from the Court?—Yes.

A-7538. How long has that injunction been operating?—They have given a permanent injunction to the effect that the Union officials should not ask the workers to go on strike or impress on them in any way the efficacy of strikes as a means of redressing their grievances.

A-7539. Have you got a copy of the injunction?—I shall send it on to you. The case was filed in September 1928 and the injunction was granted in November 1928.

A-7540. Has not the case been disposed of yet?—No, it is still with the First Class Sub-Judge at Sholapur.

A-7541. Why has not this case been disposed of?—I cannot attribute any motives to anybody. The case is not taken up because it is a big case.

A-7542. Has your Union represented to the Court that there should be an early hearing?—No.

A-7543. Have you made any application to set aside the injunction?—No.

A-7544. Surely you are not content to go on with the injunction against you?—The Union has not got sufficient funds to conduct the case. Even with the injunction against us we go on educating the workers in various ways.

A-7545. Do you suggest that the people who have filed a suit against you know that you have not got the monetary ability to follow it up?—Yes.

A-7546. *Mr. Clow*: Dealing with minimum wages you appear to suggest that the handloom industry is a suitable one for applying minimum wages. Is that your view?—Yes, there are 12,000 to 13,000 persons engaged in this industry.

A-7547. You think that it is a suitable industry for introducing minimum wages; but much of it is family work?—Yes, it is so.

A-7548. How would you deal with it?—I cannot say definitely.

A-7549. It is rather hard struggle for the handloom weavers against the Mills?—But they are getting ample wages even now, nearly 8 to 9 annas a day.

A-7550. If their wages are ample what is the object of introducing minimum wages?—We should at least introduce minimum wages for the women workers in the mills.

A-7551. Do you want that the women workers in Sholapur should draw the same wages as the men workers?—I do not want that the women workers should be paid the same wages as the men workers but they should be given adequate wages.

A-7552. You have mentioned that in the handloom industry they have no organization, that the Factories Act does not apply to them, that the wages are exceptionally low and that this principle of minimum wages should be applied without delay. You now say that you do not want minimum wages for the handloom industry but you want it for the machine industry. For which class of workers do you specially want minimum wages?—I want minimum wages for the women workers in the mills and in the handloom industry.

A-7553. But it is said that the mills are not doing very well?—So far as their profits are concerned they are all right.

A-7554. It might be rather difficult to raise the wages to the extent you desire?—At least the women should be given higher wages.

A-7555. Does the double "*khadda*" system to which you refer in your memorandum apply to all the mills in Sholapur?—Yes, especially to the Vishnu and Laxmi Mills. They do not call it double *khadda* but when the worker turns up the next day he is asked to go away as a sort of punishment.

A-7556. *Sir Alexander Murray*: It is only when the worker absents himself without leave?—Yes, it is considered to be a punishment for absence without leave.

A-7557. *Mr. Clow*: You apparently want legislation to restrict fines. How would you enforce that supposing it was introduced?—It could be enforced by the Factory Inspectors.

A-7558. If the workmen are not prepared to complain about fines how would the facts reach the Factory Inspector?—We will have to teach them that such and such a law is passed and that they would get redress of their grievances if they went to the Factory Inspector.

A-7559. *Mr. Joshi*: Did you ever inform the local District Magistrate that your Union was a separate union and not a branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union?—No, we did not.

A-7560. If the District Magistrate ever sent that information to the Bombay Labour Office then it was not information taken from you?—No.

A-7561. Why have not the employers recognized your Union; have they stated any grounds?—No, they have not stated any grounds.

A-7562. What is the attitude of the District Magistrate to your Union?—We have nothing to do with the District Magistrate at present. But his attitude as a Government Officer is not so good as it ought to be.

A-7563. If he sent information to the Labour Office at Bombay that your Union was a separate Union why did he do it without asking you?—Was that information useful to the employers in this case?—Yes, it must have been.

A-7564. Did the *Labour Gazette* use that information as a proof against your Union?—Yes, it was used as a proof against our Union.

A-7565. Was the information given by the District Magistrate without consulting you, used by the employers against the union?—Yes.

A-7566. When was this information published in the *Labour Gazette*?—In June 1928.

A-7567. You have referred to a case of a superior officer of one of the Mills assaulting a workman. What was your difficulty in prosecuting that gentleman who assaulted the poor worker?—We were confident that it would be of no use to prosecute the officer because we would not get justice at the hands of the magistrate.

A-7568. Was it your knowledge that one of the magistrates who tried the cases of the strikers said in the open court that he imposed certain fines in order to see the resources of the Union?—Yes, he stated that publicly in the court.

A-7569. *Mr. Clow*: Did you appeal against the sentence?—No.

A-7570. *Mr. Cliff*: Was it said before or after the fine was imposed?—After the fine was imposed.

A-7571. *Mr. Joshi*: If schemes for the benefit of the workers such as a sickness insurance scheme, old age pension scheme, and unemployment insurance scheme, were started would the workers be willing to contribute their share of the cost of running those schemes?—They will contribute towards all these schemes if only they are taught the benefits to be derived from these schemes.

A-7572. *Miss Power* : In your memorandum you deal with the disparity in the wages of women workers as compared with those of men workers, which you say is greater in Sholapur than in Bombay and Ahmedabad. We were told this morning that on certain work on which women were engaged they achieved only 50 per cent. of the output of the women in Ahmedabad and Bombay. Could you say whether the disparity in wages is in any way due to a lower level of efficiency among the women in Sholapur as compared with the women in Bombay and Ahmedabad ?—I do not think it is due to the inefficiency of women here in Sholapur.

A-7573. You think that the women here are as efficient as those in Bombay or Ahmedabad ?—I cannot say that the women here are as efficient as the women in Bombay and Ahmedabad ; they are at least 80 to 90 per cent. as efficient as the women there.

A-7574. Can you account for the depressed condition of the women's wages as compared with the men's in Sholapur ? Is it merely custom ?—It might be so.

A-7575. *Mr. Clow* : How many women are members of your Union ?—Nearly 20.

A-7576. *Miss Power* : We have been told by another witness that in all these Mills 20 per cent. more women are employed than there is regular work for. Have you heard any complaints from women workers that there is an inadequate supply of work which consequently depresses their wages since they have been on piece-work ?—4 or 5 months ago we had complaints from the women to that effect.

A-7577. Which would they prefer : a lesser number of women employed full time or the present number of women employed for only part of the time ?—They would prefer full time work.

A-7578. Even at the risk of sending away a certain percentage of them ?—They would not object to that.

A-7579. You speak of the inadequacy of the water supply. Do you refer to what is common to the whole city or peculiar to the factories alone ?—The water supply is scarce for the city as a whole ; in addition to that the labourers in the Mills are so hard-worked all the day that they have very little time to store sufficient supply of water for themselves.

A-7580. We have been told that there has been of late a considerable improvement in the amount of bribery which the worker had to submit to in order to secure or keep his employment. What is your experience in that respect ?—I am connected with the Mills only for the past two years and during this period I have not noticed any change in the bribery that the worker has to submit to.

A-7581. Do you think that the position could be improved if a labour exchange was started where the workers could apply for employment instead of applying at the Mill gate ?—Yes, I think it would improve the position.

A-7582. *Miss Cama* : In which Mill is the water supply insufficient ?—I have stated that in the Vishnu and Laxmi Mills it was one of the causes of the strike. There were only 12 taps for 3,500 workers. It was only after the strike that more taps were installed.

A-7583. Do you mean to say that the water supply is insufficient because they have not got a sufficient quantity of water stored there ?—They may or may not have sufficient quantity of water but they do not get sufficient time and facilities to take a sufficient supply of water.

A-7584. But can they not go out of the Mill at any time they like and have a drink ?—It depends on the discretion of the superior officer of the department. If he does not allow the workers to go out what can they do ?

A-7585. Have there been any cases of complaint that the workers have not been allowed to go out and have a drink ?—There have been thousands.

A-7586. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Let us suppose that there have not been thousands of such cases but only hundreds or even tens of such cases. Why, as the Secretary of the Union which looks after the interests of these workers, have you not complained to the Factory Inspector whose duty it is to see that the workers get a sufficient quantity of water to drink ?—We have started our Union only two years ago.

A-7587. *Miss Cama* : Cannot any man or woman in the factory go up to the Factory Inspector when he visits the factory and make a complaint to him ?—They can but they do not.

A-7588. *Mr. Asole* : Do you think that the Mill workers in Sholapur should have more houses to live in ?—Yes.

A-7589. If more houses are constructed will they occupy them?—Yes, they will.

A-7590. Do they not sublet their houses now?—Yes, they do, because the workers cannot get sufficient accommodation outside.

A-7591. During the last Mill strike were not the strikers evicted from their houses?—They were not evicted but the roofs of some of the houses were removed.

A-7592. Are there sufficient Municipal and Government hospitals for the population of the whole city?—No, more hospitals and dispensaries are required.

A-7593. Did not your Union write to Government or the Municipality to start a technical school here?—No, we did not write to them. There was a resolution before the Municipal Council to start a technical school but it was not adopted. I do not know why it was not adopted.

A-7594. Do you think that the number of hours of work should be reduced?—For the present I shall be content if the hours are reduced by half an hour each day. If the hours are reduced still further the workers' wages will be affected as they are on piece-work.

A-7595. Have the members of your Union complained to you about the inadequacy of the wages?—We have had no complaints from the workers regarding wages.

A-7596. Why then are they indebted to the money-lenders?—They borrow money because they cannot live on the wages they get.

(The witness withdraw.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTH MEETING
SHOLAPUR
Friday, 21st March 1930

PRESENT :

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (<i>Presiding</i>).	
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POEB POWER.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.	I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C., <i>Assistant Commissioner</i> .	
Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA, <i>Lady Assessor</i> .	
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.	}
Mr. A. DIBDIN.	

Joint Secretaries.

Mr. R. R. BAKHALE, and Mr. MUHAMMAD UMAR RAJAB,
representing the Bombay Textile Labour Union.

A-7597. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In your constitution you make provision for organizing branches in other parts of the Presidency and I suppose it is under that particular rule that you have this Branch here ?—(Mr. Bakhale) Yes.

A-7598. What active interest have you taken in this Branch since you created it here in May 1928 ?—This Branch was started in the midst of a strike in Sholapur and Bombay, and we had not much time to put it on a very sound basis ; during the strike we gave some help to this Union to distribute relief to its members. I myself came here once or twice to see to the affairs of the Union and to see that they were conducted on sound trade Union lines. Unfortunately owing to the last strike in Bombay we could not devote such attention as we wanted to in connection with this Branch. Every month we are receiving their statement of account which we go through ; we give them the necessary instructions about holding meetings and so on.

A-7599. The impression I gathered yesterday, as a result of our meeting with the local Union, was that they were left suspended in mid-air by you people in Bombay, that you were responsible for the Union but were taking no active interest in the running of the Union ?—That impression is not accurate. Certainly we could have done something more if we had the necessary power, but it is not correct to say that we have not done anything ; we did what it was possible for us to do.

A-7600. Have you local rules for Branches ?—The local Branch adopts the rules ; we have not yet framed any rules to regulate the connection between the Head Office and this Branch, but we propose to do so very shortly.

A-7601. Restrictions have been placed upon the activities of this Branch since November 1928 and nothing seems to have been done in the matter ?—I do not accept the position that the Union has done nothing since November 1928. There is a case which is *sub judice* and in regard to that we are giving every possible help.

A-7602. What are your views as to the welfare activities of the Poona Sewa Sadan Society and of the Missionary effort connected with the criminal tribes settlement ?—I welcome those activities so far as they go and so far as they contribute to the general welfare of the operatives. We welcome welfare work ; we consider it to be essential for the well-being of the operatives ; but an attempt is being made in certain quarters to say that as welfare work is being done in different parts of India by the employers, the conditions of the operatives are necessarily good and that they should not demand an increase in wages, reduction in working hours, or other improvements of life and service. I have had talks with some of the millowners and they have always tried to impress upon me the fact that they have been doing a considerable amount of welfare work, and yet there have been strikes. If that is the attitude that is taken up then I certainly consider that this welfare work by itself will not improve the conditions of the workers. What I desire to do is to develop the Union.

A-7603. We find that where employers provide houses the trade Union officials say that is not the duty of the employers, and when employers are not providing houses the trade Union officials complain of it. What is your attitude as to that?—We think the houses should be under the control of the municipalities, but the employers should certainly contribute to the cost of building houses for industrial workers. We had some bitter experience in these strikes when attempts were made to evict the strikers from the *chawls* built by the employers. We certainly take objection to that. The municipality should build the houses as far as possible, while the employers should contribute a fairly large proportion of the finance of the housing scheme. In Bombay city a tax was levied on cotton bales and the *chawls* were built by the Bombay Government.

Sir Alexander Murray: In that case the employers contributed all the money, the Bombay Government spent all the money, and now the Union comes forward and says the buildings are not suitable.

Mr. Joshi: I do not think it is correct to say that the employers contributed the money; the money was raised by means of an indirect tax which was presumably paid by the consumer?—It is not the fault of the scheme that the houses were built, but it is the fault of the Government.

A-7604. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you expect Government to give effect to all the 22 points you suggest in legislation dealing with fines?—If the Government wants to improve the conditions at a very early date without allowing other people to create too much trouble in the country I think they should do so.

A-7605. You suggest there should be a contract between the employers and employees in every case?—I think this refers to the rules which obtain in the Bombay Mills.

A-7606. It has no general application?—No; it was written on behalf of the Bombay Union before the Sholapur Union had come into existence.

A-7607. *Mr. Clow*: You state that the Union is opposed to the introduction of a double shift system not only for women and children but for male operatives as well. The arguments which you give against it seem to be certain arguments adduced by the Labour Research Department of Great Britain against some proposals in Lord Leverhulme's Soap Factory. Do you not think you could have given us some more direct arguments based on India?—Yes, I think I could have; I think this question of double shift has been sufficiently discussed by the Tariff Board in their report; they have pointed out that the employers gain very little, if anything, by working double shifts; I think the advantage is given at only 4 per cent. The textile workers in Lancashire for several reasons are opposed to the introduction of the double shift. In the first place, the double shift means that the times for going to the mills are very awkward in certain places; double shift may have a bad effect upon the health of the workers and also to a certain extent on their efficiency. At present a fair number of workers are female workers and if the double shift system is introduced it will not be conducive to their health or to the health of their children, especially in view of the fact that they have to do a good deal of domestic work.

A-7608. In any case the women would not be allowed to work at night. Do you not think that in this country where overhead charges are on the whole particularly high, one means of increasing wages lies in running machinery and plant longer?—But the Tariff Board has said that in spite of the overhead charges that exist to-day, the advantage that will be gained by working double shift may not be more than 4 per cent. Does it not lead to over-production when the industry is already depressed?

A-7609. But if you can reduce the costs of your production you can sell your article?—I doubt it very much.

A-7610. Why do you say in your memorandum that the Trade Union movement in the textile industry is on its last legs?—The reason is the failure on the part of the Government as well as the employers to do the right thing at the right time; that creates a good deal of discontent which goes on accumulating.

A-7611. You do not think there has been any failure on the part of the trade Unionists' to do the right thing at the right time?—We claim that we do all that can be done; we have no power to do much.

A-7612. If you take Great Britain, on which the trade Union movement here has to some extent based itself, the movement grew in spite of the opposition of the employers without very much obvious encouragement from Government?—If you want us to go through exactly the same experience as that through which the British workers have gone, that is an altogether different proposition. But I want to profit by the experience of other countries. We are hampered to-day by the opposition we encounter.

A-7613. Do you really think the movement has been steadily declining?—I should think so, so far as Bombay is concerned.

A-7614. That must be due to something in the last few years and not to any particular action of Government?—It is not due to any particular action of the Government, but it is due to the accumulated result of the actions of Government. I attach greatest importance to reduction in working hours, increase in wages, stability of employment, leave and so on. Long hours make it very difficult for people to come to our meetings because they are exhausted after 10 hours' work. We cannot give them the necessary instructions in trade unionism; we tried to organize some classes but we failed. The illiteracy of the workers is also to a considerable extent responsible for the present state of affairs.

A-7615. *Mr. Joshi*: In addition to your own work in connection with the Sholapur Branch, has the President also visited this place?—Yes.

A-7616. Are you in favour of standardizing the conditions in different mills?—I am.

A-7617. You would also desire that the welfare work should be standardized?—Certainly.

A-7618. You would also like the welfare work to be taken up by some central body instead of being left to individual mills?—Certainly.

A-7619. May I take it that you want an explicit contract in order that the workers should know what the implications of their contract are?—Yes.

A-7620. What attitude do you desire Government officials to take up towards the trade Union movement?—I think their attitude should be sympathetic towards the trade Union movement, or at any rate neutral in industrial disputes.

A-7621. Do you consider the attitude of the officials in Sholapur to be sympathetic towards the trade Union movement?—I do not think so.

A-7622. Do you consider it has been neutral?—It has not been at all neutral.

A-7623. Do you know that this Union was referred to by the *Bombay Labour Gazette* first of all as being connected with the Bombay Textile Labour Union?—Yes.

A-7624. Do you know that the *Bombay Labour Gazette* changed its statement on account of information sent by the District Magistrate?—I think so. In the issue of June 1928 of the *Labour Gazette* the Sholapur Union was referred to as a Union affiliated to the Bombay Textile Labour Union. In the issue of the following month the Sholapur Union was referred to as the Sholapur Textile Labour Union. In the October issue the same Union was referred to as the Bombay Textile Labour Union, Sholapur Branch.

A-7625. *Miss Power*: Would your Union welcome and co-operate in some such study as that which the Industrial Fatigue Research Board undertakes in Great Britain as to the effect of shorter hours on output in the textile industry in India?—Certainly, with great pleasure.

A-7626. To your knowledge has there ever been any suggestion that a study of that sort should be made by any accredited body in India?—Not so far as I am aware.

A-7627. Are you asking that any reduction of hours should be on the lines of the Washington Convention or would you be prepared to accept an intermediate stage of a 9 hour day?—We would prefer an 8 hours' working day.

A-7628. But supposing that were not a feasible proposition?—If it was proved to my satisfaction that it is not feasible I should certainly be prepared to consider any alternative proposal based on scientific investigation.

A-7629. May I take it that, although you do not say so in this memorandum, your Union is asking for the application in India of the Washington Convention and not for any lesser reduction, such as to 9 hours?—Yes.

A-7630. You say that no woman should be allowed to work before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. Would you agree that the best plan is to suggest a general reduction of hours for both men and women such as is laid down for instance in the Washington Convention and not to limit the hours of women differentially except in regard to night work?—Yes.

A-7631. Do you realize the danger of differentiating between the hours of women and men, possibly penalizing the employment of women, or do you feel so strongly about the necessity for restricting the hours of women that you would do so even at such a cost?—I do not think there would be that effect because I do not think there is such a competition between men and women at present.

A-7632. *Mr. Joshi* : If the hours of women are maintained at a lower level than the hours of men, do you think that will constitute a useful lever for reducing the hours of men also ?—Yes.

A-7633. *Miss Power* : Apparently you want to do away with half-timers altogether, you want the age for a child to be 14 to 18 instead of the present age and you want the hours of children to be limited to 5. Are you really suggesting that nobody should be able legally to employ any Indian girl or boy up to the age of 18 except for a maximum period of 5 hours ? Would you prefer the inauguration of a young persons' class in India rather than that everybody up to the age of 18 should be classed as a child ?—I am prepared to accept your suggestion that there should be a class of young persons between the ages of 14 and 18.

A-7634. Referring to what you say as to holidays, are you looking for the development of trade holidays by trade agreement as for instance in the textile industry in England, or are you looking for the creation of holidays additional to the weekly day of rest by legal statute ?—Yes.

A-7635. You are not prepared to leave it to trade agreements as in England on the ground that your Unions are not strong enough to obtain such agreements ?—Quite right.

A-7636. You apparently want two recesses, additional to the middle day recess. Is it your opinion that, if you had two such additional recesses, you would be able to break the Indian worker of his habit of taking a recess whenever he wanted thus imposing on him a certain degree of discipline involving his restricting his time off to the official intervals ?—Yes.

A-7637. With regard to minimum wage regulation, are you not suggesting the establishment of minimum wage machinery in the case of textile industry in which you cannot say that in comparison with other industries, the wages paid are unduly low ; do you want machinery, such as the British Trade Boards, only applied in the first instance to the better paid and better organized industries ?—Yes.

A-7638. You realize that that is the reverse of the British system ?—Yes.

A-7639. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Are you not beginning at the wrong end ?—You need not necessarily begin from the same end as that from which the British trade boards began.

A-7640. *Miss Power* : You refer also to privilege leave with pay. Do you want this legally established in India instead of leaving it to trade agreement ?—I would welcome legal enactment because trade agreements are not possible owing to the weak position of the trade Unions. I can give the same reply as I have given to your previous question.

A-7641. With regard to what you say as to labour representation in the Central and Provincial legislatures, do you adopt what has been said by the Trade Union Congress on this matter ?—Yes.

A-7642. Does that mean that the views of the Trade Union Congress also represent the views of the Bombay Textile Labour Union ?—Yes. This was written in 1926 when we were in the Congress.

A-7643. Your Union now belongs to the Federation and not to the Congress, and this is the view of the Congress ? Do these still represent your views ?—Yes.

A-7644. *Mr. Joshi* : And you personally agree with those views ?—Yes.

A-7645. *Miss Cama* : Do you know that a mill in Sholapur employs a welfare secretary ?—I do not, but it may be so.

A-7646. *Mr. Asavle* : Are the employers either here or in Bombay doing sufficient welfare work for their labour ?—I cannot speak with knowledge about Sholapur but in Bombay certainly the welfare activities can be increased.

A-7647. Many witnesses have stated that the women also work invariably and their income is added to the family budget. What is your opinion about it ?—I do not think that each industrial worker has a family which earns.

A-7648. If women get themselves employed in the Mills is it not because of the fact that the wages given to men are so low that they cannot maintain their families on it ?—I have said that already.

A-7649. You have stated that it is the duty of the Municipality to provide houses for the workers. But is it not the duty of the employer to provide houses for his workers ?—I have stated in reply to the Chairman that I am not in favour of industrial houses being under the control of the employers, for the simple reason that on many occasions the liberties of the workers are restricted. They may build them or may not build them but the control must be in the hands of some public agency.

A-7650. *Col. Russell* : You suggest that the houses should be built by the employers but should be under the control of some public agency. What kind of public agency are you thinking of?—The Municipality, for example.

A-7651. With regard to maternity benefit you suggest that provision should be made for six weeks before confinement. How did you come to that conclusion?—The Washington Convention recommends that, does it not?

A-7652. Do you not think that six weeks is a little too long? Do not a considerable number of women work right up to the day of confinement?—They do it because of necessity.

A-7653. Have you consulted medical opinion on the matter?—I have not consulted any medical opinion. That is the common sense opinion, I should say.

A-7654. Do you suggest that the employers should provide proper medical attention and care for all the women workers during pregnancy?—I have said in reply to Mr. Joshi that welfare work should be standardized and put in charge of some central agency. That central agency will have to be financed not only by the employers but also by the State.

A-7655. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The central agency must be a very big one if it is going to look after housing, medical facilities and all the other welfare activities. Could you see it functioning?—If you decide to bring it into existence we shall see.

A-7656. *Col. Russell* : Is it not necessary to consider the details of the scheme before you decide on its adoption?—I have dealt with the conditions as they exist and made some suggestions. It is for the Royal Commission to consider the details and the practicability or otherwise of the suggestions. I do not know the conditions as they exist in other parts of India.

A-7657. Dealing with the definition of factories you suggest an amendment with a view to bring small factories under supervision and control in order to restrict the abuses that are at present reported to exist there. What kind of factories have you in mind when you make this suggestion?—Any factory that employs not less than 10 people should be brought under the Factories Act.

A-7658. We have had it in evidence before us that if such a provision was introduced there would be an immediate division of the factories into two small ones of five persons each. How would you get over that difficulty?—I do not think when the present Factories Act laid down that any factory with 20 people would be brought under the operation of the Factories Act many factories which were working with 20 people and more were divided into smaller factories.

A-7659. You do not believe it?—It seems to be absurd.

Col. Russell : We have had evidence that that tendency exists.

A-7660. *Mr. Clow* : Does not the restriction regarding the employment of 20 persons apply only to factories where machinery and power are used and which you cannot divide into two?—Yes. You can give the necessary powers to the Local Government to prevent any evasion of the law.

A-7661. *Col. Russell* : You will then have to increase the inspecting staff considerably?—Yes.

A-7662. *Mr. Cliff* : With regard to picketing, I understood from the employers' association that they were in favour of the abolition of picketing. But you say in your memorandum that "the mill officials whose number was larger than that of the Union were also counter-picketing." Is that correct?—It is quite correct. We were picketing and asking the people not to go into the Mills and in the same way they were picketing and asking people to go into the Mills.

A-7663. If you were conducting picketing in any way you were doing it in a perfectly peaceful manner?—Yes. This sentence refers only to one Mill. During the strike last year, the Millowners' Association as an Association put up counter-pickets in Bombay.

A-7664. I just want to deal with Sholapur?—The information I have given is with reference to the Kurla Mills in Bombay. It does not refer to Sholapur. I was picketing there myself and I am making the statement from personal knowledge. It is absolutely correct.

A-7665. Do I understand that the Sub-Inspector and a few constables warned the Union pickets not to stand on a public road and to withdraw? Is your statement correct?—It is correct.

A-7666. Did they allow the Mill officials to do what they asked you not to do?—Yes, they did.

A-7667. Surely it is not correct that "a few constables warned some men inside the tea shops which were opposite the mills, not to wait there but to go to the mills." That is not the duty of the police constables. Did they do that?—I saw it with my own eyes.

A-7668. Is that what you mean when you say that the Government are unfriendly?—Yes, Government do not pursue a neutral attitude during a strike.

A-7669. Do you mean to say that the Bombay Millowners' Association officially arranged for counter-pickets?—Yes. During the strike last year the Bombay Millowners' Association officially or several important groups among them individually, put up what are now known as the blue pickets. They were counter-picketing when the pickets of the Girni Kamgar Union were picketing.

A-7670. Were they officials of the Mills?—They employed volunteers.

A-7671. You mean paid volunteers?—I think it was so.

A-7672. Why do you think it was so?—I am not in a position to prove whether any payment was made or not. It is very difficult to do that.

A-7673. Were they actual employees of the Mills?—The employees had gone on strike and naturally they had to bring in men who were not textile workers. These volunteers would not picket on behalf of the Millowners' Association unless they were paid.

A-7674. Do you mean to say that the responsible employers in Bombay actually engaged men who were not employed in the textile mills to picket? Is that correct?—I do say that. It is a fact. My colleague Mr. Rajab says that he can produce a few men if required; they are in Bombay.

A-7675. You say: "The Police were clearly helping the mill authorities and putting every obstacle in the way of the Union. On the 22nd September the Union made a complaint to the District Superintendent of Police, Bandra, and copies of that letter were sent to the General and Home Departments of the Bombay Government. The General Department directed the Union to the Home Department which merely acknowledged the complaint and did nothing more." Was no further action taken in respect of the complaint made by the Union?—Nothing so far as I am aware.

A-7676. In your memorandum you deal at length with the employers' attitude towards trade unions. Do you expect as a trade union, the employers to be friendly?—I do not expect them to be friendly.

A-7677. You say again that the "Millowners have not done anything yet in the direction of calling the quarterly general meetings contemplated by the Chairman (Of the Royal Commission) owing perhaps to the present weak position of the Union". Do you really expect the millowners to call these meetings if, as you say, "the trade union movement in the textile industry is on its last legs"?—As the suggestion came from the Chairman of the Royal Commission, I thought that the Millowners might make an experiment in that direction.

A-7678. Have you recently had unsuccessful strikes both in Bombay and Sholapur?—Yes.

A-7679. You were asked one or two questions about this and you referred to the attitude of Government and the employers. May it not be true that in any new movement like this there may be had leadership on the part of the trade unions?—It is quite possible, yes.

A-7680. Is it not possible that in Bombay and Sholapur where there may have been bad leadership the workers are dispirited and discouraged?—Certainly.

A-7681. Do you mean that the employers were prepared to treat with the unions when they thought that the unions were strong but are prepared to take advantage of the position when they realize that the trade unions are weak?—That is my experience, at any rate.

A-7682. In answer to a question by Mr. Clow you said that this country must profit by the experience of other countries. In what way do you want this country to profit by the experience of other countries?—At any rate the employers should not take up a definitely hostile attitude towards trade unions even though they happen to be weak. To give an illustration I may point out that because our union is weak now and not in a position to negotiate, and because the other Union also is not functioning properly, the Millowners' Association are trying to get into direct touch with the workers. I think it is exactly here that they can do something better.

A-7683. What do you suggest they should do?—I suggested to them once or twice that they should meet our union and discuss matters on which we may be able to improve conditions in certain respects, not necessarily those matters on which the Union may be

required to deliver the goods. We are not now in a position to deliver the goods but there are certain other matters arising out of the Fawcett Committee's report which we can discuss and arrive at a settlement. We suggested to them we should meet and settle that question. If through these discussions we could convince the workers that here is a Union which can improve their conditions though not very rapidly but at least to some extent, we will get some kind of encouragement and will have a better response from the operatives themselves. In the absence of any such thing it is very difficult to build a trade union organization in Bombay, at the present time at any rate.

A-7684. Mr. Clow was putting it to you whether it was not a tenable position for the employers to take up that they could only negotiate with a body which could deliver the goods?—But there may be certain other points where negotiations may take place with a union which is weak for the present. Take for example the standardization scheme which they want to introduce. Here we can certainly co-operate with the millowners and find out whether the standardization scheme will yield the desired results. It is not quite necessary in my opinion that the union should be in a position to deliver the goods.

A-7685. You are faced with the question of standardization of wages. It means an adjustment. It may mean an adjustment both ways. If as a result of your negotiations you reached an agreement you must be able to deliver the goods. How would you meet a position like that?—That is not the point. The fact is the standardization scheme has not yet come into operation. They have now prepared a scheme by incorporating all the suggestions of the Fawcett Committee. They have removed the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. cut. The Millowners' Association want to find out whether the scheme will yield the desired results. We can co-operate with them and find it out. It is only when the scheme comes into operation that the question arises of delivering the goods.

A-7686. Have you made an application to do that?—Yes.

A-7687. What has been the result of your application?—They are now busy with getting protection for the industry. The Millowners' Office has practically been transferred to Delhi.

A-7688. You have got to wait till they come back. In your memorandum you make a reference to labour legislation in British India and the absence of any such thing in the Indian States. Have you any concrete proposals to put before the Commission as to how your desire could be given effect to?—I cannot make any concrete proposals. I am really anxious that the conditions should be more or less similar both in British India and Indian States.

A-7689. Mr. Joshi: Suppose the Government of India convened a conference of representatives of labour, the employers and Government both from British India and Indian States, would it not be of use in preparing the way for standardization of conditions in both places?—Certainly. It should be tried.

A-7690. Mr. Cliff: Have you any other suggestion to make?—No.

A-7691. The employers in this country have in many instances provided houses. I take it that your Union as a union does not object to the provision of housing by the employers?—No.

A-7692. You only want that the provision of housing should not tend to limit the freedom of the workers to strike?—Yes.

A-7693. Quite a number of employers in this country have done some very useful welfare work. Is it clear that your Union does not object but actually welcomes the welfare work that has been done?—We do welcome it; I have said so already.

A-7694. Does your Union want an extension of the welfare work to all industries?—Yes.

A-7695. Sir Alexander Murray: In your memorandum you say that your Union is not prepared to accept any scheme which contains a cut and a reduction in the number of workers. Would not any standardization schemes result in a reduction in the number of workers?—I have qualified this statement by saying "subject to such agreements that have been reached between the Joint Strike Committee and the Millowners' Association".

A-7696. You told us that you have dispensed with the cut; what about the question of the reduction of the number of workers? Practically any standardization scheme must result in a reduction of the number of workers?—I stand by the position taken by the Joint Strike Committee that if there is going to be a reduction on a large scale some provision must be made for the maintenance of workers thrown out of employment. The Fawcett Committee has recommended what is now known as the "Out-of-work Donation Fund".

A-7697. Do you think that it is a feasible proposition?—Certainly; why not?

A-7698. Your Union is not so strong as it formerly was and yet you suggest that the employers should meet and discuss matters with you in order that it may be an encouragement to you and strengthen your position. As we have gone round India we have found that strong exception is taken to what is called employers' union. If you are a weak union as you say you are, and ask the employers to help you to re-establish yourself how will it help you to get a greater following?—I do not want any such help. When we were strong they never negotiated with us. During the 1928 strike the Millowners' Association publicly declared that they had decided to recognize any union registered under the Trade Unions Act. But they never sent a single letter to the Agents or the Managers asking them to take definite steps in that direction. The whole thing was kept within the four walls of the Association. When we were strong they never negotiated with us; when we are weak they say they can not negotiate with us. They do not want to negotiate with us at all. The position is absurd.

A-7699. In your memorandum you say that the Madras Planters' Labour Act should be repealed. Has it not been repealed already?—I do not know.

A-7700. You say that labour legislation should be a central subject. Do you mean that practically all labour legislation including welfare work should be a central subject?—The general direction should be in the hands of the Government of India.

A-7701. Will the Provincial Government accept that point of view?—They have been accepting that even now.

A-7702. Not as regards welfare work?—But certainly as regards other labour legislation.

A-7703. You have referred us to this memorandum from the All-India Trade Union Congress regarding labour representation in the Legislatures which you say you adopt. It suggests that the elections should be held under the auspices of the All-India Trade Union Congress. Do you still hold that opinion?—I really meant an All-India body representative of labour.

A-7704. Would you like to substitute the Federation for the All-India Trade Union Congress?—Any All-India body which works on the same lines.

A-7705. Are you prepared to accept the same constituency which the employers are prepared to accept?—Yes. The object in sending that note was just to point out the disparity between representation of employers and workers in the legislatures.

A-7706. But the workers are illiterate and the employers are literate. You have to put pictures of tigers, elephants and so on on the ballot boxes in order to tell the illiterate voters for whom to vote. Election among illiterate workers is attended with so many difficulties. At any rate you do not want that the election should be held under the auspices of the All-India Trade Union Congress?—No, not the Trade Union Congress certainly.

A-7707. You want to exclude Government servants from the electorate; would you exclude railway servants also?—The Government of India themselves do not say that Railway servants are Government servants. They will be included in the electoral roll.

A-7708. What about Posts and Telegraphs servants?—They are not allowed to join our Trade Union movement and they should be excluded from the electoral rolls.

A-7709. Will they agree to that?—If they accept the restrictions of Government and do not want to join the trade union movement, certainly they must accept other restrictions as well.

A-7710. But Government does not prevent them from exercising their franchise for the councils?—They have their franchise in the general electorate. This is separate representation of labour.

A-7711. *Mr. Joshi*: When you speak of employers negotiating with a Union which cannot deliver the goods you mean that some useful work can be done in directions where no binding agreement may be necessary?—Yes.

A-7712. You also think that by doing like that the employers will be able to know the workers' point of view even though they may not be able to get a binding agreement?—Yes.

A-7713. It has been suggested that in order to eliminate unfair competition between mills in British India and Indian States there should be uniformity of legislation in labour matters in both parts of India. There is also competition between China, Japan and India on the same matters and therefore there is some difficulty in proceeding with labour legislation in India. Do you think that a conference among Asiatic countries such as China, Japan and India will be of some use?—I think so.

A-7714. *Sir Alexander Murray*: There is the International Labour Conference in which all the Asiatic countries are represented. How will a conference of Asiatic countries alone be of help in this direction?

Mr. Joshi: I do not want to do away with the International Labour Conference. In addition to that Conference I want that there should be another conference of Asiatic countries which come into direct competition with each other in order to consider some questions which are common to the Asiatic countries alone. It must be held once a year or as often as the International Labour Conferences are held.

The Witness: Is it to be through the International Labour Office?

Mr. Joshi: Yes.

The Witness: Some such conference is necessary. We prepared a draft constitution and a draft agenda and arranged for the conference to be held this year. The condition of textile workers and labour legislation were two of the items in the agenda. Unfortunately other events which have taken place have made it impossible for the conference to be held this year at any rate.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Rao Bahadur Dr. V. V. MULAY, L.M. & S., President, Sholapur Municipality.

A-7715. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How long have you been the president of the Sholapur Municipality?—For seven years.

A-7716. What is the population of the municipal town?—114,000.

A-7717. How many members has your Municipality?—There are 40 elected members and 10 members nominated by Government. Of the nominated members 2 are Muhammadans, 1 Christian, 1 Government pleader, 2 Marathas, 1 Parsee, 1 European Railway Official, 1 representative of the Criminal Tribes Settlement, and 1 pleader.

A-7718. Are the representatives of the depressed classes elected?—Yes, they have a separate electorate. They elect two members.

A-7719. Is there any representative of labour?—There is no separate representative for labour. Representatives from Ward No. 9 and the two representatives of the depressed classes can be taken to represent labour.

A-7720. Is there any representative of the chambers of commerce or of employers generally?—No. There are no employers' representatives as such. All the four or five mills are situated in the 9th ward. The representatives from that ward represent the employers and the labourers. The employers live there and the labourers also have got their houses and *chawls* in that ward.

A-7721. Is there any actual working man on the Municipality?—There is one gentleman from the Union by name Dr. Autolikar. He is elected by the Union as a representative of the workers generally. But there is no actual working man as such on the municipality.

A-7722. What is the position as regards housing of the industrial workers generally?—To some extent the Mills have got their own housing colonies for their workers, but most of the workers belong to the weaver class and they live in their own houses in Sukerpet. There is no special arrangement made for them. During the last ten years the mill labourers who were not provided for by the Mills or who could not get decent houses to live in in other parts of the city have generally tried to put up small huts just close to the mills. A number of sites belonging to private people also have been occupied by the labourers in this way. There is however no provision for drainage, roads or water supply on some of these sites which are very insanitary.

A-7723. Are they all on municipal land?—Some of the sites belong to the municipality, some to Government and some to private owners, the lands belonging to the municipality are being developed on sanitary lines.

A-7724. How much of municipal land have you leased out to your workers?—We have not permanently allocated regular building sites for the labourers as yet. We have two town planning schemes; the first was completed last year and the second which covers the area close to the mills has been sent to Government for their approval. Under these schemes we propose to reserve open sites for housing the poor and to divide the areas into plots of 40/30 or 40/40 and lease them out to the labourers on long terms and allow them to build their own houses. We do not intend asking them to build houses which will be rather costly structures. The municipality will provide plinths of 1½ or 2 feet and on these plinths the labourers will be allowed to put up their own structures according to their means.

A-7725. Who is to make provision for roads, water supply and conservancy?—The Municipality, of course.

A-7726. Under what Act have you made your Town Planning Scheme?—Under the Bombay Town Planning Act.

A-7727. Could you send us a copy of your latest administration report and copies of your two town planning schemes and also other papers, if any, which you think may be of use to the Commission?—Yes, I shall do so. The town planning scheme No. 1 relates to Telangi Pachha Peth and the large open tracts to the east of the city. This place was occupied by the lowest type of weaver class. There were about 20,000 handloom weavers in this part of the town. Number of them have been squatting there for the past 40 or 60 years. The owner of the land would not allow the Municipality to carry out any improvements in that area because he was afraid his rights might be encroached upon if the Municipality did any such thing. It was his *inam* land consisting of 200 acres. The Municipality has purchased the whole of Telangi Pachha Peth out of that area under the Town Planning Act and is carrying out the necessary improvements. We have asked the consulting surveyor to prepare a scheme by which each tenant should bear half the cost of the amenities which the Municipality intends to provide. The price of the plot and the cost of improvements will be recovered from the tenants in 10 or 15 years. At the end of 10 or 15 years the tenants will be the freeholders of the lands.

A-7728. Do you find that all the 40 members of the Municipality help you in these schemes?—They all co-operate with me in carrying out these schemes.

A-7729. Have you any provision in the Municipal Act under which you can acquire congested *bustis* or insanitary places for the sake of improving them or call upon the owners of those *bustis* to make the necessary improvements?—Yes, we have.

A-7730. Have you put them into force in any case?—We have had three schemes in which we put that provision into force—the Gadda, the Rewani and the Mangalwar peth schemes.

A-7731. *Mr. Clow*: Have you got compulsory primary education in the Municipality?—We introduced compulsory primary education three years ago. It was applied to the whole city but we are taking one ward after another each year. There are four wards in the city. Two wards have been brought under compulsory primary education. We could not apply it to all the wards all at once on account of financial difficulties.

A-7732. Have you applied it to the ward where the handloom weavers live?—We have applied it only this year.

A-7733. Do you find any opposition from the parents?—Except from the depressed classes we do not meet with opposition from any other class. Even though the weavers as a class are very backward in education they realize the importance of education and are quite willing to send their children to school. There is no trouble in inducing them to send their children to school.

A-7734. Are they quite willing to forego the earnings of their children?—We have opened schools in their own areas so that the children go to school in the morning and help their parents in the evening.

A-7735. *Mr. Joshi*: Have you applied compulsory education to the mill area?—No, the turn of this ward, ward No. 9 will come next year. Most of the mills have their own schools and it was thought it would be waste of time to apply compulsion to the mill area first.

A-7736. *Miss Power*: Is there compulsory education in the mills?—No, it is voluntary.

A-7737. *Mr. Joshi*: You provide plinths and ask the workers to build houses. Is there any great difficulty in providing houses and recovering rent from the occupants?—It is a question of finance. It has been difficult to get even loans from Government, in time.

A-7738. Are they against the grant of loans to Municipalities for town planning schemes? Do you not pay interest on those loans?—The Government are not against the grant of loans. There are so many formalities and procedures to be gone through for Government loans and there are so many difficulties for Government too that they cannot sanction loans as soon as a Municipality applies for it. It takes at least two years for them to make provision for the loans in their budget since the time of the application from the local bodies. They have to raise their loans themselves, in the market in suitable times. All this means delay.

A-7739. If Government sanctioned the loan you required what other insuperable difficulty would there be in the way of your building the houses and renting them out to the workers?—As far as Sholapur is concerned it is not enough if Government gives the loans alone. They must give the open sites free of cost. Owing to the rapid expansion of industry in Sholapur the labouring classes have been occupying lands outside

the original limits of the city. Government saw that there was a great demand for lands and sold several lands which had been lying vacant for years and realized a decent price. But once they sold these lands to private parties their responsibility ceased; they made no arrangements for water supply, drainage and lighting. In connection with one or two of such development schemes of land which originally belonged to Government, the Municipality had a prolonged controversy with Government extending over three or four years. One such case was in connection with the development of the area between Sudder Bazaar and the city. Government had sold these plots and made about 3 to 4 lakhs of rupees. But the Municipality had to undertake a burden of about Rs. 2,00,000 on account of drainage, water-supply and lighting. The Municipality asked Government for a contribution towards these improvements or for a share of the sale proceeds of the vacant lands. The Government refused to help in the beginning but after some controversy the Government gave some contribution and promised to hand over some unsold plots to the Municipality.

A-7740. Do you expect new mills to be started when you improve the water supply of the municipality?—Yes.

A-7741. What steps do you propose to take in order to prevent overcrowding?—We have made ample provision in the town planning schemes.

A-7742. Have you any actual scheme for housing the industrial workers?—We have no scheme for industrial housing as such.

A-7743. Have you held any conference with the employers in order to solve the problem of housing?—So far we have not felt any necessity for it, as the mills are having their own housing colonies.

A-7744. Has the Municipality made any provision for the recreation of the working classes here?—We have made provision for parks and play-grounds in our newly developed areas. These are situated near the Mills.

A-7745. Have you made any provision for public bathing places for the working classes?—No. The water supply was not sufficient even for drinking purposes. We draw our supply from a tank which has to supply water to irrigate fields also. We asked Government for more water but they refused to supply us. There was a triangular fight between the Municipality, the mills and the agriculturists regarding the supply of water. It is only this year that Government have increased the supply of water just enough for drinking purposes.

A-7746. Would you provide public bathing places if your water supply improves?—Yes.

A-7747. *Miss Power*: With regard to compulsory education, does that include girls as well as boys?—No, it applies to boys alone.

A-7748. So that you have only partial compulsory education. We were told in Madras that although there was compulsory education in certain wards that did not prevent a large number of children who should have been at school being at work up to very often as much as 12 hours a day in what are called unregulated factories. What exactly do you mean by compulsory education here? What compulsion do you exercise on the parents of the boys who receive this so-called compulsory education?—We take a census of children of school-going age; if the parents do not send them to school we prosecute them.

A-7749. Have you got attendance officers to see that the children attend school?—Yes.

A-7750. Would you be prepared to say that in these wards where there is compulsory education we should not be able to find boys under 12 years of age engaged in unregulated industries?—Yes, to a great extent. But there may be a few exceptions.

A-7751. What we found in Madras was that if a child between the ages of 8 and 11 could earn something in one of those unregulated industries such as the *bidi* factories and so on, you would find him in those industries rather than in the school. You say it is not the case here except to a very small extent?—Yes, that is so.

A-7752. Is there any suggestion that compulsory education should be extended to the girls as well?—The only difficulty is with regard to the Muhammadan girls. They do not want to send their girls to school. Once the principle of compulsion is applied we do not want to make a distinction between Hindu and Muhammadan. The Hindu girls are nowadays going to schools even without compulsion.

A-7753. *Miss Cama*: If employers want to construct *chawls* for their work-people does the Municipality give them any concession as regards water and so on?—No.

A-7754. *Colonel Russell*: A considerable number of workers settle down on the vacant sites round about the mills. Are they not mere squatters? Do they pay any rent?—They do pay rent and sometimes an exorbitant rent to the private landlords.

A-7755. How would you deal with a population of that kind?—We shall evict them and ask them compulsorily to occupy the plots which we would have developed.

A-7756. Do you think you can manage to get them go out and occupy the new sites?—I can mention a case which occurred two or three months back. There were 60 or 80 houses in very insanitary private land. A notice was issued by the magistrate and they were evicted. We provided them with better sites at less rents and they have now occupied them as a temporary measure. As soon as our scheme for building plots is ready and the plinths are put up, they would move on to those sites.

A-7757. You think there will be no difficulty in getting these squatters to move into these new sites?—No.

A-7758. Your idea of providing plinths is a very good idea. But do you allow these workers to put up houses with any material they like and in any way they like without any consideration for ventilation and lighting?—No, we mean to have a certain amount of municipal control regarding the height of the roof, the number and size of the windows, doors and so on. There should be some attention paid to uniformity also.

A-7759. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to squatters on Municipal land or Government land, do they go there without permission?—The squatters are more on private land than on Government land. Some squatters have been there for 20 to 30 years. It is only recently that the attention of Government has been drawn to this. At times Government find it very difficult to evict them when once they are settled. Of course new squatters cannot be allowed on Government land without permission.

A-7760. Have the millowners any difficulty in obtaining lands for housing their workers at reasonable prices in Sholapur?—It is only in the case of Narasingiriji Mill that they find it difficult to get lands near their mill. In the case of other mills they have plenty of land near their own mills.

A-7761. Could they get lands at reasonable prices?—Government have got some vacant lands on the outskirts of the mill area. The millowners can enter into negotiations with Government and buy those lands at reasonable prices.

A-7762. It has been suggested that when the employers wanted lands for housing their workers the price of land was put up. It has also been suggested that it was the Government that put up the price of land. Do you know anything about it?—At present it is very likely that the Government will do it. As far as Government is concerned they sell every inch of land nowadays at fabulously high prices, if they find that they can obtain the same.

A-7763. How long has the Municipality been on its present franchise?—For the last 10 years. There have been some small changes during this period.

(The witness withdrew.)

The Commission adjourned *sine die*.

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