



ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON  
LABOUR IN INDIA.

---

EVIDENCE.

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Vol. IV.—Part 2.

BIHAR AND ORISSA  
WITH COALFIELDS.

ORAL EVIDENCE.

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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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## LIST OF SUBJECTS.

## I. Recruitment.

- (1) *Origin of Labour.*
  - (i) Extent of migration.
  - (ii) Causes of particular streams of migration.
  - (iii) Changes in recent years.
- \* (2) *Contact with villages.*
  - (i) Extent and frequency of return.
  - (ii) Extent of permanent labour force.
- (3) *Methods of recruitment.*
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  - (ii) Possible improvement.
  - (iii) Public employment agencies.
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    - (b) Possibility of practical schemes.
- (4) *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life.*
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    - (b) Voluntary retirement.
    - (c) Other causes.
  - (iii) Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.
  - (iv) Unemployment Insurance.
  - (v) Application of International Conventions relating to un-employment.
- (8) *Labour "turnover."\**
  - (i) Average duration of employment.
  - (ii) Extent of casual employment.
  - (iii) Absenteeism.
    - (a) Extent, character and causes.
    - (b) Seasonal or otherwise.
    - (c) Time and wages lost.
- (9) *Apprentices Act, 1850.*  
Value of.

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

**II. Staff Organisation.**

- (10) *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*
- (11) *Selection of managing staff.*
- (12) *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*
  - (i) Methods in force.
  - (ii) Facilities for training and promotion of workmen.
- (13) *Relations between staff and rank and file.*
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  - (iv) Works Councils and Industrial Councils.
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  - (i) How and by whom kept and checked.
  - (ii) How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.
- (15) *Contractors as intermediaries.*
  - (i) Extent and character of work given on contract.
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  - (iii) Control exercised over working conditions.
  - (iv) Effects.

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  - (ii) By Government or other public agency.
  - (iii) By private landlords.
  - (iv) By workers themselves.
- (17) *Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.*
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  - (ii) In relation to best type from health point of view.
  - (iii) Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.
- (19) *Utilisation by workers of accommodation available.*
- (20) *Rent-rates in various classes.*
- (21) *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing.*
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- (55) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
  - (i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
  - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
  - (iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.
- (56) *Days worked per week.*
- (57) *Effect of 60 hours restriction—*
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  - (ii) On industry.
- (58) *Effect of daily limit.*
- (59) *Possibility of reduction in maxima.*
- (60) *Intervals.*
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  - (iii) Suitability of hours during which factory is working.
  - (iv) Number of holidays given.
- (61) *Day of rest.*
  - (i) Existing practice.
  - (ii) Suitability of the law.
- (62) *Exempting provisions and the use made of them.*

### **B. Mines.**

- (63) *Hours worked per day and per week.*
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  - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
  - (iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

- (64) *Days worked per week.*
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**MINUTES OF EVIDENCE**  
TAKEN BEFORE THE  
**ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR**  
**IN INDIA**  

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**BIHAR AND ORISSA**  

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**FORTY-SECOND MEETING**  

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**PATNA**  
**Thursday, 19th December 1929.**

PRESENT :

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

*Members.*

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.  
Miss B. M. LEPOER POWER.  
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL,  
C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor*

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. J. R. DAIN, I.C.S., Officer on Special Duty with the Government of Bihar and Orissa, Mr. H. E. HORSFIELD, Registrar of Trade Unions and Mr. D. C. GUPTA, Director of Industries.**

**D-1. The Chairman :** I understand, Mr. Dain, that you represent the Provincial Government?—(Mr. Dain) : In a sense I do. I am put up as an official witness on the Government memorandum, but I myself take responsibility for anything I may say.

**D-2.** I take it that, although the main interest of your Province is that of agriculture, there is a very large number of persons who need to migrate to other parts of India because of the intense pressure upon the land?—That is so. The migration to other parts of India comes very largely from Chota Nagpur, where the pressure on the land is actually the least in persons per square mile because of the poverty of the land. The migration from North Bihar is not so great.

**D-3.** But speaking generally of the Province, that is the case?—There is pressure on the land, yes.

**D-4.** And your figures show to us how large the migration is at the present time?—Yes.

**D-5.** Do I take it that the policy of your Government is to encourage that migration, so far as the conditions are satisfactory?—I have no authority to speak of the policy of Government, but as far as I understand it that is the policy of Government.

**D-6.** Coming to matters on which you express Government policy, dealing with unemployment and unemployment insurance you tell us : "There is at present no necessity for any method of alleviating or remedying distress caused by unemployment, or for the provision of unemployment insurance in this Province." Do I take it that the view of the Government is that, under existing conditions, those people unable to find employment in their immediate locality are able to find it in other places?—This refers to industrial unemployment, and my view is that industrial unemployment hardly exists.

**D-7.** Dealing with relations between staff and rank and file in industrial establishments, you make the interesting statement : "Relations between the staff and rank and file, particularly in the smaller factories, are satisfactory. In some of the larger concerns, however, there is sometimes a lack of contact between the managers and the supervising staff who are frequently ignorant of the language of their workmen, and there is also a tendency on the part of foremen to abuse their authority." Will you amplify that statement for the benefit of the Commission?—My personal experience is entirely confined to Jamshedpur. It seemed to me that, as one of the causes of the big strike last year, there was a lack of contact between the supervising staff and their men, and that that lack of contact was partly due to the supervising staff's ignorance of the language and of Indian customs.

**D-8.** That is the case of an Indian concern, which I take it from what you say, is staffed to a large extent, by Europeans?—The superior staff is composed mainly of Europeans and Americans. It is being Indianised gradually, but at present it is composed mainly of Europeans and Americans.

**D-9.** Is there no labour officer there who can form a channel between the rank and file and the superior staff?—There was a labour

supervisor there, but his position was a little anomalous. He neither belonged to the superior staff nor to the men, and it did not seem to me that he formed a very efficient channel of communication between them.

**D-10.** Do you suggest he was not sufficiently highly qualified for that delicate and difficult position?—It is difficult for me to give a personal description of the man. He was exceptionally gifted in languages, but I do not think his general education was sufficient for his position.

**D-11.** Is it your view that it needs a man, very highly qualified, and of course also highly paid, to satisfactorily fill a position of that kind?—That was what I told the General Manager of Messrs. Tatas. I told him that he required a highly qualified officer with a broad general education who also possessed the necessary ability to understand and to speak the Indian languages.

**D-12.** The memorandum expresses the opinion of your Government with regard to the question of sickness insurance. It would appear that your main difficulty in that regard is one of finance?—Yes.

**D-13.** You tell us that your Government is unable to incur any financial liability in this matter. Would your objections also hold against the provision of a State Medical Service in lieu of sickness insurance on the ground of expense?—I take it it would be the same thing.

**D-14.** From what you tell us, you have in your view, an adequate number of medical men, in the Province. You go on to detail some of the difficulties in the matter of workers frequently changing from one concern to another?—That might hold good in the coalfields, but I do not think it would hold good in Jamshedpur.

**D-15.** You think that any system could only be local and partial?—Yes.

**D-16.** You deal with the Workmen's Compensation Act, and you tell us that your Government prefers to adhere to the lump sum payment rather than to periodic payments on grounds of difficulty of administration; but you suggest that the minimum payments should be increased. Have you anything to say with regard to the extension of the Act in any other direction, namely, to cover additional classes of industrial concerns?—The memorandum has suggested two small additions. These are, industrial concerns not at present covered by the Indian Factories Act and mines exempted under section 46 of the Mines Act.

**D-17.** When you say they are not at present covered by the Factories Act, does it follow from that that the Factories Act should also be extended to cover additional classes?—I think that question may be put to the Chief Inspector of Factories. I cannot give an opinion.

**D-18.** Dealing with the desirability of legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, you tell us that in the opinion of your Government there would be no objection to legislation on these lines, but you then go on to detail a number of difficulties in the way, questioning whether the employers in any organized industries, or even in the smaller organized industries, would be able to pay the compensation awarded. I take it you have a number of such small and struggling industries in the Province?—There is a number, yes.

**D-19.** Then you remind us of the difficulty of making the two things dovetail into one another—the Workmen's Compensation Act and the suggested Employers' Liability Act?—As far as I remember there were provisions following the English Employers' Liability Act in the first draft of our Workmen's Compensation Act. I think the effect would probably be purely negative—that an Employers' Liability Act would not be used and would also be defeated by the poverty of the smaller employers, but I do not see that it could do any harm.

**D-20.** Except possibly a great increase in litigation?—I do not think so. I do not think it would be used to any great extent.

**D-21.** Dealing with the question of minimum wages, you tell us that the local Government are of opinion that at present the conditions of industry and the rates of wages are not sufficiently established to make the fixation of a minimum wage feasible at present. Are you thinking of a minimum for the whole of your Province, or as applied in particular cases to particular industries. You tell us that you are of opinion that there is no necessity to fix by statute a minimum wage for unskilled labour?—I have never heard in any strike any demand for fixing minimum wage by law.

**D-22.** Dealing with payments of wages you tell us, "The local Government are of opinion that conditions in this Province are not such as to require legislation either for the regulation of periods of payment or to prevent delay in payment." You tell us that in the case of the Bengal Iron Company, there was a referendum taken and that out of 4,500 employees only 200 expressed their wish for weekly payments. You also tell us that the Jamshedpur Labour Association regarded the Bill with apprehension. Does the view of your Government, besides applying to statutory provisions with regard to the period of payment—weekly or fortnightly as against the present monthly system—apply also to a limit of delay. Have you any knowledge of delay extending beyond, say, 15 days after the close of the month?—I have no knowledge of such delays in any industry. I have seen instances of long delay in the case of the menial servants of local bodies.

**D-23.** Do you think there is a legitimate grievance where payment is delayed, say, beyond 15 days after the period in which the wages are earned?—Yes,

**D-24.** You would not object to legislation to prevent unreasonable delay?—I would not object, but I do not think there is any need for it at present.

**D-25.** Do you think the workers are in a position to protect their own interests in a matter of that kind?—The strength of their Unions is growing in some cases.

**D-25a.** Under the head of "Intelligence", you tell us that in the opinion of the Local Government "The present industrial conditions of the Province would not in the ordinary course of events justify the expenditure of any further sums for the maintenance of a labour office to facilitate the collection and consideration of labour statistics." Has anything been done by your Government in that direction?—(Mr. Gupta) I have a small Commercial and Labour Intelligence Bureau, but it is doing more work along the lines of collection and dissemination of commercial and industrial intelligence rather than labour intelligence.

**D-26.** Do you feel yourself sufficiently equipped to undertake any work in the direction of investigation and compilation of labour statistics?—No, I have no staff for that.

**D-27.** What is your present staff?—I have an Intelligence Officer and a clerk to assist him.

**D-28.** Apparently you have made enquiries, beginning in 1922, with regard to the index number showing the rise and fall in the cost of living?—Yes. That is what we are carrying on now.

**D-29.** You tell us that family budgets were prepared for six centres. Was that work done by the small staff you have just mentioned?—No. It was done in the manner explained in Bulletin No. 7 (issued by the local Government). We obtained these budgets through the Welfare Superintendent of the Tata Iron and Steel Company for Jamshedpur, and also with the help of Dr. G. W. Thompson, Medical Officer of the Mines Board and his staff of sanitary inspectors for Jharia. We also took advantage of the existence of a small society here which has been carrying on studies in the economic conditions of Bihar since 1909.

**D-30.** The information was accepted by you and embodied in your Bulletin without any special examination by your own staff. It was not sifted?—I understand my predecessor consulted experts as to the accuracy of the information gathered, but I cannot say what was done to verify and check the information.

**D-31.** Are these budgets still in existence?—I have been able to get a few relating to Jharia, but I have not been able to trace the Jamshedpur budgets yet.

**D-32.** Does the Bulletin to which you have just referred describe the methods that were used?—Yes.



**D-33.** Was that an enquiry merely for the purpose of arriving at the index figures you give showing the rise in the cost of living, or does it also cover the family incomes and expenditures?—Yes. These budgets state the pay of the men and of other members of the family and the actual expenditure incurred under different heads.

**D-34.** Were those budgets analysed and summarized by your office?—Yes.

**D-35.** Where do we find the analysis and the summary?—They must be in the records. I have not looked for them but they were tabulated and an average struck.

**D-36.** Might we have this bulletin at our service for a short time so as to examine it and see if we require any further information?—Yes.

**D-37.** *Mr. Clow* : You refer to indebtedness and insufficiency of work as the factors which lead to migration to industry. Does social oppression play any part in this? Have you still in the Province, shall I say, "unpleasant conditions" under which the agricultural labourer works in some cases? For example, is the *kamia* system entirely stamped out?—(Mr. Dain) : I would not venture to say that it is entirely stamped out, but I should say its effect was to prevent migration of labour rather than to encourage it, by making it difficult for a man to leave his village.

**D-38.** *The Chairman* : Will you describe to us this *kamia* system?—It works like this. A man of the labouring class borrows money from his landlord. The debt runs on and increases. He is under contract to work for his landlord until the debt, on certain calculations, is paid off. The debt increases faster than it can be paid off, and not only is the man bound for life but sometimes his sons also. I have come across cases of *kamias* being actually sold and mortgaged.

**D-39.** Does that apply at all widely?—The district most affected is Palamau. I have come across it in south Gaya and I have heard of its existence in the south of this district.

**D-40.** Does Government do anything?—Government has passed an Act making these contracts unenforceable.

**D-41.** Therefore a man can release himself?—Yes.

**D-42.** *Mr. Clow* : You suggest that the provision of maternity benefit in the collieries would probably do more harm than good because it might prevent women from returning to the villages; but I understand that a number of collieries have started this system of their own accord?—They pay small sums to the women, I know, but I have no first hand experience of the colliery area.

**D-43.** In your memorandum you state that what would appear to be a very salutary rule was held by the Government of India to be *ultra*

tires of the Factories Act. Will you explain that?—As far as I remember it was held that the Factories Act did not apply to Railways.

**D-44.** Even when the Railway was entirely contained within a factory?—This is a question for a lawyer, but as far as I remember that was the case.

**D-45.** What amendment would your Government consider advisable to meet this point?—Railways within a factory come under the Railway Act. I could get the information for you. A question has been raised as to how far railways come under Railway Inspectors. I cannot answer this legal point.

**D-46.** Has your Government considered whether it wants any amendment to meet the difficulty?—I know that the question is under consideration, but as it does not belong to the Department with which I am concerned, I cannot answer this question.

**D-47.** You suggest the extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act to such concerns as are at present exempted under section 46 of the Mines Act. As you are probably aware, the definition of "mine" in the Mines Act is so wide that even a child scooping earth in a garden is "employed in a mine"?—The Workmen's Compensation Act does not apply to mines which are exempted by the Governor General in Council.

**D-48.** My point is that if you were to apply it to all mines including those at present exempted, it would cover practically every excavation in India?—Yes, it would.

**D-49.** In other words, it is necessary to exclude some classes of mines from the operation of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Perhaps it is.

**D-50.** You have not thought of where the line should be drawn? Every earth-work is a mine within the meaning of the Act?—As a matter of fact this extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act to mines which have been exempted from the operation of the Mines Act was my own suggestion, and I understand now that it would simply mean drawing the line at a lower limit. There are a fairly large number of mines exempted in this Province.

**D-51.** It would not be sufficient to say that it applies to a mine within the meaning of the Act without exemption?—There would be some practical difficulty in defining the extension.

**D-52.** The Chairman raised the question of legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act. I am not clear as to your proposal. As you know the effect of the Employers' Liability Act is to make certain modifications of the civil law relating to negligence and matters of that kind, and the Workmen's Compensation Act at present gives a man practically a choice between going to civil courts and applying to the Commissioner for compensation. If he chooses one remedy

he is precluded from the other. I gather the proposal here is that when the civil law has been modified civil cases of that nature would have to come before the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner. Is that the intention?—As I said before I did not draft this memorandum. That is the apparent intention, and I do not understand it.

**D-53.** Relating to the enforcement of the day of rest at Jamshedpur you state : " The general effect has been a protest from the daily-rated workmen." And later on you talk of " a fairly general complaint by the workman against the enforced deduction from his wages ". That would seem to suggest that the enforcement of this provision is a recent change. Is that so?—The fact is that the attempts to enforce it have been half-hearted because we do not want to take the risk of further labour trouble in Jamshedpur. Messrs. Tatas have now been exempted for a period of six months from the operation of that part of the Act.

**D-54.** You say that at Hazaribagh a partial failure of local crops caused a slight rise in wages at the mica mines. One would expect a partial failure of the local crops to cause a slight fall, if anything. Does that mean that the miner worked very much harder because he had not had a good harvest?—Yes, that is what it means.

**D-55.** In the Government's memorandum it is said : " The Indian Mining Federation reports that the raising of wages in 1921 by roughly 25 per cent. had the result that the average working days per week dropped from 6 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ". Within your knowledge has the Indian miner ever worked 6 days a week on the average?—My knowledge of the coalfields is very slight and I cannot answer that question.

**D-56.** From what is stated of ' factory inspections ' in the Government memorandum, it appears that there have been very few in this Province, and I gather from what is said here that that is due to the deliberate policy of the local Government?—Yes.

**D-57.** You refer to prosecutions as a method of preventing accidents, but are any prosecutions instituted for infringements of the provisions relating to hours and holidays?—I cannot remember any; the Chief Inspector of Factories might be able to answer that question.

**D-58.** Am I right in taking it that the Chief Inspector of Factories has been acting under instructions in prosecuting as seldom as he has done?—I think it may be taken that the local Government approve his policy of reducing prosecutions as far as possible.

**D-59.** *Mr. Joshi :* In your memorandum you deal with the effects of the agricultural situation upon the supply of labour and you say : " when the agricultural situation improved in 1920 constant complaints were again heard of shortage of labour ". Can you state roughly what proportion of workers in mines and working on Tata Jamshedpur coal

possess land for cultivation?—Taking the better class of workers, the class of skilled and semi-skilled workers, I should say most of them possess land.

**D-60.** Can you give us an idea as to how much land each man may possess?—No, I cannot.

**D-61.** You stated just now that there is no industrial unemployment. When the last Jamshedpur strike was settled were there any workers left unemployed?—A large number took their settlements from the Company and some of those who took their settlements remained in Jamshedpur without employment.

**D-62.** Have you any idea of the number of people who remained in Jamshedpur without work?—No. About 1,100 had taken their settlements up till the time when I left Jamshedpur after the strike.

**D-63.** So that it may be taken for granted that those were unemployed?—They were unemployed for a time; a large number of them took employment in the tinsplate works during the tinsplate strike.

**D-64.** Until then they were unemployed?—Till then they were living in Jamshedpur and I had not suspected their existence till the tinsplate strike.

**D-65.** So that it is quite possible that after these big strikes there may be some unemployment?—I think the conditions of Jamshedpur have been abnormal for the last 18 months; we cannot draw any conclusions from them.

**D-66.** You said with regard to sickness insurance that a difficulty arises from the workers changing their employers; but does that really create a difficulty in the establishment of a sickness insurance scheme?—I imagine that the insurance would be done through the employer.

**D-67.** But suppose that is not so, suppose there is established a sickness insurance scheme in which payment is made not through the employer but by some central organization like Government?—I understand you mean the workmen will insure direct with Government?

**D-68.** A sickness insurance scheme is generally undertaken by Government and the payments are not made by the employers but by a central agency. I know very little about the mechanical structure of an insurance scheme; I am afraid I cannot answer the question.

**D-69.** In the local Government's memorandum certain information about sickness insurance is given. We want to find out how much leave each man takes on account of sickness?—I think that could be collected from the employers concerned.

*Mr. Joshi:* You say that payments are made to permanent employees but not to casual employees. We want to know how many days' payments are made to each worker.

*The Chairman* : I take it this information was given in response to a query of yours to the firms concerned.

*Mr. Joshi* : Yes, but the details required of the periods of sickness were not given. I understand what is required is the number of days sickness in the year.

*The Chairman* : It seems to me a little doubtful whether they will have figures?

*Mr. Joshi* : I think it is doubtful, but we can try.

**D-70.** *Mr. Joshi* : Mr. Gupta has spoken of the effects of the enervating climate of India on the hours of work; do you not think the enervating climate is an argument in favour of shorter rather than longer hours? (*Mr. Gupta*) : I might explain that this memorandum was submitted by Mr. Rao who was officiating for me while I was away; I would not wholly subscribe to what Mr. Rao has stated.

**D-71.** In the Government memorandum it is stated : " The local Government are of opinion that there is no necessity to fix by statute a minimum wage for unskilled labour..... The local Government are, however, of opinion that at present the conditions of industry and the rates of wages are not sufficiently established to make the fixation of a minimum wage feasible at present ". The Director of Industries also says " it will neither be possible nor practical to fix by Statute a minimum wage ", and he gives his reasons. I take it the point of both is the same. It is true that the conditions in different areas may vary, but when it is proposed to fix a minimum wage it is not proposed that there should be one minimum wage for the whole Province; so that your Government may not object to devising some machinery for fixing minimum wages if there is a separate machinery for each area, and the minimum wage is fixed for certain industries, taking into consideration all the local circumstances?—(*Mr. Dain*) : There will not be the same difficulty in fixing a minimum wage in a particular area as there would be in fixing a minimum wage for the whole Province, but, as far as I know, there has been no demand for it and no need for it.

**D-72.** No demand, because the minimum wage fixing machinery is generally intended for unorganized workers who cannot fight strikes and get their wages increased when an increase becomes necessary; so that, that there is no demand is not a strong argument. Whether there is need for it or not is to be enquired into. With regard to comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers, you make certain statements as to the experience of Tatas and the Tinplate Company and you make suggestions as to a certain proportion of Indians being equal to a European. Have you any idea as to the wages paid to Europeans and Indians whose comparative efficiency is given therein?—No; this is simply a repetition of the report received from the employers

**D-73.** *The Chairman:* You do not take responsibility for this statement?—It is given in the memorandum as the statement of Messrs. Tata.

**D-74.** *Mr. Joshi:* You have made no enquiry as to the comparative wages of these people?—I was in Jamshedpur throughout the strike and I made certain enquiries as to the wages paid both to Europeans and Indians.

**D-75.** Does the Government of Bihar and Oriasa interest itself in the settlement of industrial disputes?—It undoubtedly is interested in the maintenance of industrial peace.

**D-76.** During the Jamshedpur strike of 1928 did it take any steps for a settlement of the strike?—There was no intervention of Government as Government.

**D-77.** Why?—The Jamshedpur strike of 1928 took place before the Trade Disputes Act existed; Government would have had no authority to intervene, except at the request of both parties.

**D-78.** What would have happened if Government had proposed a committee of enquiry or appointed somebody to make an enquiry and report; would the parties have refused to give information?—I do not think the intervention of Government would have been accepted by both parties.

**D-79.** Did Government ask both the parties whether they would like to have an enquiry made?—Government never made any official enquiry from the employer. The workmen did submit a request for Government intervention.

**D-80.** And Government did not enquire from the employer?—Government did not officially enquire from the employers; but I met the employers daily throughout that strike.

**D-81.** But suppose Government had officially intimated to the company that they wanted to make an enquiry and suggested that the company and the workers should put their case before an officer or a committee appointed by Government?—It seems to me that this is a hypothetical question as to what might have happened in a certain event, and I am afraid I cannot answer it.

**D-82.** Will you explain why Government did not intervene in the tinplate strike also?—I can explain; it would be a somewhat long explanation. The request for intervention came in the first instance through the Trade Union Congress and the local Government sent me down to enquire.

**D-83.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* When was that?—I should say about May 12th, the first or second week of May. When I got down there I found, first of all, that there were a thousand new mill hands in those works.

**D-84.** *Mr. Joshi* : As soon as the strike started?—It was not as soon as the strike started; the strike started on April 7th and the first request for intervention came some time in May.

**D-85.** Why is request needed to a Government; is it not the duty of Government to make efforts to settle industrial disputes?—I do not feel able to answer that question.

*Mr. Cliff* : They do spell out their duties as I understand it in the memorandum, and I suppose we must take that as their answer.

**D-86.** *Mr. Joshi* : Will you explain the circumstances in which you did not intervene in the tinsplate strike?—As I have said, I went down there as soon as this request for intervention was received. I found that out of a total labour force of 3,000 necessary to run the works they had over a thousand new men and about 600 of their old hands back. Then I went into the question whether a conciliation board was possible, and it was perfectly obvious from the outset that it was not. The employer had gone as far as he could reasonably go; in fact, he stated he had gone further than he ought to have gone in making concessions in order to prevent a strike. When the strike occurred, he had no further concessions to make and he was not prepared to enter into any kind of negotiation; so that a conciliation board was out of the question. As regards the board of enquiry the attitude of the employer was that he did not mind, he was perfectly prepared to face an enquiry, but he could not see what good it would do, and it would mean a lot of work; he was not going to ask for an enquiry, but he was prepared to face one if it came to him. Then I called the leaders of the tinsplate union, and with them was Mr. Naidu. I asked what they wanted. I explained to them that I thought that any form of conciliation board was useless; especially with regard to the thousand new hands in the works, a situation had been reached which could not be remedied by negotiation; and I went into the question of a court of enquiry. They really could not tell me what they wanted; they did not know; they wanted some form of Government intervention. As a matter of fact, the tinsplate union are not a very highly educated lot of men; they could not explain to me what they wanted. Then I saw Mr. Giri of the railway union; he came with the rest of the tinsplate leaders; I discussed the matter with him and he was strongly opposed to a court of enquiry; he realised as well as I did that the men's case could not stand it, and what he wanted me to do was to try, as I had done in the previous Jamshedpur strike, to intervene myself. I reported to Government that there were no issues to go to a conciliation board, and in view of the fact that the employer did not want it and the workmen were definitely opposed to it, a court of enquiry would serve no useful purpose.

**D-87.** Although neither party asked for it, if an enquiry had been made and the result published, do you think the pressure of public opinion would have been exercised upon one of the parties?—I think

myself that public opinion operates more strongly on the employer than it does on the workman.

**D-88.** But in this case you yourself stated that the employer really had done everything that he could; if a committee of enquiry had reported to that effect, on the whole public opinion could not have gone against the employer, whatever might be the desire of the workers?—It is possible a court of enquiry would have rallied support to the employer.

**D-89.** Then why did you not do it?—The employer did not want this support.

**D-90.** I want to know when it is necessary for a Government to have a request made by one of the parties under the Trade Disputes Act?—The position I think is that Government may act on their own motion, and must act in certain circumstances on a request.

**D-91.** In this case why did Government not act without any request?—I have given the reasons that influenced me in advising against it.

**D-92.** *Miss Power* : The Chief Inspector of Factories deals with the necessity, as he feels it, for a larger scheme of apprenticeship in order to train workers for skilled industrial processes; but in the Government memorandum it is said : “ In some of the industrial concerns, as for instance in the engineering firms, there is an apprenticeship system and the apprentices on completion of their term are kept on, but the percentage of students completing their term is very small.” Can you tell us why that is ?—(Mr. Gupta) : This statement, if it refers to small engineering firms, is probably true, because the boys as soon as they reach about the bazaar standard of skill are able to earn outside much more for the time being than by staying on under an apprenticeship system. I admit that they are very short-sighted in throwing up their apprenticeships as easily as all that, but there is an immediate advantage for an apprentice after he has gone through perhaps 2 out of 5 years; there is an opportunity for him to earn a good deal more, although he may not go very far, by throwing up his apprenticeship; it is a case of sacrificing the ultimate gain for immediate gain.

**D-93.** Dealing with dietary, you say : “ Another factor which has raised the cost of living is the high wages paid by the companies which has served to create an artificial standard of comfort.” Will you explain what you mean there?—(Mr. Dain) : This refers to Jamshedpur where wages are very much above the normal; they increase from the bottom upwards. I should say the wages of an ordinary coolie in Jamshedpur are the normal wages of a working man in the district; but the skilled and semi-skilled labour draw a wage very much higher than they would draw anywhere else, and the supervising staff draw salaries that to our ideas are excessive. The company will



tell you that those are the rates that must be paid to get the men with the necessary qualifications out from home. Undoubtedly a higher standard of comfort is demanded by people living in Jamshedpur than is demanded in other parts of the Province; that is so by the force of example.

**D-94.** I take it the cost of living there is also much higher?—Yes, considerably higher.

**D-95.** Have any investigations been made as to how much higher the cost of living is there than in the Province at large?—There is a table drawn up which shows the comparative prices between centres but it is not in the memorandum; I can get it.

**D-96.** Perhaps we can have it?—Yes.

**D-97.** In regard to workers' meal time, you say: "The midday interval is the usual meal time and the interval is availed of for this purpose." Does that mean that universally in the Province industrial workers take their meal in the midday break? If so, that is very contrary to what we have been told is the practice in other Provinces?—My experience is that where a midday break is long enough, that is to say, where it is more than an hour and a half or more, they take their meal in the midday break; but the Chief Inspector of Factories would be better able to tell you.

**D-98.** Dealing with the question of the unregulated mica factories, you seem rather to suggest that that is the only class of unregulated factory which has been considered as regards the possibility of bringing places at present unregulated under the Factories Act. Are there no other factories or workshops of any appreciable size in this Province as yet unregulated?—There are others; the details could be given by the Factory Inspector.

**D-99.** Is he the person to whom to apply for information as to the conditions in these unregulated places?—Yes, he has some knowledge of it.

**D-100.** You say here that the hours in the mica factories are not excessive and the conditions are fairly good, which is rather the reverse of what we have been told in respect of most of the unregulated places elsewhere. What sort of investigation was made to discover the conditions actually prevailing in these places?—These would be based on the reports of the local officers, the Deputy Commissioners of the districts.

**D-101.** You mean the Deputy Commissioner would have made a personal investigation?—He would know his district; he would know the conditions.

**D-102.** I take it you cannot say what the hours actually worked are?—No.

**D-103.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You give a comparative statement as to the wages of ploughmen and carpenters in the various districts. Would the wages of the ploughmen, varying from 4 to 7 annas, include any payment in kind, or would that be merely the cash payment they receive?—These figures were taken from the quinquennial wage census, and in working them out the value of the payments in kind would have been allowed.

**D-104.** Would it include an allowance for the midday meal which is, I think, given to ploughmen in some districts?—I do not think so; it very often happens that the agricultural labourer gets a meal in the middle of the day as well as his wages; I do not think that would be included in these figures. I did the wage census before this one and as far as I remember the figure would not include casual benefits like a meal.

**D-105.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : With regard to recruitment, you say : " There is some unwillingness among this labour to engage in any industrial work because an idea has developed (based on experience of coolie lines in certain Bengal mills) that industrial labour is apt to be short-lived." Will you tell us something more about that?—That is simply a repetition of the opinion of the Manager of the Tatanagar Foundry; I do not know what the basis of his opinion is.

**D-106.** You mean it has come from the Tata Iron and Steel Works?—No, it is not the Tata Iron and Steel Company; the Tatanagar Foundry is a concern employing, I should think, not more than a thousand men belonging to Mr. Jadunath Agarwalle.

**D-107.** Is it not the case that the Bengal jute mills draw more labour from Bihar and Orissa than from all the rest of the Provinces in India; as a matter of fact, over 200,000 hands, that is over 50 per cent., employed in the jute industry of Bengal come from Bihar and Orissa?—Yes.

**D-108.** If the conditions in Bengal are as bad as you describe them here, are they likely to be willing to go to Bengal? You have told us that this statement is not your opinion or the Government's opinion. What does " short-lived " mean?—I take it, it means that he gets ill and dies, but I do not think there is any basis for this view.

**D-109.** You do not volunteer that as your own opinion?—No, that is not volunteered as our opinion.

**D-110.** The backbone of the jute industry labour in Bengal comes from Bihar and Orissa?—Yes.

**D-111.** With regard to workmen's compensation, you say : " At the same time there is a certain disadvantage in that the insurance companies would be more likely than the company concerned to contest disputed claims." On what is that opinion based?—Partly, I think,

on the opinion of the Commissioner for workmen's compensation in the coalfields, and partly on my own experience that in the factories which are insured at Jamshedpur a larger number of these cases are contested than in the Tata Iron and Steel Company who are not insured.

**D-112.** Therefore, that is based on the experience of the Tata Iron and Steel Works?—Yes, and other concerns at Jamshedpur.

**D-113.** With regard to incidence of accidents in factories, figures are given which show that the number of accidents have increased materially since the introduction of the Workmen's Compensation Act in 1924; they have increased from 808 to about 1,700, which means that they have practically doubled. I see from your figures that practically all the accidents in the Tata Iron and Steel Works result from falling objects handled by the injured persons and from hand tools in the hands chiefly of the injured persons. Tatas give leave on sick pay immediately an accident takes place?—They do not claim the waiting period.

**D-114.** Tatas are extremely generous in their treatment of anybody who has suffered an accident?—Yes.

**D-115.** I notice you say that in the year 1928 under the Workmen's Compensation Act they would have had to pay Rs. 5,000 but as a matter of fact they paid Rs. 35,000, while in the following year the corresponding figures are Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 25,000. Do you connect the increase of minor accidents at Tatanagar with the generous treatment accorded to the workers?—But the generous treatment was accorded to the workers before the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force. If you take the Tinsplate Company, which is a small company with 3,000 men, you see their figures are pretty much the same year by year. The variations are in the steel works and the coalfield figures where numbers are large.

**D-116.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: May it be that minor accidents have been reported are classified, whereas in the old days they might not have been?—That is possible.

**D-117.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: I notice that every colliery has to have a registered medical practitioner if it employs more than 30 employees. You have not anything corresponding to that in your factory legislation?—I do not know; the Chief Inspector of Factories would know.

**D-118.** Are your medical officers of health made Factory Inspectors under the Act?—I do not know.

**D-119.** I see from Mr. Horsfield's memorandum that a trade union that was registered in 1929 has not given the number of its members, is it not compulsory to give that information when a union is registered?—(Mr. Horsfield): No The annual returns have been supplied under a threat of prosecution.

**D-120.** Was that at the time of registration?—Yes.

**D-121.** Can you give us the numbers now for your return for 1929 for all three unions?—The East Indian Railway Union is just over 26,000; the second one is I think about 16,000 and the Tinsplate Workers' Union is 2,800.

**D-122.** Could we have the latest figures you have?—I will send in a note.

**D-123.** Have any unions been registered since?—Only those three.

**D-124.** Have any unions been registered and then lapsed?—No, none.

**D-125.** So that you have three unions on your books?—Yes.

**D-126.** What are your duties in that connection; do you feel called upon to go into their accounts in any way to see whether the accounts are properly kept?—The accounts are audited under the rules.

**D-127.** You simply do what the rules lay down?—I have no power to do anything else.

**D-128.** Have you refused to register any union?—No.

**D-129.** What do you do when you get their accounts; do you just file them?—We see that they have been drawn up in accordance with the rules and if they have been audited we are bound to accept them.

**D-130.** You do not examine them to see whether the income corresponds with the number of members and that sort of thing?—No, we make no examination at all; we simply see that they have been audited.

**D-131.** *Mr. Cliff:* You are also the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies; do you deal with the accounts of trade unions in exactly the same way as you deal with the accounts of joint stock companies?—We see that the company's accounts are audited and the balance sheet is filed.

**D-132.** The accounts are audited by their auditors?—Yes, the auditors are certified by Government.

**D-133.** Do you see that the accounts of trade unions are audited?—We do; we have no power to question the balance sheet of a trade union.

**D-134.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Mr. Dain, you were questioned by Mr. Joshi as to the negotiations with the trade union during the strike at Jamshedpur. How many parties did you deal with in connection with the union; was it the same leader each time throughout the negotiation?—(Mr. Dain): In the strike at Jamshedpur I dealt with the management and the directors on the one hand, and on the other hand with Mr. Homi, who was the *de facto* leader of labour,

and I had a certain number of dealings with the other association, but that rather sank into the background.

**D-135.** *Mr. Ahmed* : In your memorandum you deal with the recruitment of labour through *sardars* and the commission they get. Do you not think that, in the interests of the labourers, it is advisable to do away with this system of extra payment to the *sardars*?—(*Mr. Dain*) : I have no sufficient practical knowledge of the coalfields to give an answer.

**D-136.** In any kind of work, whether in the coalfields or in factories, some percentage as commission is taken by the *sardars* or contractors, and that is detrimental to the interests of the workers because they get much less than what they actually earn. If you are a benefactor of labour, will you not be in favour of abolishing this system of recruitment through contractors? The *sardars* are in an advantageous position to bring in labour. As a matter of fact, they take a share of the wages that these labourers earn. I am asking you whether it would not be advisable in the interests of the labourers to do away with the present system of recruitment?—I think that, if the facts are as you state, it would be advantageous to do away with the system, but I have no knowledge of the facts myself.

**D-137.** Would you not be in favour of instituting an employment bureau just as they have in England and other advanced countries?—I do not think there is any need for setting up a State employment bureau.

**D-138.** Because any number of workers are available through *sardars* whenever employers want them?—As far as I have seen, labour is available now except during agricultural seasons.

**D-139.** *Mr. Cliff* : *Mr. Ahmed's* point is, should not there be an opportunity to find out exactly the amount of unemployed industrial labour? If one takes the memorandum of the Director of Industries and also the memoranda put in by many employers, one sees that unskilled labour is plentiful. *Mr. Ahmed* is asking whether there should not be an employment bureau for the purpose of registering the number of unemployed?—I doubt whether the number of unemployed industrial labour is sufficient to justify the setting up of such machinery.

**D-140.** Would you turn for a minute to the Director of Industries' memorandum? Dealing with recruitment he says : " Since surplus of unskilled labour is available in the province it is desirable to provide facilities for the migration of coolie labour particularly from Chota Nagpur." The unskilled labour, according to his statement, is very plentiful. *Mr. Ahmed's* question is, should there not be a register for ascertaining particularly the number of unemployed?—I should doubt the statement that unskilled labour is plentiful. It is plentiful only in certain seasons of the year ; it is plentiful if there is a bad harvest.

**D-141.** In view of the conflict of opinions, is it not advisable to ascertain adequate and proper information on this subject?—(Mr. Gupta): May I intervene with an explanation? The big companies in Bihar and Orissa run their own employment bureaux and they say that there is no dearth of labour for them; their experience shows that there is no difficulty so far as big industries are concerned in obtaining their quota of labour.

**D-142.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do they have employment agencies of their own?—Some have; for instance Messrs. Tata Iron and Steel Company run an employment bureau.

**D-143.** *Mr. Cliff*: Mr. Ahmed's point really is, everyone is saying that there is no unemployment problem and yet everyone is unable to give specific information as to the actual amount of unemployment; therefore, would you not have registration of the unemployed?

**D-144.** *The Chairman*: Do you consider that practicable in the existing conditions of your province?—(Mr. Dain): No. The labourer is half agriculturist; when he has no work in the factory he is back on his land.

**D-145.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Last year from one part of your province alone, namely Chota Nagpur, you sent 40,000 adults to the tea gardens. Presumably they were all unemployed workers, otherwise they would not have gone to the tea gardens. Is it feasible to keep a register of 40,000 workers who seek employment in tea gardens?—No, I do not think so.

**D-146.** *Mr. Ahmed*: Is it not a fact that a number of workers from Bihar and Orissa go over to Bengal and other provinces?—There is a certain amount of emigration from Chota Nagpur and the feudatory Indian States to the tea gardens and to Bengal.

**D-147.** *Mr. Joshi*: Do they go to Burma also?—I cannot say whether they go from this part of the country to Burma.

**D-148.** *Mr. Ahméd*: The mere fact that these people go out of the province shows that they cannot keep themselves engaged on land. Does it not show that there is unemployment here?—I take it that the man who emigrates is not destitute.

**D-149.** What do you mean by that?—He probably is a member of the family that has a little bit of land.

**D-150.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Will it be possible, for instance, to keep a register of those who would be prepared to take up employment elsewhere as and when they are required? They might be working on their land and all the same get their names registered so that if there was employment available elsewhere they might be made aware of it?—The administrative staff in this province is very small, and I do not think the proposal is practicable.

**D-151.** *Mr. Ahmed*: Does the statement made by you in your memorandum represent the individual earnings, or does it include the contributions from the rest of the family?—It represents the individual earnings as they were ascertained at the wage census held in 1924.

**D-152.** You agree that living in villages is cheaper than in urban centres like Patna or Jamshedpur?—The circumstances in urban centres and in villages are no doubt different.

**D-153.** The cost of living is more in urban centres than in villages?—Yes.

**D-154.** And therefore the comparison made by you in your statement is not of much help at all?—The figures are given and allowance has to be made for the facts which you have mentioned.

**D-155.** *Mr. Cliff*: In giving the wages earned in 1928 by operatives of the industrial concerns in the Province, you have taken seven industrial concerns of varying types in the Province, and then there are the grades of labour set out. It would be very helpful if you could collect the number of employees in each grade to supplement that return?—Yes; we will enquire from the companies.

**D-156.** Then you deal with the proposal for a Weekly Payment Bill made by Diwan Chaman Lal. The local Government appear to have urged on the Central Government that "if the experiment was to be tried it should at least be confined in the first instance to mines and factories where, as a matter of fact, weekly payment system is widely in force already". What kind of experiment would that be?—That was a proposal for enforcing weekly payment by legislation. We suggested that the legislation, if undertaken at all, should be confined, in the first instance, to mines and factories.

**D-157.** You wanted to make it statutory where it was really already in force with the exception of a small minority. Would it be well to try this system by legislation as an experiment for a period of, say, one year, where it is not in force?—I do not think the weekly payment system is generally wanted. For instance, in the terms of settlement that were offered by the Tinsplate Company Union before the strike the Company accepted the workmen's desire to be paid monthly instead of weekly.

**D-158.** *Mr. Joshi*: Are there any advantages going with the monthly payment?—There are certain advantages.

**D-159.** *The Chairman*: In the instance that you mentioned I think the question was one of rating monthly; the people did not like being daily rated and they wanted that they should be monthly rated?—I think so.

**D-160.** *Mr. Cliff*: I found some opposition to the payment of weekly wages on the railways because the work-people felt that they

would lose certain privileges accruing to monthly paid service. I wanted to know if your Government desired to take a bolder step in that particular case. Can I ask you a general question? In the memorandum put in by the Officiating Director of Industries it is stated that "the industrial prosperity of a country largely depends on the efficiency of labour which is one of the main factors of production. The intelligence, adaptability, skill and efficiency of the labour force, in turn, depend upon education, hours of work, wages, physique and opportunities for leisure". Put on one side for the moment education. May I ask what suggestion your Government has to make to this Commission with regard to achieving any of those consequential conditions that are spelt out by the Director of Industries?—I am afraid there are no concrete proposals to put before the Commission at present.

**D-161.** Under 'Staff Organization' it is stated "the experiment to train sons of weavers on these lines carried on in one of the weaving centres of this province has proved to be successful". I gather you had a committee which formulated practical proposals. Have there been any industrial schools of that type commenced in this province in order to train this class of labour?—(Mr. Gupta): Yes; I can give you some statistical data about the number of technical and industrial schools. We have an engineering college and an engineering school; we have 19 Government-owned technical and industrial schools; 14 aided, of which 4 are for women and 10 for men, and two unaided schools for men and one for women. We have a total of 21 Government institutions.

**D-162.** Are these the middle industrial schools of which mention is made here?—No. That particular weaving school is an experiment; it is known as half-time weaving school which is specially meant for craftsmen.

**D-163.** You say that the experiment has proved to be successful. Have any other schools of this type been established?—No; not exactly of that type.

**D-164.** Would you be able to put briefly before the Commission a short note dealing with this successful experiment in order that the Commission may have it in evidence before them?—If it is about the weaving school, yes. But I must make it clear that this school does not train men for textile mills; it trains men only for cottage industries.

**D-165.** If that were the case we are not concerned with it. Again it is stated: "Most of the workmen are illiterate and this is a great handicap in imparting any technical training to them." A committee was appointed and they formulated practical proposals. Are these practical proposals any guide to this Commission with regard to the training of illiterate labour?—That was a committee appointed to consider generally the question of providing vocational training, and



as a part of their recommendation this weaving school has been established. But the idea was to train craftsmen rather than to give industrial training for the organized industries.

**D-166.** In your memorandum you deal with the attitude of your Government towards trade combinations and in connection with industrial disputes. Can we take it that your Government itself encourages the recognition of trade unions?—(Mr. Dain): I do not think that Government have taken any steps actually to encourage trade unions.

**D-167.** Are they taking steps where trade unions have been registered to encourage their recognition by the employers?—No.

**D-168.** *The Chairman:* In some cases there are two rival trade unions covering the same field?—In the case of Jamshedpur there are two unions.

**D-169.** *Mr. Cliff:* There were two unions at one stage in the case of one industry?—There are two still.

**D-170.** With regard to disputes is the position of Government correctly spelled out here that "Government itself watches most carefully the progress of every industrial dispute, and makes all necessary arrangements for the maintenance of law and order, and for the protection of the individual in the exercise of his legal rights"? Does the Government attitude go no further than that? In answer to Mr. Joshi, I understood, you were representing Government as taking a more active part than what is spelled out here.—I endeavoured to act as an intermediary between the two parties; that did not commit Government in any way.

**D-171.** *The Chairman:* In your capacity as officer in that district?—But I was not acting under orders of Government in doing so.

**D-172.** Under whose responsibility was that done?—Under my responsibility as Deputy Commissioner I endeavoured to bring the two parties together.

**D-173.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Does your Government encourage district officers to do what you did; or was what you did in advance of what others might do?—I was in correspondence with Government all the time and I know that Government approved of what I did.

**D-174.** *Col. Russell:* Dealing with the standard of living you say, "The Indian workmen's diet is generally not suitable and produces insufficient energy for sustained effort". On what was that remark based?—(Mr. Dain): I cannot answer that question off-hand. I have to look up the papers.

**D-175.** You tell us that "until he is educated to appreciate the value of higher standard of living, it will be useless to expect such

higher standard of living merely from an increase in wages". But this statement does not tally with the statement in Bulletin No. 7 of the Department of Industries that "the percentage on cereals tends to decrease and that on other food to increase with the income" and so on?—(Mr. Gupta): That is only a proportionate decrease. They spend more on other luxuries.

**D-176.** Naturally it will mean an increase in the standard of living?—Yes, certainly.

**D-177.** The Government memorandum refers to the special investigations made with regard to the cost of living. In your Bulletin No. 7 you also describe the methods adopted for the collection of statistics and say, "The reports were at first very unsatisfactory and the figures collected for the first few months have been abandoned". What staff did you employ for this investigation?—It is rather ancient history so far as I am concerned. I gather that the question arose out of a conference that was held in Delhi.

**D-178.** I know of that conference. How many investigators did you have?—The investigators were the welfare superintendent of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, the Chief Medical Officer of the Jharia Mines Board of Health and a number of Sanitary Inspectors working under them.

**D-179.** How many Sanitary Inspectors were there?—I cannot say how many.

**D-180.** What training had these men for making an investigation of this kind?—They had probably no special training.

**D-181.** That was the reason why the report was unsatisfactory?—Yes.

**D-181a.** You say that the figures for the first few months were abandoned. For how many months exactly did you abandon the figures?—I could not say off-hand.

**D-182.** In what way was the Medical Officer of the Board of Health, Jharia, able to help you in this connection?—I presume he detailed his Sanitary Inspectors to gather information on the form supplied. The form is shown in appendix II to Bulletin No. 7, Department of Industries, Bihar and Orissa.

**D-183.** You give us various items of food, fuel and lighting, clothing and so on in that form. How long did it take one investigator to complete one family budget?—I have no information.

**D-184.** Was it necessary for that investigator to repeat his visits to an individual house to find out the particulars necessary for completing the budget?—I am not in a position to give the information.

**D-185.** We want this information, if possible, because the question of collecting family budgets has come up before the Commission several

times?—I shall make an enquiry and see if there are any records which will give the information you require.

**D-186.** *The Chairman* : Could you send us a short note on the point?—Yes.

**D-187.** I understand that Government itself do not take any responsibility for your figure?—No. Government do not employ their own agents; but they have reporters.

**D-188.** *Mr. Cliff* : Is the Government introducing cost of living index figures based on these budgets?—Yes, based on the results obtained from those budgets.

**D-189.** *Col. Russell* : In your memorandum you say further on that to ensure accuracy in index figures would necessitate employment of a considerable staff under trained supervision. Is that the Government view?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. H. W. BRADY, Chief Inspector of Factories, Bihar and Orissa.**

**D-190.** *The Chairman* : I understand that you are the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bihar and Orissa?—Yes.

**D-191.** Could you tell us the period during which you have held your present post?—9 years.

**D-192.** *Miss Power* : With regard to the question of dining sheds it is said that the problem is not so simple here as in Europe on account of the existence of caste scruples. But in the Government memorandum it is stated that at Jamshedpur a women's rest house is provided in which the women take their meals and that about 13 to 14 thousand women use this rest house per month. Apparently that seems to imply that large numbers of women take advantage of this facility regardless of caste distinction. Do you suggest that it would be possible to get over the caste difficulty in the matter of dining sheds?—I think there is a difficulty, but that can be got over by putting up separate sheds.

**D-193.** Has it been got over in that way at Jamshedpur?—There is a place,—I confess I have not seen meals taken in it—where different *jats* of people go and take their food.

**D-194.** You suggest that there is necessity for a scheme of apprenticeship and you attach a copy of a note by you containing suggestions for training apprentices. The Government memorandum suggests that schemes of that nature, mainly in connection with small engineering firms, have not been a success, because many of the apprentices do not remain to complete their term; they leave in the middle of their course when they can command higher wages?—I agree that it is so; my suggestion is to take steps to give them a better chance by some sort of control.

**D-195.** You think that the present system is inadequate?—Yes, under this system some employers have a temptation to exploit the lads, they do not give sufficient training to them; many of them are turned out without any training at all. There are few firms which honestly try to train these boys to a trade. They can be counted on one's fingers. In the rest, the conditions are such that the boys do not find them sufficiently attractive.

**D-196.** Dealing with "administration" the Government memorandum says that in rural areas the acquaintance with factory legislation is very slight, but in the industrial centres where the work-people are better educated a growing knowledge and interest in factory legislation is evinced. Have you ever received complaints of failure to observe the Factories Act from the workers?—We have received complaints. I think for the past nine years we have received about one a year, say 9 such complaints. Nearly all of them proved to be malicious. I do not suggest that there is no room to believe that the Factories Act is being infringed in this Province at all. But it does seem to be the case that the factories about which we get anonymous complaints,—(they are mostly anonymous)—are not the serious offenders.

**D-197.** Are notices dealing with such information as the hours of work and so on posted in the factories in the vernaculars?—An abstract of the Act and the rules is posted in the vernacular. They do not put up notices regarding hours of labour in the vernacular.

**D-198.** Would it not be a good thing if such a notice were posted, because experience all the world over is that work-people do not care to read the actual abstract of the Act but do require to know certain essentials like the legal hours of work?—The main usefulness of the programme of labour, the time-table of the factory being put up in the factory is really for the Factory Inspector. It is of more use to him than to the operatives. When he goes to the factory he goes straight to that; it gives him the starting point in his inspection. What the employees are mostly concerned with is to have in the language which they understand the law under which they work. For this purpose we give them in their own language an abstract of the main provisions of the Act dealing with such points as the hours of labour and so on.

**D-199.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does the abstract show the time of beginning and ending work each day? Does the vernacular abstract that is put up do that?—No. That is shown in the common abstract printed in English and other languages for use by all the factories. The managers of the respective factories paste upon that abstract the hours of work of that particular factory once a month or as often as they are changed.

**D-200.** Do they give the hours of work in the vernacular?—No, not necessarily in the vernacular. We do not insist on that.

**D-201.** *Miss Power:* Supposing they were worked overtime illegally; what is there to prevent an abuse of that kind?—The work-people have the abstract of the Act and the rules, and they obviously must know their own hours of work.

**D-202.** Dealing with "administration" the Government memorandum refers to the percentage of inspections and the number of prosecutions per annum, and suggests that the percentage of inspections is adequate. Is that your view as well? In 1927 the percentage was 45.1 and in 1928 it was 59. Roughly speaking the average in the last two years is a visit every other year?—Yes.

**D-203.** Do you agree that it is adequate?—It all depends on the degree to which it is required to enforce the Act. The frequency of inspections and prosecutions does result, no doubt, in a certain standard of compliance with the Act. That standard of compliance could be increased and would be increased if the number of inspections and prosecutions were increased.

**D-204.** There is no indication either in your report or in the Government report as to the level of compliance found as a result of this 50 per cent. inspection?—The level of compliance is not very good.

**D-205.** That would imply that it could be bettered if you could do more inspections?—I agree with that, if we could also have more prosecutions.

**D-206.** In the Government memorandum it is said that since last year certain Sub-Divisional Officers have been roped in to assist in factory inspection. What measure of assistance were you able to get from these officers since?—I take it that these officials must be very busy with their legitimate work?—We expect to get occasional assistance from them in supplementing the work of the Factory Inspector especially with regard to the control of the hours of labour. The Factory Inspector often has a great distance to travel and persons with a little local knowledge can inspect better such things as the attendance register at a factory and the hours it actually works, than a man who arrives there from a distance of 200 miles after travelling for a long time.

**D-207.** I take it they do surprise visits?—Yes.

**D-208.** Are they supposed to report to you the results of their inspections?—The code of instructions governing those matters has not yet been issued.

**D-209.** I am concerned to ascertain what follow up would result from the information received from these *ex-officio* officers regarding non-compliance with the Act?—The intention was that they should report to the Circle Inspector or to the District Magistrate or to me. Any one of these people would launch a prosecution if necessary.

**D-210.** Would they be empowered to prosecute if necessary?—Yes.

**D-211.** *The Chairman* : Do not the *ex-officio* inspectors make a report of their inspections to you in all cases?—Prior to their appointment they were not *ex-officio* inspectors in any sense. The District Magistrate alone was inspector for certain sections of the Act. But the other officers referred to are not, so far as I understand the law, entitled to enter any factory and inspect it, unless they have been specially empowered to do so as has now been done here.

**D-212.** *Miss Power* : How does the District Magistrate prosecute? Does he try his own cases?—As a matter of fact nearly all the prosecutions have been instituted by the regular inspectors. Sometimes the District Magistrate tries the case; sometimes he sends it to the junior magistrates. Virtually in all cases the chief witness for the prosecution is the regular Inspector of Factories.

**D-213.** *Mr. Clow* : But does the District Magistrate himself try the cases that he has instituted?—No.

**D-214.** *Miss Power* : Who will try that case?—He will transfer it to a junior magistrate.

**D-215.** Has any Medical Officer of Health been nominated as an *ex-officio* inspector?—They were *ex-officio* inspectors some years ago, but not now.

**D-216.** Is there any form of medical inspection of the workers in the factories?—No, except with regard to children, which is required by the Act.

**D-217.** You mean the Certifying Surgeon?—Yes.

**D-218.** Nobody else?—None.

**D-219.** Who are the Certifying Surgeons; are they the Medical Officers of the district?—Usually the Civil Surgeon of the district is the Certifying Surgeon. But he may delegate his powers to any registered practitioner, usually one who is employed by the factory. His certificate is valid for three months unless a new certificate is issued by the Civil Surgeon in the meantime.

**D-220.** Is there any undue delay between the child obtaining employment and his getting the necessary certificate, from the surgeon? I do not think that ordinarily there is any delay. In rural districts it is difficult to get the Certifying Surgeon there at once; it may be difficult to get him even within a few days. That difficulty is now got over by delegating his powers to an examining surgeon.

**D-221.** Do you or your assistants check the work of the Certifying surgeon from time to time?—Yes, we examine the children, and their certificates.

**D-222.** Do you know why Medical Officers of Health have ceased to be *ex-officio* inspectors?—I do not know.

**D-223.** Did that happen in your time?—No, that happened long ago.

**D-224.** So that, there is no form of medical inspection in connection with industrial workers other than what the Certifying Surgeons do in regard to children?—That is so.

**D-225.** Do you suggest that the position should be remedied?—I do not think there is any great evil in it as it stands. I have no reason to suppose that there is any large amount of disease in factories, either industrial disease or other kinds of disease. I confess that is only a negative statement of the position. My information is negative only. We ask the doctors in the district if they know of any disease having broken out in the factories in their jurisdiction; they generally say no. It might be that if we made arrangements for regular medical inspection of factories, it would reveal diseases that at present are not observed. I have no reason to suppose it will be so, but it may be so.

**D-226.** Government in their memorandum say that with regard to the mica factories the hours are not unduly long and the conditions are not such as to require regulation. Is that your view also?—I know nothing about them further than inspecting a number of them 3 or 4 years ago and reporting on what I found then. I have no clear idea now of what I reported at that time.

**D-227.** Do you know the hours of work there?—No.

**D-228.** At any rate they must have been such that you thought there was no necessity for regulation on that score?—If they were brought under the Act there would be a great deal of irritation caused and there would be difficulty in remedying the evil of overcrowding.

**D-229.** What was the age of children working in those factories?—I do not know.

**D-230.** Were they lower than that prescribed in the Factories Act?—No, I do not think that was so. I doubt very much whether children below the statutory age are very much worth employing.

**D-231.** But that has not been our experience in other Provinces, where we have found much younger children employed in unregulated than in regulated factories?—That has not been my experience in these mica factories and other factories in this Province.

**D-232.** Are there any factories, other than the mica factories in this Province which you feel should be brought under regulation?—There is a considerable number of unregistered shellac factories in this Province and those that I have seen are not very good. The structure of the buildings is bad; lighting is bad; and conditions at work places are not good. The existence of such unregulated factories acts unfairly on those which do come under the Factories Act and which are fewer in number. I think there is a case for bringing at least some of the unregistered ones under the Act.

**D-233.** What about places employing power but where less than 20 persons are employed such as the small engineering works. They do not come under the Factories Act?—No such factories have been brought under the Act. The only factories with power but employing less than 20 persons that have been brought under the Factories Act are saw-mills, on account of the dangerous character of the work there.

**D-234.** Have you brought any other factory with power, but employing less than 20 persons under the Factories Act, on account of the dangerous character of the work?—No. Only saw-mills.

**D-235.** Do you feel that there are others which could be brought under the Act if the number of persons employed were reduced from 20 to 10?—It is a question of balancing the advantages and disadvantages of such a step. There are a good many little places like that; there is no very obvious reason why they should not be brought under the Act, but the standard of intelligence and the standard of management are very low.

**D-236.** Is not that an added reason for bringing them under the Act?—I agree with that view.

**D-237.** Have you any idea of the number of such places?—No.

**D-238.** You could not say how much additional staff you would require if all such places were brought under the Factories Act?—I could not say off-hand. I could give you the required information in a week's time.

**D-239.** It would be valuable to us if you could give us a note on the subject?—Yes, we have the file with us. It has been going 9 years. At any time we could mention some scores of factories which do not come under the Act. I shall send the information in a week.

**D-240.** *Mr. Clow:* What is the procedure in this Province with regard to prosecutions under the Factories Act?—Do you launch a prosecution on your own account or do you have to submit the question to any higher authority before prosecution?—No. I do not think we have got anything in writing in that connection. When there is a case fit for prosecution the inspector sees the District Magistrate about it. Our prosecutions are so few; our policy has been to prosecute only very bad cases. Therefore when I ask the District Magistrate for a prosecution, there is not very much room for discussion about it; it is an obvious case.

**D-241.** Your prosecutions are much fewer than in Provinces of the same importance in India. You have had only 20 prosecutions in 8 years?—Yes.

**D-242.** Do you agree that the Act is not rigidly enforced in this Province?—It is certainly not rigidly enforced.



**D-243.** How many prosecutions out of this 20 have been in respect of infringement of the provisions regarding hours of work?—I cannot say off-hand.

**D-244.** Most of them related to questions regarding safety?—Yes.

**D-245.** Is the position such that an average factory owner is led to believe that he can infringe the Act in respect of hours of work with reasonable prospect of impunity?—I think there are a large number of persons who infringe the Act in this respect, but are not brought to justice.

**D-246.** *The Chairman* : Is that not rather unfair to the better employers who want to observe the law?—Yes, that is so.

**D-247.** *Mr. Clow* : Judging from experience, unless the factory owners of this Province are very different from those of other Provinces, there must be many infringements unnoticed for every prosecution that is launched?—Yes.

**D-248.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : I have just been looking at the section as regards putting up of notices. Section 36 of the Act runs :

“ There shall be affixed in some conspicuous place near the main entrance of every factory, in English and in the language of the majority of the operatives in such factory, the prescribed abstracts of this Act and of the rules made thereunder, and also a notice containing the standing orders of the factory upon the following matters, namely :—

- (a) the time of beginning and ending work on each day;
- (b) the periods of rest fixed under section 21;
- (c) the hours of beginning and ending work for each shift (if any);

and

- (d) the hours of employment of all persons employed;
- (e) the weekly holidays fixed under section 22..... ” and so on. Would you not consider that section to cover the putting up in the vernacular of the time of beginning and ending of work each day?—I think it might cover that.

**D-249.** If you did not read it that way it would seem rather extraordinary that you should insist on the prescribed abstracts being put up in the vernacular, whereas the standing orders of the factory including the most important point, namely, the hours of beginning and ending work need not be put up in the language of the majority of the operatives of the Act. Is there any objection to enforcing the thing now?—No.

**D-250.** There is no reason why the one thing should be put up in the vernacular and not the other?—None, except the reason I have already given.

**D-251.** *The Chairman* : Dealing with this matter in another Province it has been represented to us that it should be done according

to the Act?—There should be no objection to it whatever. I think it is well to do it, but I do not think the absence of it now leads to any abuse.

**D-252.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Are there occasions when the hours were changed?—Yes.

**D-253.** Are there occasions when the workers objected to the change in hours?—Yes. When the hours are changed the manager sends notice to the inspector.

**D-254.** Is that not another reason why the alteration should be put up in the vernacular?—Yes, perhaps so.

**D-255.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : In your memorandum, you say you have no unemployment problem. You refer to industrial unemployment there, I suppose?—I am merely quoting the Government memorandum there. I have no figures for unemployment myself. I understand that there is very little unemployment.

**D-256.** You have given us an interesting memorandum dealing with a system of apprenticeship. You speak of a five years course of apprenticeship. Have you had experience of the apprentices and have you found that the boys are willing to stay up to the end of five years?—I have no personal experience. I know that the bigger engineering firms take apprentices. What I have referred to is only in the small factories. I find that generally there is a dearth of the kind of men that is so easy to get in England. I do not quite understand why they should never become available in India.

**D-257.** My experience in other shops in India is that the boy stays there for two or three years and then leaves the apprenticeship to take up a job which pays him more money. What provision do you make for paying these boys?—I think that Government, if they can find the money, should adopt a system of State-aided and State-controlled apprenticeship instead of spending so much on higher education.

**D-258.** I agree with you ; that is the weakness you find everywhere. You want money to do that sort of thing. In connection with mines, of course the managers have to be certified?—Yes.

**D-259.** It has been suggested that managers of factories also might be certified. Is that a workable proposition?—A District Magistrate who has taken a great interest in this matter and has had an exceptional amount of experience in it suggested that. Of course any Factory Inspector, especially if he happens to be an engineer, would be delighted to see that done. But I agree with the view which Government take on it that it would almost amount to a restraint on industry. It might be otherwise in Calcutta, but with the factories that we have here it would be top-heavy.

**D-260.** Do you generally meet the workers ; do they know as a rule the starting and stopping times of the factories they work in?—Yes.

**D-261.** Do you meet many workers who do not know when they should be inside the factory and when outside?—I think they all know as a rule.

**D-262.** Do these men, women or children wear any tokens of any description?—Only the children.

**D-263.** *Mr. Ahmed* : With regard to prosecutions for infringement of the Factories Act, are they a very large number?—No, they have been criticised as being very few.

**D-264.** Are they few on account of want of time for the Factory Inspector?—It is a matter of balancing three factors. the policy of Government, the number of prosecutions, and the strength of the staff. If the policy were changed or if the number of inspectors increased there would be an increase in the number of prosecutions.

**D-265.** I take it that the policy of your Government is mild?—The policy of the Government is beyond me as a witness. There is the Government memorandum for you to refer to.

**D-266.** *The Chairman* : In that connection I see that it is stated in the Government memorandum that attention has been called to the small number of prosecutions by the Government of India two years ago. Did that have any effect?—That was in the nature of an enquiry. We were also asked whether there was any connection between the small number of prosecutions and the large number of accidents. We answered that our accidents in general were coming down to the average of the whole country. Our large number of accidents mainly occur in one industry. I do not think anybody who has interested himself in it either as Inspector of Factories or Factory Manager or District Magistrate, and has full knowledge of the circumstances of the industry would suggest that we have left any stone unturned to stop the occurrence of accidents. Neither an increase in the number of prosecutions, nor an increase in the penalties leviable will help to prevent the dangers that are the cause of these accidents.

**D-267.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : I do not know if you have noticed that accidents have gone up very materially during the last two or three years?—I have noticed that very painfully.

**D-268.** Have you any information as to the causes of the increase in the number of minor accidents?—It is mostly of course in one industry. That industry has expanded at a tremendous rate. It would be remarkable anywhere; it is very remarkable here. Labour has hardly had the time to be properly trained in the lower ranks. At the top there have been very rapid promotions on account of extensions. In this industry here, the rate of output per man employed—(I think I am well within the truth in saying this)—is only a quarter of what it is in other countries. If we think of that, and then the fact that our accidents are only 80 per cent. more than in other countries—I use the words "only 80 per cent." deliberately—the wonder is that the accidents are not very much more.

**D-269.** The Factory Inspector's report shows that there has been no increase in the number of employees of the Tatanagar Works during the last three years. As a matter of fact there have been fewer hands there. Still the number of accidents remains high?—I find that the number has been steady in proportion to the output.

**D-270.** But the incidence of accidents per hundred employees has gone up?—Yes. It is the incidence per ton per man which has been very steady; it has not varied very much.

**D-271.** I am not referring to accidents dealing with machinery, but to accidents which consist in people allowing weights to fall on their toes or fingers. Do you attribute the increase in the number of such accidents to the very generous treatment by Tatas of their workers? Ordinarily under the Workmen's Compensation Act a worker has to prove disability for so many days before he becomes entitled to compensation. He is evidently not liberally treated under the Act. But the Tatas give their workers five to six times what they are entitled to under the Act. Do you associate that very generous treatment by Tatas of their workers with the increase in the number of minor accidents?—I have not gone into the question as I did with regard to a railway factory a few years ago.

**D-272.** What did you find in the railway factory?—There was definite evidence there of malingering. There were a considerable number of people implicated in that; there was almost a conspiracy. I do not want to be misunderstood in this connection. What I refer to in this factory was some years ago. I think it is changed now.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. W. B. BRETT, I.C.S., Financial Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa.**

**D-273.** *The Chairman:* You have in recent years had much experience of the chief district from which recruiting takes place for Assam?—Yes; I was Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi for 2½ years; most of the recruits for Assam in this Province come from Ranchi.

**D-274.** We understand that you can speak both from your own experience and as representing the policy of Government with regard to recruiting for Assam?—Yes.

*The Chairman:* The point on which we shall greatly value your help to-day is your own experience of a district from which there is a large recruitment to Assam and in what ways in your opinion the present methods can be improved, if you have any suggestions to make.

**D-275.** *Mr. Clow:* Could you tell us roughly the control which is at present exercised by the district authorities in respect of this recruitment?—Copies of all licenses issued to *sardars* are sent to the Deputy Commissioner; he also has the power of cancelling the license of a *sardar* in case of misconduct. He grants the license to the local agent, after considering the recommendation of the Assam Labour

Board, and he has power to suspend that license and to recommend the Government to cancel it. I do not think the Deputy Commissioner has power to cancel the license himself, but I am not quite sure on that point. He has the power of inspecting the depôts to which the coolies are brought before being forwarded to the labour district; he has power to call for papers and to call for recruits before they are sent to the labour districts. Actually control is chiefly exercised partly by one's general knowledge of what is going on, and, more particularly, by watching the daily statements of coolies despatched from the local agent's office to the gardens. The local agent has to send one a copy of all particulars in his register, and if you wish that you are usually in a position to tell any case in which unusual features appear; those are usually cases in which a large number of people have been put down as being recruited by one *sardar*.

**D-276.** Mr. Cliff: Is that done monthly?—Daily.

**D-277.** Mr. Clow: A case of that kind, where a large number of coolies were recruited by one *sardar* must, I take it, show that other people had been assisting in the recruiting?—In most cases, yes; one would find out how long the *sardar* had been in the district. For instance, if it appeared that a man had come down, spent, say, 5 days in getting to his home, two days more there, and coming back again to Ranchi in another three or four days, if he showed he had recruited more than 7 or 8 people, one could be pretty certain he was not the person who had actually recruited them.

**D-278.** And that therefore the provisions of the Act had been infringed?—Yes, there had been assistance to recruitment.

**D-279.** Do these particulars reach you in time for you to take any effective action if you suspect there has been illegal recruitment?—Usually not in time to prevent the despatch of the coolies to the garden. One's action usually consists in making things unpleasant either for the local agent or for the garden which employs the *sardar*, and, of course, one can always prosecute the people concerned if necessary.

**D-280.** You think, in spite of that, the control is on the whole effective?—I think on the whole the local agent is afraid to countenance anything seriously wrong; in most cases, as a matter of fact, he is only too glad to ask one's assistance; frequently a local agent, if he is doubtful, will send the case up to the local Magistrate for orders.

**D-281.** This Province, and the Ranchi area in particular, was the scene in the old days of very grave abuses?—Yes, very serious.

**D-282.** Do you think that would recur if the control were withdrawn and free recruiting allowed?—Yes, I think it would. Some of the factors have changed and some have not; the aboriginal coolie is probably rather more educated than he was, but not very much; he is still extremely liable to be led away by false promises, and he is still just as fond of drinking as he was. In the old days the usual

way of getting these people away was to make them drunk, put them in the train and when they recovered they found they were well on their way to Assam.

**D-283.** Another memorandum submitted to us suggests that it should be made an offence to supply drink to any coolie; is that a serious evil at present?—No. I should think most coolies probably seal the bargain with a drink with the *sardar*, but I do not see how you could differentiate between coolies and other people; they all drink very heavily.

**D-284.** In this Province the Tea Districts Labour Association and the other recruiting agencies concentrate mainly on the aborigines?—Ranchi is the district in which I have had experience; the recruitment there is almost entirely aboriginal.

**D-285.** There is, I take it, extensive recruitment for other areas from Ranchi; people emigrate for employment to Calcutta and elsewhere?—A great number of people emigrate to the Dooars tea gardens. In a bad year you get considerably more people going to the Dooars and Darjeeling than to Assam.

**D-286.** Does your experience bear out what we were told in the United Provinces, that whereas free emigration goes on on a very extensive scale for other centres of industry, the labourer goes extremely reluctantly to Assam?—He does not go there of his own accord usually; he seems to require a certain amount of persuasion to go to Assam, chiefly I think because of the bad name Assam still has owing to the old abuses. I have discussed the matter with coolies who have been to both, and what they usually tell me is that they were afraid to go to Assam, but that when they got there they were rather more comfortable than they were in the Dooars.

**D-287.** *The Chairman:* That is rather an important and useful statement to have. Then may we understand that the abuses of which we have been speaking just now were prior to the enquiry of 1921-22?—The bad time for the abuses was before the Act of 1901 was enacted; the abuses are pretty ancient history.

**D-288.** But in the main these abuses do not exist as far as you know at present?—They exist in a modified form; I do not think they exist in the Assam recruitment at present; I think it is probably too well controlled.

**D-289.** I am not speaking for the moment of recruiting but of conditions in Assam. You told us just now that when you talked to coolies who had been both to Assam and the Dooars, they gave a better report of conditions in Assam than the Dooars. Can you confirm that on any large scale; I mean, is that just a single coolie or more than one?—It is some coolies from one village, as a matter of fact.

**D-290.** And that was the general opinion, was it?—Yes; among people who have been to Assam I do not think there is any general opinion that conditions are unduly hard.

**D-291.** *Mr. Clow* : The great bulk of the coolies recruited I understand actually return to Ranchi?—They are recruited for a definite period and they return at the end of that period, unless they wish to settle on the garden. A certain number, of course, come back as *sardars* to recruit other coolies.

**D-292.** So that the bulk of the population ought to have no difficulty in finding out what conditions in the gardens are like; I mean Ranchi is full of people who have returned from the gardens?—Yes. In practice it would rather depend on whether men have gone from their village or not.

**D-293.** My point is this : if there is a prevailing impression that conditions in Assam are from their point of view not entirely satisfactory, that can hardly be based entirely on impressions of a generation ago?—No; as I say, I think people who have been there are satisfied with it. Of course, there are cases of people who go there and are not satisfied with it; but I think the majority of coolies are probably satisfied with their conditions.

**D-294.** Then if that is so, why should this persistent fear of going to Assam remain when such a fear does not seem to exist with regard to Calcutta or even Burma?—I should say that it is because whereas a man going to Calcutta goes to a large centre of population from which he can get back easily and where if he finds the conditions of his work are not suitable he can take other work, I should imagine that in Assam the reverse is the case. I have never seen an Assam tea garden, but I gather the tea gardens are somewhat isolated, the communications are difficult, and the coolie is going to a place in which one man is in charge of the whole settlement, so that if he quarrels with that man or finds the conditions are unpleasant, he has not in practice much remedy; he cannot go off to the next man and get work from him; also he has not got the money to pay the fare home again.

**D-295.** Do you think these considerations do act as a deterrent to the potential recruit?—They would certainly act as a deterrent if control were removed. I take it the recruit now knows that Government controls the recruiting and more or less puts his trust in that.

**D-296.** I take it, provided conditions in Assam are satisfactory and there is adequate control here, it is all in the interests of Chota Nagpur and other parts of the Province that there should be extensive emigration?—Yes, emigration to Assam is a very valuable safety valve in times of famine or scarcity. The population of Ranchi is probably too big for the district to support from its own resources, and whenever the rice or other crops fail you want a large emigration to Assam or to any other employment that offers itself. It is useful that there should be connections between the Assam tea gardens and Ranchi, so that the men will go automatically as soon as they see conditions at home are going to be bad.

**D-297.** The *sardars* seem to recruit extraordinarily few coolies on an average; I suppose there must be a large number who recruit no coolies at all?—Yes, that is the trouble; it varies considerably, but on the whole I should think the ordinary *sardar* who does recruit anybody recruits possibly two or three, but a large number of them do not recruit anybody at all.

**D-298.** And I suppose a fair number come with the intention of not recruiting anybody?—I should imagine so; I should imagine it is an easy way for a coolie who does not like work in the garden to get home again.

**D-299.** *The Chairman*: You have no figures or particular knowledge on that point in your district?—I can give the figures of the number of recruits per *sardar*.

*The Chairman*: We have that.

*The witness*: But I cannot tell you how many *sardars* fail to recruit anybody at all; I am basing my information more or less on an examination of these returns which used to come to me.

**D-300.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: 45,000 *sardars* last year recruited 60,000, but of that 45,000 *sardars* 22,000 got none; that means that about 23,000 recruited 60,000. Is it not the case that many tea gardens give their labourers who wish to come back to their villages recruiting *sardars'* certificates deliberately, because that is the only way the labourer can get back and return to the tea gardens without being recruited afresh; nobody can come on leave from the tea gardens unless he is recruited again, so that they give men *sardars'* certificates in order that they may go home on leave and then return again?—I think that is very probable; I have not any detailed information on that point.

**D-301.** Do you know of any way whereby a man can come home on leave from a garden and go back again without being recruited afresh?—If his term is expired I do not think he can; in fact, in any case I do not think he can.

**D-302.** *The Chairman*: Then under this new system of short-term recruitment, men going to Assam for 6 months only, if they come home, and, as you suggest, go back again, are they each time treated as new recruits?—Yes, they are recruited afresh.

**D-303.** They are counted all over again?—Yes; they go to Assam one year and come back again on discharge; next year, if the season is bad, they will be recruited, passed through the depôt and go up as fresh coolies to Assam.

*Mr. Cliff*: They would have to pay their own fares if they were not recruited afresh.

*The Chairman*: What was in my mind was that if it is a question of a man who is known to prefer working 6 months in the year, why should not the employer who engages him on those terms make provision for that class of recruit?



*Mr. Cliff* : But at the moment the only way to get his fare is to go to the agent.

*The Chairman* : Apparently that is so.

**D-304.** *Mr. Clow* : Could you give us some idea of the work of the Assam Labour Board in the recruiting districts; what do they actually do?—They maintain supervisors; one supervisor is maintained at Ranchi; the supervisor is supposed to keep a general watch on the working of the local agencies; the Chairman comes down periodically on inspection and discusses matters with the district authorities. They also are the authority who recommend to the District Magistrate the grant of local agents' licenses.

**D-305.** But do they fulfil any important functions that are not undertaken, for example, by organizations like the Tea Gardens Labour Association. In other words, do they act as an effective police on the system of recruitment?—I doubt whether they do very much as distinguished from the Tea Districts Labour Association; I doubt whether the Assam Labour Board exercises any special functions. As you know, the composition of the two bodies is practically the same, except for the Chairman. Their control is not very obvious to the district officer in a recruiting district, except to the extent which I have mentioned.

**D-306.** But that is practically the only place in which their control is exercised?—Yes.

**D-307.** If the Assam Labour Board were not there, what would be the practical effect from the point of view of the recruiting districts?—Presumably there would be no supervisors; there would be one less agency which one can use to get on to cases of illegal recruitment; that would probably be the only practical effect from the point of view of the district. Whether it would be the same from the point of view of Government I do not know.

**D-308.** As far as supervisors are concerned, they would be, in some ways, more effective acting under the control of the local authorities rather than under the control of an authority at Calcutta?—I should imagine they would, because there have been cases in which the views of the local authorities and the views of the Assam Labour Board on questions of recruitment have differed, and in those cases it is not too easy to use the Assam Labour Board's supervisor to help to ascertain the facts. The difficulty has chiefly arisen in connection with individual garden managers coming into the recruiting districts. In the last two years there has been a practice for a garden manager to come down himself to the recruiting districts; usually he says he is coming down on a shooting expedition or to improve his knowledge of the language; but we have had a certain amount of reason to suspect they have actually taken a part in the propaganda for recruiting coolies. Under the scheme of the present Act we have always held that that is, if not illegal, at least not to be encouraged. With the

ordinary organization of a district it is very difficult to get first-hand information as to what those people are doing in the mofussil.

**D-309.** Actually the manager is precluded by the present Act from taking part in the recruitment?—Yes, I think the Act definitely says that the coolie must be recruited by a licensed *sardar*.

**D-310.** You suggest it is undesirable that the manager should take part in recruitment; is he not in some ways a more trustworthy person than the *sardar*?—Put that way, of course it seems so, but our difficulty has always been that with the Act as it is at present we cannot distinguish between one outsider and another; we cannot distinguish between the manager and a professional coolie contractor. It is a legal question entirely.

**D-311.** I am dealing with the practical question; is it not desirable that the manager should be allowed to take part in recruiting?—It might mean that his *sardars* would not be in a position to vouch for their recruits. One of the strong points of the present system of registration is that when the coolie comes before the registering officer at the depôt, the registering officer has before him the *sardar* who ought to be acquainted with the conditions of the intending recruit; he ought to know whether he is a person who should be allowed to go or should not be allowed to go. If the manager came down, I think it might result in strangers being recruited and put through the depôt, with regard to whom no one could vouch as to whether they could go to Assam or not. Unless you have somebody before you whom you can hold responsible for false answers, a system of registration by itself is of not very much use.

**D-312.** *The Chairman*: I notice reference is made in these papers to the increase in short-term recruitment—terms so short as 6 months and 12 months. Is the period always stated in the engagement?—There is no definite engagement; the coolie is not required to sign any document; I think it depends partly on the requirements of the management and partly on what the coolie himself is prepared to do.

**D-313.** But I take it this short-term engagement, which you tell us is popular, accords with the needs of a large number of the people here?—It does, very much so, in a bad year especially.

**D-314.** And you suggest that a number of those, after an experience of 6 months, may either stay, or, after returning home, go back again to the gardens?—Yes.

**D-315.** Does experience bear that out?—I think it does. The system has not been in vogue for very long, but from what I hear the recruiting people attach very considerable importance to it. They say that a man who has been in Assam for a short-term—for six or nine months—may come back here again and put the garden to the expense of his railway fare. If he goes up a second time he can be started straightaway on his work, whereas the new man has to be put through a certain amount of training before he becomes efficient.

**D-316.** So that it is a system which has its advantages to the employer and at the same time suits the needs of a large class of the migrant workers?—Yes.

**D-317.** Have you any figures to show how many who have been engaged on a short-term engagement stay longer than they have promised, or go back again after they have returned home?—No. That could only be obtained from the Tea Districts Labour Association.

**D-318.** You cannot even say whether or not the number is considerable?—No. I only know that in the last two or three years large numbers of coolies have gone back from the same villages, which indicates that the same people go backwards and forwards; but it is not a point which I have had to investigate officially.

**D-319.** That would seem to indicate that these short-term engagements tended to dissipate the distrust which still lingers in some places from abuses?—It should have an important effect in that direction.

**D-320.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How does anybody know whether the engagement is a short-term one or a long-term one?—It is arranged between the coolie and the local agent at the time of recruitment. There is no document signed. It is purely verbal so far as the coolie is concerned.

**D-321.** What is there to prevent either man saying that it is a long-term engagement when it is a short-term engagement?—The price he would pay for that would be that he would not get any more short-termers.

**D-322.** *Mr. Clow* : Are you sure there is no document signed?—There certainly ought not to be any document. That has been abolished now.

**D-323.** *The Chairman* : In the register at the dépôt is not there a record for what term the man is engaged?—Yes, the register shows that.

**D-324.** Would it be possible to obtain from one or two dépôts the numbers going on different terms. Between how much do the terms vary?—6, 9 and 12 months are the most popular terms. I believe there is a two-year term.

**D-325.** You see how important that is by way of despatching the old lingering belief that to go to Assam was to go for ever?—Yes. The figures can certainly be obtained from the dépôts.

**D-326.** Do you think that the 6, 9 and 12 months' engagements are the wisest step?—Yes. I do not know what their financial effect is on the garden, but from the point of view of the recruiting district they have been very useful indeed.

**D-327.** Presumably if the conditions in the gardens are good enough, men will stay and send for their families?—Yes.

**D-328.** I suppose only men alone are recruited for these short-term engagements?—No, a large number of women are recruited. About half the labour on a tea garden is women.

**D-329.** Does that apply even to the 6 months' term?—I am not certain, but there is a great demand for women's labour on the tea gardens for the plucking.

**D-330.** Do a man and his wife go together?—I think they do.

**D-331.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : It is chiefly single men who go on the short-term engagement?—Yes, that is so. I was wrong in my previous answer.

**D-332.** *The Chairman* : Can you get a depôt or two in the district with which you are familiar to analyse these figures for us?—Yes.

**D-333.** When a short-term recruit comes back does he pay his own fare?—I think the garden pays his fare.

**D-334.** Does that appear in the register too?—I think it is simply a custom of the industry. I do not think it is shown in the register.

**D-335.** If the tea gardens are now recruiting on as short a term as six months' engagement, on condition that they will pay the man's fare back to his home, that at least presumes a confidence in Assam that the conditions are such as may be attractive if they are known?—Yes. One point which I noticed about this short-term recruitment at Ranchi was that it tended to come from a different area to the long-term recruitment. A very large number of the short-term people come from the area 20 or 30 miles round Ranchi itself, whereas the long-term people tended to come more from the west.

**D-336.** Might it not be the case that those men who take a given engagement for six months are men who have some land to attend to but that those who take on longer engagement are landless men?—I think in most cases the coolie has land. I put the difference as between the more sophisticated people near the district headquarters and the more ignorant people in the remoter parts of the district.

**D-337.** Are you fairly confident that the employer does pay the return fare?—I think so, but it is not a point on which I can speak from definite experience.

**D-338.** Would it appear in their record at the depôt?—I cannot say.

**D-339.** If there is no written agreement, I do not see how the employer in Assam will know to whom a return fare has been promised. You would not suggest it is the custom to promise that to everybody now?—The agent would report for how long the men were coming. He would record their names and at the end of their time the manager would pay their fare back again.

**D-340. The Chairman :** Has this system of short-term engagements been in operation for very long?—For the last two or three years. It has certainly grown to considerable proportions in the last two years.

*Sir Victor Sassoon :* There are two points. The first is the short-term against the long-term men, both paying their own fares home, and the second is where the return fare is paid by the tea garden.

*The Chairman :* Yes. I should like, if possible, to get some figures from the depôts showing how that stands.

*Sir Victor Sassoon :* Particularly figures as to how many men have been promised their fare back by the tea gardens on recruitment?—The witness : My impression is that they are all repatriated at the end of the period for which they have gone to the garden. If the man goes for six months he is repatriated at the end of six months. If he goes for three years, then he is repatriated at the end of that time. But I think in all cases the gardens pay the expenses back.

**D-341. The Chairman :** One of the complaints put before us is the absence of an undertaking on the part of the employers to pay for the return journey. Clearly no employer would do that on demand except at the end of an agreed term?—If the man goes back before the end of the agreed term he gets nothing.

**D-342.** You understand that in all cases now, where the coolies fulfil the agreed term, repatriation is at the expense of the employers?—I believe so.

**D-343. Mr. Cliff :** With reference to short-term recruitment, it is stated in the local Government's memorandum that it is expensive, and secondly, that short-term recruitment can only be carried on on the assumption that a good many of the labourers decide to stay. Is that the practical effect of a short-term recruitment?—I am not certain as to the number who do stay on, but that is certainly what I have been told by responsible people in the recruiting agencies in Ranchi, that it is expensive, but they think that people will stay on, and, if they do, it is worth it from the point of view of economy.

**D-344. Sir Alexander Murray :** But if they do not stay on their fares back are paid?—I think so, at the end of the period for which they have agreed to go.

*Mr. Cliff :* I am not on the point of fares at the moment. I am concerned with the question of the short-term. The Chairman was trying to find out whether it was really practicable.

**D-345. The Chairman :** I take it what that means is this; that if everybody who went for six months, kept to the letter of his agreement and demanded his return at the end of six months it would be an uneconomic policy for the tea gardens?—I should say so.

**D-346.** On the other hand it shows some confidence in the conditions to-day in the tea gardens that they give that undertaking, being certain that a proportion, at any rate, will stay for longer than they have promised. That is your point?—Yes.

**D-347.** In the Government memorandum dealing with a proposed alteration in the Assam Labour Board, it is suggested that there might be two representatives of local Governments. Do you mean two representatives of each of the local Governments where recruiting takes place?—I think the intention is one representative of, say, the two most important local Governments concerned.

**D-348.** Does your Government here, in Bihar and Orissa, ever send a representative to Assam to examine the conditions there?—No. Many of our officers have served in Assam but we do not send anybody specially to make enquiries into the conditions there.

**D-349.** In the district where you were recently serving did you have any evidence as to the amount of money that came back to the district from the workers in Assam?—My impression is that the ordinary man does not make monthly or quarterly remittances to his home. He tends more to come back with a lump sum of two or three hundred rupees the amount depending on the time he has been there.

**D-350.** Taking any particular village or district, does the contribution that comes from Assam form a substantial portion of the wealth of that village or district?—Yes. Certainly the district would be very much poorer if these people did not return with money from the tea gardens.

**D-351.** It would not be correct in your experience to say that they return as poor as they went?—Certainly not.

**D-352.** On the average, allowing for what will happen in this world, there is a distinct increase of well-being both to the persons concerned and to the village to which they belong?—I think so.

**D-353.** *Miss Power*: The Government memorandum says: "Most of the abuses in connection with recruitment are in connection with the recruitment of women and minors." What is the loophole in the Act which makes it possible for these abuses to arise, in respect of both married women who go without their husbands, and minors?—I do not think there is any particular loophole in the Act which makes it possible. Possibly these women are more easily deceived than the men.

**D-354.** When they are recruited, how long do they have to stay before they can be removed to Assam?—If the local agent has any suspicion that all is not well, he detains them up to 10 days.

**D-355.** Why should he have any suspicion?—The lady herself may give an evasive answer, or the *sardar* who is responsible for her may do

so, or somebody may turn up and question the *sardar's* right to take her off. It happens in a variety of ways. In a good many cases nothing happens at all.

**D-356.** There is no systematic arrangement for finding out whether any particular female minor has been properly recruited?—If there is anybody in the party who claims to be the guardian of the minor, and there is no suspicious circumstance, the local agent will conclude that all is well.

**D-357.** What happens if she is brought in singly?—Then he would probably make very careful enquiries indeed.

**D-358.** If the Government memorandum says that "Most of the abuses are in connection with the recruitment of women and minors", what is wrong with the present system?—What usually happens is that in a village if a woman disagrees with her husband and wants to go off with somebody else, they go to a *sardar* and either tell him the truth or tell him a false story and ask him to take them to the depôt and recruit them as husband and wife.

**D-359.** *The Chairman:* Who is the prime mover?—In that case either the man or the woman not the *sardar*.

**D-360.** *Miss Power:* I take it that there are differences between husbands and wives which do not involve another man?—In those cases I do not think the lady would go off. Sometimes the differences are rather violent ones. Nearly half the murders which take place in Ranchi arise out of domestic disagreements.

**D-361.** Have you any suggestions for getting over this difficulty? We have had a good deal of written evidence from different witnesses to the same effect. They all imply that the abuses are grave, and that they are mostly in connection with women and female minors. There seems to be such a general consensus of opinion, that the impression is left that things are from right?—The only real safeguard against it is to make quite certain that the man who recruits them is really in touch with conditions in their village. That is obtained more or less automatically under the *sardari* system, because he practically has to recruit people he knows.

**D-362.** Would it be advisable to prohibit the recruitment of female minors altogether?—No, as in some cases they may be joining their relations who have already gone to Assam.

**D-363.** Do the women and the female minors also go on short-term engagements, or do they all go on long-term engagements?—I think the short-termers include a certain number of women and minors. They very often take up the minors as dependents and not to work.

**D-364.** In the return which you are going to compile for us can you divide the figures between males and females and also let us know when you are referring to minors and when you are referring to adult females?—Yes.

**D-365.** Can you suggest any amendment in the Act which would safeguard the females in respect of these abuses?—I do not think I can, except to insist that the recruiter is a person who has first-hand knowledge of the people in the village. One of the difficulties of the present system is that the recruit may go off from his village and nobody will ever hear of him again, even though he may be quite happy in Assam. Communications are very difficult indeed. Any system which would tend to maintain communication between the village and the recruit in Assam would do a lot to stop these abuses. It would mean that anybody who went to Assam and who wanted to communicate with his people could do so and could get help if he wanted it. I have had many cases of people coming to me and saying "My wife, or daughter or son has been taken off to Assam. How am I do find him?" In practice you cannot find him at all if he has gone under a false name.

**D-366.** Do the women who go to Assam without their husbands ever return?—Some of them return as *sardars*. Women are sent to recruit women.

**D-367.** *The Chairman* : Are there lady *sardars*?—Yes.

**D-368.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : A few of them have been prosecuted for taking away women, have they not?—I have had a good many of them prosecuted for that.

**D-369.** *Miss Power* : Do they specialise in the recruitment of women and girl minors?—Very probably they do.

**D-370.** I suppose the real fact is that there is no specially stringent enquiry in the case of the women and minors. The procedure is just the same as it is in respect of all recruits?—The local agent usually pays special attention to any cases of women and minors being recruited. I think it is fair to say that most of them are very careful before sending to Assam women and minors about whom they are not satisfied.

*Miss Power* : In view of the Government evidence, and of the other evidence, has any suggestion been made as to how these abuses can be put right? There is a general consensus of opinion that there are grave abuses in connection with the recruitment of women and girl minors?

*Sir Alexander Murray* : Where do you get that from?

*Miss Power* : From the Government evidence.

*Sir Alexander Murray* : Last year out of 75,000 people recruited there were only 75 prosecutions. That is only 1 per thousand.

*Miss Power* : Those prosecutions were only undertaken when the abuses were actually found out.

*Sir Alexander Murray* : It cannot be called a serious irregularity.



*The Chairman* : The prosecutions are only undertaken in those cases where the actual abuse has been proved.

*Miss Power* : The extent of the abuses will be far greater than the number of prosecutions.

*The Chairman* : Such abuses as there are revealed by the prosecutions are mainly on this question of the improper recruitment of women and girls.

*Miss Power* : The Bishop of Ranchi has devoted several pages of his evidence to the question of these abuses. The Women's Council also raises the question, and several other persons have sent in evidence on the point.

*The Chairman* : It is quite clear, whatever its measure may be, that there is a distinct evil there which, in the interests of all parties, should be removed. What we are searching for is the required amendment in the law.

**D-371.** *Miss Power* : Is there any other suggestion you can make for the improvement of the recruiting machinery which will remove these abuses?—You could do something by insisting on very much fuller examination at the depôt. I think that the local agents do examine very fully now, but it can be made more stringent. But that will not be a safeguard against cases where the woman or the *sardar* or anybody who has taken a lead in the matter wants to conceal the real facts.

**D-372.** Are there no people in the villages who can be questioned as to the truth of the situation in cases of that kind?—If you can do that it would certainly be good, but the trouble is that the depôt is very often situated 150 miles from the villages.

**D-373.** *The Chairman* : Is there a headman in each of these villages who may be consulted in such cases?—Certainly there are headmen in the areas from which most of the long-term recruiters are drawn. Even now enquiries, when necessary, are made from these headmen.

**D-374.** You think that might be made a general regulation in these cases?—Yes, in case where there is a serious dispute, but it would be difficult in many cases simply owing to the enormous distance involved.

**D-375.** But there is a postal service, is it not?—Yes, but the post may take five days each way.

**D-376.** Taking it that there is a certain amount of evil as is stated in the Government memorandum with regard to the recruitment of women and girls, from your experience could you measure the extent of that in terms of recruiting, say one in 100; or how many cases you yourself have had to deal with in a year?—I cannot give any definite figures, but I think that, even allowing for the fact that a lot of cases go unnoticed, it is not of a very serious character.

**D-377.** But a very small number of cases of that serious character do give a bad name to a large system?—Certainly.

**D-378.** *Miss Power*: Is there any system whereby officials from the area which supplies a good deal of recruitment can investigate conditions actually in the tea gardens, or is there always a complete hiatus between the tea gardens and the recruiting area?—The tea gardens are under the control of a different provincial government, and this Government does not consider it to be its ordinary business to send its officers to see the conditions in Assam. But I have no doubt that if we wished to send officers the Assam Government would agree to the arrangement; we are not so much concerned with what the conditions of tea gardens are as with the recruitment in accordance with the Act; the question of conditions is the affair of the Assam Government.

**D-379.** *The Chairman*: You do not regard them still as your citizens?—No; we presume the Assam Government will do their part.

**D-380.** If they go to Ceylon, the Madras Government, for example, continues to take interest in them?—We have no experience of that.

**D-381.** *Miss Power*: Would it be possible to have a woman official associated with the recruiting officer to look into the question of recruitment of women and girl minors?—Yes, it would certainly be possible; the depôts are not very many; there are only four depôts in Ranchi.

**D-382.** You agree that it would be a useful thing, as long as these abuses continue, to have a woman official?—If you get the right kind of person it would; I am not quite certain whether one would be available for that kind of work.

**D-383.** People are usually available when the demand is made, but the difficulty is to get the demand voiced?—Yes, it would be good.

**D-384.** Does anybody ever get the opinion of coolies who return, not as *sardars*, as to what their experience has been?—The coolies about whom I was talking were mere coolies and not *sardars*.

**D-385.** What is your experience of the stories told by returning recruits about their treatment in the tea gardens?—I think their account is favourable. There are, of course, good gardens and bad gardens. I know of cases where they did not like certain gardens and when they came back they stopped further recruitment to those gardens. But ordinarily the man, I think, comes back satisfied, and he probably encourages others who are desirous of going, to go to the garden from which he returned.

**D-386.** Why is the number of recruits per *sardar* so low if that is the case, especially if there is too great pressure on the land here?—It is a question of what amount they can earn by going to Assam and what amount they can earn in other places. In the tea garden they get other things in addition, but the actual money wage in a tea garden in Assam does not compare very favourably with what a man can get by coolie labour or working on a railway.

**D-387.** They do not go in large numbers because they do not find it profitable; they are better off if they stay where they are?—That I should not say; I think it is mainly a question of what the opportunity is.

**D-388.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Have you seen the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture?—I have gone through it cursorily.

**D-389.** They have strongly recommended that as soon as possible all restrictions on the internal movement of labour should be removed. What is your opinion on that?—If we remove the restrictions on the movement of labour, at least so far as the aboriginals of this province are concerned, I am very much certain that the old abuses would come forward chiefly because of the great competition for this type of coolies.

**D-390.** Do you know at whose instance the Assam Labour Board was formed in 1915 and why it was set up?—I am afraid I cannot tell you.

**D-391.** I understand that it was set up at the request of the tea industry in order to exercise control over recruiting. I understand that one of the uses to which the board is put is that it should recommend applicants for local agencies. Had this province any occasion to disagree with the recommendation of the Labour Board in that connection?—In one case I think we refused to cancel a license which the Assam Labour Board wished to cancel.

**D-392.** That is to say, there was a case where the Labour Board which controls the tea industry recruiting asked the local Government or the District Magistrate to cancel the license of an agent and the authority concerned refused to cancel it?—(Mr. Dain): I remember the case; it was in about 1923, but, as a matter of fact, I think there were extraneous considerations which prevented us from accepting the Board's suggestion.

**D-393.** Have you found the Labour Board inefficient in its supervision and appointment of local agents?—(Mr. Brett): It does not appoint; it merely recommends.

**D-394.** Yes, it makes recommendations, and I believe you are the only provincial Government that reserves the right of accepting or not the recommendation of the Labour Board?—I think, in most cases, if they recommended that a man should be accepted, the Government always has accepted him.

**D-395.** As a matter of fact you are the only Government that reserves to itself the right of not accepting a recommendation?—(Mr. Dain): That is so.

**D-396.** Is that based on experience of the working of the Labour Board? I want to know why this differentiation exists?—(Mr. Brett): I think that in connection with some of the Ranchi agencies objections were raised by the Board, but they were not considered of very great substance. In the case of a local agency which fell vacant owing to the

death of the local agent, there was considerable delay in the Assam Labour Board forwarding their recommendation to the Deputy Commissioner. As I got no recommendation from them in spite of my writing to them I had to pass orders without waiting for their report.

**D-397.** You appointed a local agent without getting their recommendation?—I knew that the application had been sent to the Labour Board about six weeks before I made the appointment. I wrote to the Board as to what had happened about it but I could not get a reply; as the agency had to be filled and the coolies were waiting, I appointed this man as the local agent.

**D-398.** Have you any other instances where the Labour Board did not function properly in your opinion?—No; I think that is the only case that I can mention in my experience.

**D-399.** It has been suggested that managers have been coming down here to influence recruiting directly or indirectly. Is there anything in the Act to prevent that?—The manager has no license; it is only a *sardar* who can recruit, and you cannot treat a manager as a *sardar*. I admit the position is somewhat strange.

**D-400.** What is to prevent managers forming themselves into an association and inviting applications for appointment of local agents? Is it not the case that quite recently six Indian managers formed themselves into an association in order to enable them to start machinery for recruiting local agents?—I have not heard of that.

**D-401.** Why do you object in principle to propaganda? When Canada, Australia and other countries want emigrants they spend a lot of money on propaganda. Do you not think that it would be advisable to have propaganda in an area like Bihar and Orissa? Why should you object?—The only objection to propaganda is that it appears to be contrary to the law as it stands. If it is straight propaganda it would be an excellent thing provided we could get rid of the legal difficulty.

**D-402.** *The Chairman:* Assuming that that part of the Act is altered you would be in favour of propaganda?—Yes, but some control of the propaganda might be necessary.

**D-403.**—*Sir Alexander Murray:* You control the *sardars* and the local agent, but as regards *bona fide* propaganda that would enlighten people as to the conditions under which they can migrate to any province, what objection can there be?—I do not see any objection; it would be a very good thing.

**D-404.** We hear of a certain number of offences in connection with recruiting agencies, but all the offences are not offences relating to minors and women; there must be a big percentage of other technical offences for going outside the district, etc.?—Certainly; a good many of the cases in Ranchi are connected with what we call mission recruitment. In Ranchi there are three large missions. They, especially the Roman Catholic Mission, have a very large number of converts all over the

district, and one of the troubles in administering this Act in Ranchi has been that the missionaries naturally do not want their disciples to go to a place where there is no priest available. From that point of view the missionaries have always tried to keep control over recruitment, but the danger of that is that you may get a missionary doing recruiting himself, and in a certain number of cases we suspected that that was happening.

**D-405.** That is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ranchi?—No, not the Bishop; in fact, none of the actual missionaries do that. It is the underlings of the mission. In a case in which I had to convict a man there was an elaborate correspondence between the garden manager and the Father in charge of the mission station. The garden manager came down several times and after he got back, correspondence went on between him and one of the mission underlings. The result was that the underling suddenly appeared with 40 coolies which he offered to the manager. The manager wrote down and said "you must not do this because it is illegal, but I have a *sardar* in the district and you can send your men through him". There was some disagreement on the question of payment of commission to this underling of the mission and in the end both he and the *sardar* were run in and given heavy sentences of imprisonment.

**D-406.** You do not agree with the objections that have been taken to this particular type of recruiting?—From what we know of the missionaries we can guarantee that they would look after their coolies very well, but as the law stands at present we cannot give any concession to the missionary which we are not prepared to give to the labour contractor.

**D-407.** The other means adopted for recruiting, I understand, is that these missionaries tell their people, to go to other provinces for employment rather than to starve in their own place?—Provided they know that a sufficient number of their people can go to one and the same place where priests are available they will advise their people to go to any form of employment which happens to be available.

**D-408.** *The Chairman:* Surely it will be rather to the good that, say, 40 Roman Catholic Indians should go to one tea garden rather than be dispersed into twos or threes where they do not meet any of their co-religionists?—Yes. I think it would be of great advantage if you could have definite connections between individual villages in Ranchi and individual tea gardens so that people who go to the tea gardens might have a much better time being in the surroundings of their own people.

**D-409.** Your only reason for taking action against these persons is that the present law does not allow it?—Yes.

**D-410.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* It has been said that the Assam Labour Board does not effectively control the supervisors. What has been your experience of the activities of the supervisors working under the Labour Board?—I think the control is effective. The supervisors

do a great deal of useful work. I think they are very few in number. There is one man for the whole of Chota Nagpur and possibly for the whole of Bihar, I think.

**D-411.** In addition to the local agents, you think that there should be at least two supervisors for this Province?—I think it would be good if that could be done.

**D-412.** Calcutta is the only suitable headquarters for any organization of that description, is it not?—I should think so.

**D-413.** You would be satisfied if you had on the Board a representative of your Government to look after the interests of the Province?—I think so; it is necessary to have some liaison between the two.

**D-414.** *Mr. Cliff:* Sir Alexander Murray was talking about propaganda. Do not the *sardars'* acts assume propaganda?—That is the intention of the arrangement.

**D-415.** Do you estimate it to be very effective propaganda?—It has a very limited scope. It can usually be applied only to people whom the *sardar* knows.

**D-416.** He is really intended to come and speak from his experience and tell about good things that are at hand?—Yes.

**D-417.** I understand that some of the missions are also conducting this propaganda?—It is very limited. I think their propaganda is chiefly confined to showing that there is an outlet for people in Ranchi whose land may not be sufficient for their support and to ensuring that coolies go to a place where their spiritual needs can be looked after.

**D-418.** I was wondering whether the real trouble about this was that while the spiritual needs are being looked after the material needs are not looked after. You say in the memorandum that the supply of labour is not equal to the demand. Is there any other place in this country that adopts a similar form of recruiting agencies as the Assam tea gardens?—I think a similar system is followed in the matter of recruitment for the coalfields.

**D-419.** We have been told that there is a great demand for the supply of labour in Assam. If that is the case, I want to ask you, if you can indicate as an officer situated in a recruiting district, what is the reason that the supply is not equal to the demand?—In the first place, the aboriginals are not a very big tribe, and a fair number of them are required to look after their own fields.

**D-420.** But the recruiting board is not restricting itself to Ranchi, and what is required in Assam is something like a million. At the moment I do not see in any memorandum that has been sent to us the reason for the fact that they are not able to get a sufficient number of recruits, especially when we are told that the standard of life in agricultural or industrial labour is too low and every form of industry is able to get more recruits than is wanted. Can you suggest any reason why

the supply of labour in Assam is not equal to the demand?—I do not think I can give any opinion from that point of view; it seems to me that it depends on what the conditions in Assam are of which I have no detailed information.

**D-421. The Chairman:** The two points which you have already put in your memorandum are, the distance between the recruiting area and Assam and the bad name that it gained in old days?—Yes.

**D-422. Mr. Cliff:** But there are places nearer to Assam than Ranchi on the other hand; the abuses which are spoken of occurred many years ago, and as far as I can see thousands and thousands of missionaries have preached the gospel without result. Does your Government consider that its duty is finished with the conclusion of recruitment as far as its responsibilities to its citizens are concerned?—I should think so; we think our responsibility ceases when our man passes under a parallel organization on the other side. I do not think you regard ourselves as responsible for looking after the Assam Government.

**D-423.** I do not want you to look after the Assam Government. I want to know whether you think your duty is finished as far as your own citizen is concerned at the conclusion of his recruitment?—Yes; I think when the man passes our border we are no longer responsible for him.

**D-424. Mr. Cliff:** Do you know whether the present system of recruiting really hinders the free flow of labour to Assam?—I could not say; it is a question to be answered by persons with greater knowledge of the conditions in Assam.

**D-425.** It would not be fair to press you then; it would be helpful if as a result of a little thought Government could say whether in their opinion the recruiting system adopted at present does in fact restrict the free flow of labour to Assam. As I understand it, this Government is concerned particularly in Chota Nagpur to find what might be called a safety valve, that is to say, employment for a certain section of its population. Assam is one large avenue for this; and I am asking whether the restrictions are such as to hinder the free flow of labour there?—If you removed the restrictions from recruiting for a year or two, there would be a large flow of the aboriginals from Ranchi into the Assam gardens. That would probably result in greater abuses in connection with recruitment and give Assam a bad name again. Combined with the previous history of this matter, the ultimate result will be to check the free flow of labour to Assam. I think that control is necessary more or less to keep a steady flow.

**D-426. Sir Alexander Murray:** Under the present system of recruitment competition between the various recruiters is abolished. Was that not one of the objects of the appointment of the Labour Board?—Yes.

**D-427.** *Mr. Cliff*: There are people who suggest that these restrictions should be abolished. For instance there is recruitment to Ceylon from Madras; I am advised at the moment that the supply of labour to Ceylon is rather in excess of the actual demand; but they hesitate to stop the supply or in any way restrict the supply for fear of not being able to resume the even flow of recruitment. In that case it is argued that the absence of restrictions does not appear to restrict the free flow of labour from Madras to Ceylon. It is stated that this is one test. The Commission wants advice from people who are recruiting as to the effect of restrictions. You suggest that for a short time after their removal there would be a temporary increase and later on there is a possibility of reduction or a return to the present state?—Yes, that is my opinion.

**D-428.** In the Government memorandum it is stated that similar recruitment to the Dooars gardens is subject to no restriction as in the case of Assam. It is also stated that "the frequency with which the aid of the Magistrates is sought to recover women and minors who have been taken to the Dooars indicates that abuses occur on a fairly considerable scale under free recruitment". It is said here that the assistance of magistrates is sought. In how many cases were the magistrates able to assist the complainants?—Very few. It is very difficult to trace them. You could recover the persons only if you knew where they had gone. In the majority of cases the magistrate is helpless. It is generally the case that when a criminal has been absconding for a long time, we think of the Dooars as the most likely place where we would be able to find him.

**D-429.** Why does Government not intervene in these cases?—It is usually held that the safety valve is that the men can walk back from the Dooars.

**D-430.** I am speaking of the women and minors?—With regard to the Dooars, I think Government is taking up the position that they rely on the provisions of the Indian Penal Code relating to these cases.

**D-431.** Is there no strong public opinion to bring pressure on them?—Public opinion does not go very far.

**D-432.** In dealing with the Assam Labour Board, the Government memorandum speaks of the strong disciplinary power of the Board over the industry. Is that strong disciplinary power exercised over the recruiting agents and the *sardars*?—I think the reference is more to the gardens themselves.

*Sir Alexander Murray*: The *sardars* also are sent by the gardens.

**D-433.** *Mr. Cliff*: When you speak of the gardens, do you refer to strong disciplinary action over the conditions in the tea gardens?—I think so.

**D-434.** It is again stated that "it must be recognised in this latter case that the inclusion of the labour representatives will quite probably paralyse the united work of the Board". It seems to me that according



To all the reports the system has not succeeded. With a system which has not succeeded, is there any objection to paralysing it?—The argument is, I think, that at present with regard to the tea industry the Assam Labour Board is their own body, a body in which all of them are strongly represented and any disciplinary action it takes may be listened to. Whereas if it is a mixed body it would not enjoy the same amount of authority.

**D-435.** But this Government is not to be dictated to by the tea planters of Assam?—But if the tea planters of Assam showed any large tendency to break away from the association it would undoubtedly make things more difficult with regard to matters of recruitment.

*Mr. Cliff:* I understand that the tea planters have expressed themselves in that way; but that does not seem to me to justify the Government of Bihar and Orissa expressing themselves that the inclusion of labour representatives will probably paralyse the united work of the Board. It might be that the tea planters are going to paralyse it, not the labour representatives.

**D-436.** In answer to a question by the Chairman or Mr. Clow you said that the Magistrate or the Collector called for papers regarding the recruits and that you examined them daily. When we were in a *depôt* in Cawnpore we were told that the duplicate leaves of the register were sent to the Magistrate once a month. You do them here daily?—We do not take copies of the register monthly; it is the carbon copy that is sent to the Magistrate.

**D-437.** Is it done monthly there?—It is done daily here.

**D-438.** I do not know whether the Government here have ever contemplated the possibility of making definite arrangements with the Government of Assam with regard to the labourers who emigrate from this province to Assam. Has there been any such arrangement as will cover emigration and repatriation and possibly also the conditions of work in Assam?—(Mr. Dain) I cannot recall any such thing.

**D-439.** *Mr. Clow:* Is not that a central subject?—(Mr. Brett) Yes, it is; the initiative has to come from the Government of India. I do not think this Government has any hand in it.

*Mr. Cliff:* That does not prevent this Government considering this matter and making recommendations to the Central Government. On one point I am advised that in Assam if a recruiter recruits a labourer from this Province, he has no opportunity of getting work with anyone else in Assam as he could for instance in Burma.

*The Chairman:* He is recruited for one garden.

*Mr. Cliff:* And he cannot move by reason of an agreement among the tea planters themselves.

*The Chairman:* Does that hold good under the law?

**D-440.** *Mr. Cliff:* The tea planters have made an agreement among themselves and the scope of employment is absolutely restricted. Have Government ever attempted to meet that position?—We have not regarded that as part of the duties of this Government.

**D-441.** *Mr. Ahmed:* There are certain restrictions placed on the labourers who go to Assam such as the number of months or years they should serve and so on. Are you in favour of doing away with these restrictions?—No, I am not in favour of doing away with those restrictions.

**D-442.** Does this system prevail in any other part of the world?—I do not know; I cannot say.

**D-443.** Suppose a labourer is recruited for a certain number of years; he finds it hard to work before his term is completed; will he be repatriated at the cost of the employer?—No, unless his term is completed. But there is no contract entered into at all; that has been abolished many years ago. It is only an arrangement between the employer and the labourer. The coolie does not bind himself to serve for any particular period.

**D-444.** I think you said that the *sardar* brings these coolies and says that so many are recruited for so many years and so on?—Yes.

**D-445.** Suppose a man is recruited to serve for 6 months and he wants to be repatriated at the end of three months, will he be repatriated?—Not at the cost of the garden. But the employer cannot stop him from paying his own fare and going home.

**D-446.** If they like to go to any other employer they cannot go?—I believe they are not allowed to go to another tea garden; I have no definite information about it myself.

**D-447.** Has not the Royal Commission on Agriculture recommended a change in the method of recruitment?—No.

**D-448.** They made some recommendations on this point. Have you done anything since the report was published?—I do not think this Government regarded that recommendation as a reason for taking up the revision of the Assam arrangements.

**D-449.** But the Agricultural Commission did recommend a change in the method of recruitment?—I have not studied the report myself. I believe this Government thought that the whole matter was left to be dealt with by this Royal Commission.

**D-450.** You say that these men do not go back home because they have no money to pay their fares?—Yes, if a man arrived at the tea garden and after working for a short time, say, a fortnight or a month, wanted to go home, he would probably have no money to pay his way home and would be stranded in Assam.

**D-451.** The ordinary coolie becomes clever having himself been repeatedly cheated by the *sardars* and he himself wants to become a *sardar*?—I think the *sardar* is successful in making a certain amount of money; the prizes of a *sardar's* life are sufficient to tempt the coolies to become *sardars*.

**D-452.** Is it only such people who go back home and buy lands with the money they have made in Assam?—I think the people who return have not all been *sardars*.

**D-453.** These *sardars* having made some money leave the people they recruited in Assam to suffer from malaria, cholera and typhoid and all sorts of diseases?—I am not aware of the health conditions in Assam.

**D-454.** Is it not on the false representations of the *sardar* that the coolie goes to Assam?—I think the coolie himself gets an advantage by going to Assam.

**D-455.** Why do you not remove these restrictions on recruitment when you find that they result in abuses?—If the restrictions were removed the abuses would become much more frequent.

**D-456.** I believe that it will be an advantage both to the people and Government if these restrictions were done away with. They do not exist in any other country. The penal provision in the Act for breach of contract has been repealed and the labourer is under no statutory obligation to stay in the garden for any fixed time?—Yes.

**D-457.** Is it not high time that these restrictions are removed?—  
(Mr. Brett) I do not agree with that.

(The witness withdrew.)

**BIHAR AND ORISSA.**  
**FORTY-THIRD MEETING.**  
**PATNA.**  
**Friday, 20th December 1929.**

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PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY, (*Chairman*).

*Members.*

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.  
Miss B. M. LEPOER POWER.  
LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL,  
C.B.E., I.M.S., *Medical Assessor.*

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

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**Babu BHAGWAT PRASAD JAYASWAL, representative of the  
Bihar and Orissa Chamber of Commerce.**

**D-458.** *The Chairman:* You have been good enough to submit to us a memorandum on behalf of your Chamber. What is the constitution and membership of your Chamber?—There are about 40 members. Among them there are many traders and employers.

**D-459.** Which industries do the employers represent?—The oil milling, rice milling, engineering industry, the sugar milling industry, the coal industry, and so on.

**D-460.** You tell us in the letter which accompanies the memorandum that in the opinion of your Committee better sanitary conditions and education facilities should be given in the villages rather than in the factories. You also state that in the opinion of your Committee improvements in the conditions of labour should be first brought about in Government factories, so that the private employers may see the example and be compelled to follow it. Turning to your memorandum dealing with the question of housing, you suggest that the State should encourage employers by acquiring land and leasing it to the employers. Further you suggest that such expenditure on the part of employers should be chargeable to their trade accounts so as not to be subject to income-tax, and you also suggest that it should be exempted from municipal taxes. Will you tell us the position at present with regard

to income-tax on housing schemes made by employers?—The present practice is to treat expenses in erection of buildings as capital expenditure, on which they allow only a certain small percentage by way of depreciation, and this only is deducted from actual profits, and on the balance the taxes are assessed. I suggest that all expenses towards building of houses for labour be treated as regular business expenses of the year, and this full amount be deducted from actual profits, and the tax be levied on the balance.

**D-461.** Do you suggest that these houses should be completely free from municipal taxes?—No, they should be exempt from municipal taxation only till the full value of acquisition of the land has not been paid to the Government.

**D-462.** You have a good deal to say, quoting from other reports, on the matter of health. The chief of your points, I think, is to be found in the opinion you give that “ Malaria and hookworm together are the main causes of the relative inefficiency of Indian labour... Malaria is in itself not the cause of high mortality, but by reducing the vitality and resistance of its victims it indirectly conduces to a high death rate or subsequent attacks of more fatal and virulent diseases.” Does that mean that the employers whom you represent will cheerfully make their proper contribution towards improved medical service for the diminution of malaria and hookworm?—That is not my meaning. It is for the Government to do that.

**D-463.** I only mean that through their ordinary taxes the employers will be ready to make their proportionate contribution towards the increased expenditure which these medical services will call for?—I do not think the employers will be ready to do that.

**D-464.** But you put forward as one of the main parts of your memorandum the need for improved services for the control of malaria, and therefore diminution of consequent diseases. Who would pay for that?—Government.

**D-465.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Where will Government get the money from?—I think Government could re-arrange its expenditure in such a way as to be able to spare more money for the improvement of health.

**D-466.** You think Government should spend less on other heads?—Yes.

**D-467.** *The Chairman* : Dealing with the question of safety, after saying that most of the accidents in factories have occurred through the negligence of the workers, you go on to say : “ The inspection of the factories is carried on very carefully, and employers comply with suggestions and requirements without the least possible delay.” Is it the view of your Chamber that the present inspection of the factories is sufficient to bring the more backward employers up to the level of the best?—The employers feel that the factory inspection at present is a little too rigorous.

**D-468.** You are aware that the number of prosecutions in this Province is very much less than in most others. Is that because of the very good behaviour of the employers?—I have not compared the number of prosecutions in this Province with the number of prosecutions in other Provinces.

**D-469.** May we take it from you that the employers in this Province willingly comply with all the demands of the Factory Inspector?—Yes. They have to.

**D-470.** Dealing with the question of the hours of labour, you say that at present there is no room for a reduction in the maximum number of hours allowed to be worked under the Factory Act, and you suggest that "A schedule should be prepared and approved by the Government after investigation by the Industries Department of the total time of actual work per hour during which the workers can actually work, and such actual hours should be taken for the purpose of calculating the hours of weekly and daily limit instead of the nominal hours of attendance as done at present." I do not quite understand what that means. Will you explain it?—I will take the example of a fireman and an oil mill attendant. There is a vast difference between the work of these two people. The former has to stand before the fire and perspires most profusely in performing his duty. He works for 10 hours. The oil mill attendant only works intermittently for 8 hours, in the meanwhile idling and talking to his fellow workers. If the fireman is expected to work for 10 hours under his conditions, why should not the oil mill attendant be made to work for 12 hours, so as to equalise the conditions of the two.

**D-471.** Is it your suggestion that the permitted hours of labour for the intermittent worker in a factory should be increased?—Yes, that is my point.

**D-472.** Would it be practicable that the oil mill attendant should spread his work over a nominal 12 hours while the fireman was limited to 10 hours?—Yes.

**D-473.** I do not see where the advantage would be to the employer?—It would be in the number of shifts and in the continuous process. If he is able to run his mill for 24 hours with those two shifts, his expenses will be curtailed.

**D-474.** You make a suggestion with regard to the certification of age, namely, that it should be made more easy and that a number of doctors other than the Civil Surgeon should be allowed to certify the age of a child and its fitness for work in a factory. Do you think that that is a practical suggestion?—The present practice is that either the Civil Surgeon certifies the age and fitness of a child, or he delegates his power to an Assistant Surgeon. If an Assistant Surgeon can certify the age and fitness of a child to work in a factory, why should not other doctors, who have the same qualifications and degrees, be permitted to do so.

**D-475.** Do you suggest that the employer should be allowed to call in any doctor he pleases?—Yes. At present Assistant Surgeons give a certificate, which is a temporary certificate. If that temporary certificate is endorsed by the Civil Surgeon it becomes a permanent certificate. In the same way we think these other practitioners might be allowed to give a temporary certificate which will be subject to the endorsement of the Civil Surgeon.

**D-476.** Dealing with wages, your Chamber is not in favour of legislation regarding the prompt payment of wages in this Province. What is the general custom?—The general custom is to pay the labour a lump sum equal to half the monthly wages on or about the 25th of the month. When the month closes the wages are calculated according to the attendance of the labourer, and then the labourer is paid between the 7th and 15th of the next month.

**D-477.** Have you never heard of any cases of payment being delayed beyond the 15th of the next month?—I am not aware of any such cases.

**D-478.** Then would there be any hardship on the employers in making it compulsory that payment should never be delayed beyond the 15th of the month?—Yes, it would entail a hardship in connection with those employers who pay piece work. They might need more time for calculating the wages.

**D-479.** They will require more time beyond the 15th? It may be the 20th of the month?—Yes, or between the 15th and 20th.

**D-480.** Are there any cases in this Province where the actual wages are paid fortnightly or weekly?—Yes. Labourers who are paid on daily rates are paid after the end of the week, and some after the end of the fortnight.

**D-481.** Are those casual workers?—No, they are semi-permanent workers.

**D-482.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: For how many months do the labourers work in the factories without returning to their homes?—Those who have their homes near the factory generally go home once a month. Those who are interested in agricultural operations sometimes stay at home for a month or two months. Those who have adopted the work in factories as their profession go to their homes only for two or three days and then return to the factory again.

**D-483.** How often do they go to their homes?—Some of them go once a month and some of them go four times a month.

**D-484.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Four times a month for three or four days?—No. They go at the end of Saturday and return in time for work at the factory on Monday.

**D-485.** How far away do those people live?—Sixteen to 20 miles.

**D-486.** *Mr. Cliff:* I understood you to say, in reply to the Chairman, that the employers made a practice of giving advances against wages?—Yes, they do.

**D-487.** Does your Chamber cover the major industries in this Province?—No. The major industries in the Province are the coal industry and Tata's industries.

**D-488.** You have quoted extensively from certain reports. Do I take it that your Chamber agrees with those quotations?—Yes.

**D-489.** *Mr. Ahmed:* You have said that Government should pay the cost of medical assistance?—Yes.

**D-490.** You have also said that firemen work 10 hours?—Yes.

**D-491.** Are not these men liable to attacks of diseases much more than people working in the villages in the open air?—Yes.

**D-492.** If Government have not sufficient money for the purpose of improving the health of the workers, is it not absolutely necessary that the employers should pay that portion of the cost which Government cannot meet?—I do not think Government is unable to meet the cost.

**D-493.** If Government is not in a position to meet the cost do you not think the employers ought to meet it out of their profits?—No, I do not agree with that. The employers are not in a position to pay for the medical attendance of their employees. It is the Government's duty to do that.

**D-494.** You think Government is able to pay the expense?—Yes.

**D-495.** Are not you aware that there is a deficit in the Government fund for education, health and sanitation?—That is because of the faulty arrangement of the budget.

**D-496.** Do I understand that the Central Government should meet the expense of health, sanitation and education?—If the Local Government is in financial difficulty about these matters, they should ask the Central Government for assistance.

**D-497.** Do you mean that a part of the revenue at present allotted to Military matters should be expended on health, sanitation and education?—Yes.

**D-498.** If there were still a deficit in the fund to be set apart for these matters, would employers be willing to make up that deficit?—No. I hold the view that there should be no Government deficit at all in regard to these matters.

**D-499.** You consider the first things on which money should be spent are health, education and sanitation. You also think that the first charge on the revenue should be for these items and that other items must follow on afterwards?—Yes.



**D-500.** Do I understand you to say that it is the duty of the Factory Inspector only to look after safety, ventilation and sanitation; that he does not bother his head about looking after the other interests of the workers, and that is the reason why there is a less number of prosecutions in this Province than in other Provinces?—That is not my point. He has been assigned certain duties, and he only carries out those duties.

**D-501.** Are you aware that it is the policy of the Government to have as few prosecutions of employers as possible?—It may be so but I do not know about it.

**D-502.** Are you acquainted with the recommendations of the Washington Conference of 1919 and of the International Labour Conference at Genoa in regard to the hours of work?—No.

**D-503.** Do you not think that in this country where the temperature is sometimes as high as 120 degrees, the hours of work should be less and not more than the hours of work in Europe where the climatic conditions are so much better?—No, I do not subscribe to that principle.

**D-504.** But I suppose you are prepared to accept the recommendations of these international conferences as to hours of work?—If India accepts those recommendations, then of course I for my part will loyally abide by them; otherwise I am not in favour of that principle.

**D-505.** You appreciate that at those international conferences you were represented by Government who acted on your behalf through its salaried servants and representatives. Will you, therefore, as representing the Chamber of Commerce accept the principle of the 8-hour day which has been accepted by more educated and advanced countries?—If it is passed by the legislature I shall accept it.

**D-506.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you in favour of the 8-hour day?—No.

**D-507.** *Mr. Ahmed*: With regard to child labour, the Civil Surgeon delegates his power of certification to the Assistant Surgeon; do you think that is a good practice?—It would be difficult to insist that the Civil Surgeon alone should examine, because he resides at the district headquarters and many factories may be situated at a great distance from the headquarters; if employers are compelled to come to the Civil Surgeon in every case to obtain a certificate for a child, they will be involved in considerable expense.

**D-508.** I suppose the Civil Surgeon is more expert than the Assistant Surgeon?—Yes.

**D-509.** Therefore the Assistant Surgeon may be mistaken as to the age of a child, and that may be a reason why there are so few prosecutions under the Factories Act?—I do not think that is the reason.

**D-510.** *Miss Power*: You say in your memorandum that the liability of an employer to pay compensation to a *bona fide* child

apprentice should be abolished as this would much improve matters. I do not quite follow your argument?—The employers have now a tendency to eliminate child labour as much as possible and there is no arrangement for the compulsory education of children by the State; if a child is neither educated nor sent to a factory to learn to earn his living, he is likely to waste the three years from the age of 12 to 15.

**D-511.** But that does not exactly answer my question. I presume you are asking for the abolition of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act in respect of child apprentices?—Yes.

**D-512.** That is to say for all children who are employed. I want to know how you think that will improve the situation?—Because that will encourage employers to employ child labour and train children in the arts.

**D-513.** Do you suggest the decrease in the number of children employed is because of the liability of the employers to compensate them under the Workmen's Compensation Act in the case of accident?—Yes, that is one of the main factors which prevent employers from employing children. Children are liable to make mistakes and hurt themselves, in which event the employer is liable to pay compensation.

**D-514.** But if a child is more liable to accidents than an adult, surely there is all the greater need for protection?—Yes, there is the greater need for protection, but there is also a need for training. My point is that at present there is a danger of the child being neither educated by the State nor trained by an employer during the three most valuable years of his life. Until education is made compulsory I think employers should be exempted from liability for workmen's compensation in respect of children.

**D-515.** Is not the decrease in the number of children employed much more likely to be due to the regulations made in respect of their employment under the Factories Act rather than under the Workmen's Compensation Act, for example, the special restrictions as to their hours of work?—Yes, both adversely affect the employment of children and tend to cause the employer to eliminate child labour.

**D-516.** *Mr. Clow* : How many factories are owned by the members of your Chamber?—About 15.

**D-517.** Are you prepared to give us any suggestions as to what employers should be asked to do to improve the conditions of labour? In your memorandum you have suggested various things which would adversely affect labour, such as, lengthening hours, withdrawing compensation and so on?—It is necessary to open night schools, partially supported by Government, for giving theoretical training to labour.

**D-518.** Would the members of your Chamber be prepared to pay for the night schools to a large extent?—At present this is merely my personal opinion, but I do not think they would have any objection to paying for that.

**D-519.** Do you think they would?—I cannot say.

**D-520.** *Mr. Ahmed:* Are the workers indebted?—It may be some of them are indebted.

**D-521.** So that it is important from the point of view of the workers that they should receive their wages as soon as possible after they are earned, in order to relieve the burden of their debts. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

**D-522.** It is a great hardship for the workers if payment is delayed and wages are paid on the 15th or 20th of the following month?—It is no hardship in our case because they get half their month's wages on the 25th of the previous month; that is the custom.

**D-523.** So that you make payment twice in a month?—Yes.

**D-524.** If wages were paid every week it would be a benefit to the workers?—No.

**D-525.** They would then be able to pay the grocer weekly?—He is paid by the month.

**D-526.** If they were able to pay the grocer every week, that would decrease the interest charged?—The grocer does not charge any interest within a month.

**D-527.** I think you said that people who live outside the factory go home every month. How many miles from the factory do you mean when you say "outside"?—10 to 20 miles.

**D-528.** If these people had their accommodation in the factory or near the factory, I suppose they would not require to go home?—Yes, but the worker does not like to have his family near the factory.

**D-529.** Is that because he has not the accommodation?—No, it is not because of that but because he has a natural prejudice.

**D-530.** *The Chairman:* He keeps his family in the village?—Yes.

**D-531.** *Mr. Ahmed:* If he were given the accommodation I suppose he would bring his family to live near the mill or factory?—Some of them would.

**D-532.** It therefore follows that if such accommodation were provided near the mills or factories it would benefit the workers?—It may be.

**D-533.** You say the skilled workmen go home four times a month?—Yes. You will see from my memorandum that the unskilled workmen are mostly local.

**D-534.** As regards education the workers of this Province are very backward and there is a great need for education for the workers?—Yes.

**D-535.** A great many labourers emigrate from this Province to Assam and Bengal. If the workers were provided for here, they would not go outside the Province?—Yes.

**D-536.** If Government took steps to provide employment for these workers, it would be to the interests of the masses in this Province?—Yes.

**D-537.** If bathing places were provided near the factories the workers would be able to keep themselves clean, but I suppose the objection is that it would be costly?—There are rivers and wells here where they can bathe.

**D-538.** If water were provided near the factory I suppose it would be a convenience to the workers?—It might be convenient but it would be expensive.

**D-539.** If drinking water were provided in the factory it would save time because then the workers would not go outside the factory to get drinking water?—No, when in the factory the workers do not go outside for their drinking water; they get it in the factory.

**D-540.** There are a lot of women workers?—Yes.

**D-541.** No maternity benefit is given them?—No.

**D-542.** Are you in favour of maternity benefits?—It depends on the expense.

**D-543.** Are you in favour of providing the workers with housing accommodation?—Most of them are provided with housing accommodation and some of them are paid money for rent.

**D-544.** I suppose the rest of them have to go from 3 to 8 miles to the factory?—They live within two or three miles.

**D-545.** Anyhow, if that accommodation were given to them it would be a great help to them?—Whatever convenience we can give them would be for their benefit, but the point is what amount of expense can the employer bear.

**D-546.** When workers are injured in the factories sometimes they cannot get compensation or the compensation is insufficient?—When the man is in hospital he gets his wages in full without working, or he is paid half his wages while he is in hospital. That is the usual thing in this district.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. ARIKSHAN SINHA, General Secretary, The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha.**

**D-547. The Chairman :** Will you, first of all, tell the Commission about the Sabha, how many members it has and what are its objects?—There is a very large number of members. The object of the Sabha is to improve the conditions of the peasant class and the workers.

**D-548.** Are you appointed by this Sabha to appear before us?—There was no meeting of the Sabha.

**D-549.** Do your members pay a subscription to the Sabha?—There is no regular subscription. The meetings of the Sabha are attended by several thousands and there is a good deal of commotion or agitation in the province.

**D-550.** In which questions is your Sabha particularly interested?—Mostly in questions connected with tenancy law; a tenancy law is now pending before the local legislature, and this Sabha is interested in seeing that provisions which are in favour of tenants are incorporated in that law.

**D-551.** As you are aware, that question was covered more by the Royal Commission on Agriculture?—That was not covered by that Commission. I appeared before the Commission. That Commission dealt only with how to improve agriculture, but the question of the improvement of the conditions of agriculturists or tenants was not taken up by them; the question of amendment of the tenancy law was not referred to the Commission.

**D-552.** That would hardly come within our reference as an industrial Commission?—I agree.

**D-553.** With regard to the question of the migration of workers from this province to other provinces, *e.g.*, Burma and Assam, to which you refer, we are concerned in particular with the case of Assam. We shall be interested to hear anything which you have to say to us from your own personal knowledge about the recruitment of people from this province who go and work on the tea gardens in Assam. May I ask whether you live in Patna or in any other district?—I live in North Bihar, in Muzaffarpur District.

**D-554.** Is that a district from which there is a good deal of migration?—Yes.

**D-555.** Do you personally come in contact with the labourers who have been to Assam and come back again?—Yes. Some have gone to Burma, and I know many of them personally.

**D-556.** In the case of Burma it is free recruiting; there is no law that affects recruiting for Burma?—That is so. As I have stated in my memorandum, the labour for Bengal, Assam and Burma are generally drawn from Bihar and the United Provinces.

**D-557.** Have you yourself been to Assam to see the conditions under which they work?—No.

**D-558.** Therefore your information is from those who have been to Assam and returned to their villages?—What I have stated is as a result of my hearing from those who have returned. I have got no personal knowledge.

**D-559.** Are you aware that before 1921 there were great many troubles and complaints about the conditions on the tea gardens and that in 1921-22 there was a committee of enquiry into those complaints?—I have no personal knowledge about that committee of enquiry, but I know that there was great agitation among the tea garden coolies; a large number of them left the tea gardens and Sir Henry Wheeler, who afterwards became the Governor of this province, went to console those garden coolies, but they could not be persuaded and they came back to their places in Bihar and the United Provinces.

**D-560.** We are aware, of course, that there was a great deal of agitation and trouble at the time that you refer to, but what I am asking you is how recent is your own information about the tea gardens? Do you consider that in the last eight years conditions in Assam have been improved?—I cannot say; they might have improved.

**D-561.** Have you talked with any coolies who have been to Assam and come home again recently in the last three years, let us say?—From the talk that I had with them I find that the treatment of the coolies in the Assam tea gardens is far from satisfactory.

**D-562.** How long ago is that information?—That information I gathered more than eight years ago; I cannot say anything about the recent period. Formerly there was a great deal of complaint, but it might have been improved now.

**D-563.** Are you aware that now a good deal of recruiting is on what are called short-term agreements, for six months, nine months or twelve months?—That may be so, but I know that one of my own labourers went on three years' contract.

**D-564.** At his own wish?—He was of course induced; his name was Sivanand Chamar.

**D-565.** Are you yourself a land-owner?—No, I am a cultivator.

**D-566.** And you employ labour?—Yes.

**D-567.** How much labour do you employ?—You know there is scarcity of labour; whatever I get I employ; on an average it will be 10 to 20 persons.

**D-568.** If they go to Assam or Burma they are not able to work for you?—No, they are not.

**D-569.** And you yourself would like to see no recruiting for Assam or Burma?—As a cultivator and one who is desirous of improving the condition of agriculture in Bihar, I would not like that labourers from this place should go to other places.

**D-570.** If the labourer has any choice of employment and is not confined to work on the land in Bihar, to that extent it sends up his rate of wages?—Yes. I will have no objection if he were to go seasonally, say, for six or nine months in a year.

**D-571.** Relating to the question of hours in factories, you tell us in your memorandum that "In indigo, sugar and cigar factories labourers have to work seven days a week. They have no holiday for rest." On what information do you base that statement?—There are a number of indigo factories around my village; I have gone to several of them and there are many relations of mine working in such factories.

**D-572.** Do you say that they work seven days a week without rest?—Yes.

**D-573.** Are those factories under the Factories Act?—I do not know, but this much I am sure that they do not get any holidays.

**D-574.** Do you mean to say that all the year round they work seven days a week?—I have not heard of any case where the labourers are not allowed to work for seven days. If they absent themselves for one day that day's wages are deducted.

**D-575.** Do they employ machinery in these factories?—Machinery is employed in indigo factories for preparing indigo.

**D-576.** In the cigar factories is there machinery?—I have not been inside a cigar factory; I do not know.

**D-577.** Again you say in your memorandum: "So far as I know no holiday is given in any factory."—I think that is correct so far as Bihar is concerned. I will be very glad if I were to be corrected on that point.

**D-578.** Are you acquainted with the provisions of the Factories Act?—No.

**D-579.** Again, in reference to mines, you say: "Generally a labourer has to work for 10 hours a day in mines. There is no holiday or rest day."—That is my information; I have no personal knowledge and I am subject to correction.

**D-580.** Then you tell us that infants are employed by indigo, sugar and cigar factories. What do you exactly mean by infants; children of what age?—12 to 15 years.

**D-581.** Presumably these factories are not under the Factories Act?—May be so.

**D-582.** And you wish that they should be brought under the provisions of the Factories Act?—Yes.

**D-583.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* You say in your memorandum that the workers send remittances to their homes. Have you any figures to show how much they send home? In some cases you say they send home half their earnings?—As far as my information goes, the labourers from North Bihar who go to Assam, Bengal and other places after spending sufficient money for their own maintenance send the balance for the support of their wives and children; and from the rough calculation that

I have made I find that roughly they send about 50 per cent. of their earnings to their homes.

**D-584.** You also suggest that Government should start big commercial and industrial enterprises in India to meet the cases of unemployment. What do you think the Government could do to help here in this province?—That is a very big problem. Unemployment is increasing in India. I believe in Parliament also some legislation is being passed to meet unemployment there. When I was a member of the Bihar Legislative Council in 1926 I had tabled a resolution, but unfortunately it could not come up and it lapsed. In my opinion, Government ought to find out employment for young men either by starting industrial enterprises or by starting agricultural farms and encouraging these men to take to agriculture; Government should advance loans on easy terms to these young men so that they may take to agriculture and earn their living. That is my honest opinion.

**D-585.** Is that the educated young men you are speaking about?—Yes.

**D-586.** From your experience of the educated young men, do you think that they would plough themselves or would cultivate crops themselves if they get assistance?—Educated young men will take to ploughing by machinery.

**D-587.** I do not think that is likely yet, but do you think that the educated young men, the *badralog* class, would take to cultivating?—In Bengal the Hon'ble Sir Abdul Karim Gaznavi is encouraging cultivation of land by young men; I understand that he is prepared to give some of his own lands so that these young men may take to agriculture. I am of opinion that if you give these young men lands and allow them to form companies, they will certainly plough with motor ploughs; they will have no objection to plough with motor ploughs but they will have objection to plough with ordinary ploughs.

**D-588.** What is the difference between ploughing with a motor plough and ploughing with an ordinary plough; if they can plough with a machinery plough why will they not plough with an ordinary plough?—That was a question that was put to me by the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. Here in India there is some sort of superstition, or social custom you can call it, that the *badralog* class should not touch the plough driven by bullocks; that is the tradition among the high caste people; men of my caste will not touch an ordinary plough.

**D-589.** Unfortunately we are not enquiring so much into the *badralog* troubles as the industrial troubles?—I quite see that, but so far as the question of labour is concerned I am sure our esteemed Chairman will bear me out when I say that in England the term 'labour' includes not merely the labouring classes but also the educated middle classes who earn their living by clerical labour.



**D-590.** Mr. Cliff points out that there are very many places in India where they are now using ordinary ploughs and it will be almost impossible to replace those ploughs with machinery ploughs which will cost a good deal of money. How would you get over that difficulty?—As I said, there is social objection to hand plough, and unless machinery ploughs are made available the situation cannot be improved; I know that it will cost a good deal, but there is no other way out of it. It may interest you to know that the social objection to use a hand plough is based upon religious grounds. A Brahmin will not touch the plough. So far as Kshatriyas or Rajputs are concerned, there is no objection to their touching the plough because the tradition is that Raja Janak, the father-in-law of Lord Rama and the father of Sita, himself ploughed.

**D-591.** Dealing with working hours you say in your memorandum: "There is no harm if reduction in maxima is made at Jamshedpur, Jamalpur, in cigar factory and in Indian liquor factory, but in other factories it is not a practical scheme." Why do you make that difference?—The labour that is employed in the factories that I have mentioned is technical labour and the maximum in that case can be reduced, but so far as labour that is employed in agricultural areas, like sugar fields, is concerned, a reduction in the maximum will not be a feasible thing.

**D-592.** Never mind the fields; it is not so much the fields as the factories and workshops that we are thinking of?—I have no objection if it is reduced in workshops, but so far as sugar and indigo factories are concerned, which include field work also, I am not in favour of reducing the maximum number of working hours.

**D-593.** In your memorandum you say: "If Indian workers be properly trained in skilled labour they can successfully compete with any foreign workers." Do you really think so? Have you had any experience?—That is my information. I have no personal experience of foreign workers, but I may say that my opinion is endorsed by my friend Mr. T. R. Filett who has wide experience of workmen in England.

**D-594.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Have you any experience of training Indian labour?—No.

**D-595.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say lots of things about the conditions in Assam. You told the Chairman that you have not been to Assam, is it not?—Yes.

**D-596.** You say that the death rate is very high and the sickness is very great in Assam. You will be surprised if I tell you that there are fewer deaths in Assam than there are in Bihar and Orissa?—Certainly I will be surprised, but you should know that people catch kala-azar and generally die.

**D-597.** That is quite true, but in spite of all that the death rate in the tea gardens in Assam and in the Dooars is less than it is in Bihar.

Again you state : " In the mining areas at Dhanbad the accommodation provided is worthless from sanitary point of view." Have you been to Dhanbad?—No. My remarks are based on the information that I got.

**D-598.** Do you know that in Dhanbad they have a Board of Health which specifies what kind of buildings have to be erected for the workers and if they are not erected according to the conditions laid down by the Board of Health, employers are prosecuted? As a matter of fact, the housing conditions in Dhanbad are not bad on that account; but you do not know anything about that yourself?—No.

**D-599.** Then why do you say that they are worthless from a sanitary point of view?—That is based upon the information that I got; it may not be accurate.

**D-600.** *Mr. Ahmed* : In your memorandum you say that 50 per cent. of the labourers are employed on agricultural works. I take it that the remaining 50 per cent. is confined to industrial works?—No. What I mean is this : In our locality about 50 per cent. of the labourers remain at home to look after agriculture, and the remaining 50 per cent. go in search of employment in Assam, Bengal and other places. They might be employed in industrial or agricultural enterprises; they might be employed in jute works or with some *mahajans*.

**D-601.** You say that in the big estates and indigo factories tenants work under compulsion and for fear of being oppressed and persecuted. Is that one reason why you say that Government ought to create public employment agencies? If Government does not do that, will not the people turn seditionists and become disloyal?—Empty brains always create mischief. If they have no work to do young people will start preaching sedition. Therefore Government ought to find employment for them.

**D-602.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Do labourers go to Burma of their own free will?—Yes.

**D-603.** *Mr. Ahmed* : Or does somebody induce them to go there?—They go there of their own free will.

**D-604.** You have stated somewhere that contractors take them there?—No, not to Burma, only to Assam. Those who go to Burma go voluntarily.

**D-605.** Then I will deal with Assam. Who sends the people to Assam?—The contractors. I cannot say whether it is in existence these days, but there used to be a system in vogue that when an agent found a man wanting work he would say to him " I will give you employment," and then he would put the man in some secret place for some days and then suddenly produce him before a magistrate and compel him to make a statement that he was willing to go and serve in Assam or some such place.

**D-606.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is that the case now?—I cannot say what happens now, but formerly that system did exist.

**D-607.** *Mr. Ahmed* : Your suggestion is that if there were proper employment agencies this evil would be removed?—With all due respect to your opinion, what I say is that public employment agencies should be set up for unemployed people. There is plenty of work for the uneducated labourer. The difficulty is to provide employment for the educated man.

**D-608.** *Mr. Cliff* : Within the last two or three years have you come in contact with people who have returned from Assam?—I cannot say; I am subject to correction in these things.

**D-609.** *Mr. Ahmed* : You say : " I would suggest that there should be a sufficient number of labour representatives on such Boards " —that means the Assam Labour Board—" to safeguard the interests of the labourers." Do you know anything about the Assam Labour Board?—I do not know much about it; I have never been to Assam.

**D-610.** *Mr. Cliff* : Will you tell the Commission about the organization of which you are General Secretary; how is it constituted?—In 1918, when the famous proclamation with regard to responsible government in India was announced by Mr. Montagu in the House of Commons, naturally parties were formed to safeguard the interests of the landlords, capitalists, labour and tenants. At that time the Kisan Sabha was formed in order to protect the interests of the tenant class. It sent representatives to express the grievances of its members and to urge their representation. Later on the Kisan Sabha urged on our Government the disadvantages its members suffered under the tenancy law. I was myself nominated a member of the Bihar Tenancy Committee in 1921. 15 of us consisting of 5 officials, 5 landlords and 5 tenants had to draft a Tenancy Bill. That Tenancy Bill could not be passed and some other Bill has been brought before the Council by the present Revenue Member.

**D-611.** Is it since that date that you formed it into a workers and peasants association?—Yes.

**D-612.** At what date did you form it into a peasants and workers association?—It was after 1917; I cannot give you the actual date.

**D-613.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : What does " Kisan " mean?—It means tenant cultivator.

**D-614.** *Mr. Cliff* : In your memorandum you say : " In big estates and indigo factories tenants work under compulsion and for fear of being oppressed and persecuted. There is no voluntary labour in indigo factories and big estates." Are there many indigo factories in the district from which you come?—Yes, North Bihar is full of indigo factories.

**D-615.** How do the workers obtain employment in the indigo factories?—A peon of the factory will go and catch hold of all the young men and old men in the village capable of working and ask them to work for the factory, and those people go to work on account of fear. Of course, the indigo industry is not thriving now, it is in decline. The remuneration of the labourers has been increased now by the factories. There were two reasons for that: One reason is the establishment of the Kisan Sabha and the general awakening of the masses, I mean the labouring class, and the other is the non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. After that the factory owners have increased the wages of the labourers.

**D-616.** *The Chairman:* Then you do not say now that they are working under compulsion?—To a certain extent in big *zamindaris* and in the factories I would say they are.

**D-617.** In what respect are they more under compulsion than the men who, as you told us, work for you? Who compels them?—The servants of the factory and the servants of the big *zamindars*; they say: "You must go and work, otherwise the big landlord and the big factory will come upon you."

**D-618.** *Mr. Cliff:* How will he come upon him?—Well, it may come in many ways, but a big man is always feared.

**D-619.** It is the ways I want to know; I understand there may be many ways of being fearful. You are Secretary of the peasants and workers organization and you are in close contact. I understand there may be many forces which drive people to work, but I want to ascertain, first of all, whether or not you mean that the people are compelled physically to go to work?—They are not compelled physically.

**D-620.** Then may I understand whether people are compelled to go to work because they or their fathers may be indebted to the factory owner?—It is not like that; the factories do not advance money to these labourers. These labourers are indebted to small farmers who, in order to procure labour in times of cultivation, advance some money to these labourers on very easy terms; so that these labourers prefer going to the field of that particular *mahajan*. These factories do not advance money and these big *zamindars* do not advance money.

**D-621.** That seems a very real compulsion; is it a compulsion of that kind that compels men to go to the indigo factories?—No, the factories do not advance money.

**D-622.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Do you advance money?—I very gladly answer that question. In order that the labourer may work in my land I must give him his regular wages and I must give him money without interest or at very low rates of interest. I must give him all these sorts of comforts and inducement, then he will work with me.

**D-623.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How does the indigo factory take him away from you, where he wants to work, and make him work in the factory?—We are ordinary poor people; the factories have got many villages, they are big people. They will do it in this way: I pay 4 seers of grain per day to a labourer, I supply cloth to the members of his family, and in times of necessity I will give him grain and all those things. Then the factory will say: "All these labourers must go to me." The point is that if the factory advances grain as we do, then there is no complaint.

**D-624.** Then why does your labourer leave you and work in the factory?—Because they are under the influence of the factory.

**D-625.** How?—In his village, in his *zamindari*, in his clutches.

**D-626.** How is he in his clutches? What can the factory do to him? He does not owe the factory any money?—Torment him.

**D-627.** How can a factory torment a man who is your labourer?—That is a question of influence.

**D-628.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is it not the case that these big indigo plantations may own a great deal of land and *bustis* on the understanding that the land is cultivated with indigo if they want it, and that the labourer will come and work with them if they require him?—The factories generally have some villages of their own, but in neighbouring villages there are low labouring class people; they will take land on a lease for 7, 9 or 15 years; they will pay a reasonable amount of rent to the landlord who, to make profits, will have the advantage of those labouring class people in that village; those village labourers will come and work on the landlord's land or the fields of the factories at a very low wage. There are some cultivators in that village who will try to pay more wages to the labourer, but on account of fear of the *thekedar* or the owner of the factory, the labourer must go to the factory. There is much labour trouble in the agricultural areas; there is very hard competition in agriculture.

**D-629.** The men you are speaking of are the cultivators?—Yes.

*The Chairman* : This hardly seems to come within our terms of reference.

**D-630.** *Col. Russell* : You say in your memorandum that the health of the workers in rural areas is generally good; but again you say: "A very large number of persons in India starve every day." How do you reconcile those two statements?—They are two different things; one is that they live in a good climate with pure air and pure drinking water. But they do not get a full meal and I am perfectly right when I say that 50 per cent. of the people do not get every day two full meals.

**D-631.** But yet you say they are healthy?—They are healthy because they get pure air and pure water; but they are not stout and strong.

**D-632.** You say : " I have not noticed special arrangements for medical facilities provided by employers anywhere..... In other labour employing centres no such facilities exist." Do you still adhere to that opinion?—It is quite true when I say in indigo factories, sugar factories and cigar factories there are no medical arrangements.

**D-633.** When you say " In other labour employing centres no such facilities exist " . what do you mean?—Excepting Jamshedpur, Jamalpur and other places.

**D-634.** Are not there local dispensaries and hospitals?—They are run by the local board and municipalities and not by these industrial factories.

**D-635.** Why should not they be run by the district board?—I do not object to that, but they are not run by these industrial factories.

**D-636.** You say : " There is no arrangement of official supervision for indigo and sugar plantations' inspection in North Bihar." What do you mean by that?—So far as I know there are arrangements for supervision in mining areas and other factories.

**D-637.** What official supervision are you referring to?—There is no official supervision.

**D-638.** You want these places to be inspected by a Factory Inspector; is that it?—Yes.

**D-639.** Again you say : " Industrial diseases prevail only in mines and in Assam tea gardens." Which industrial diseases are you referring to?—Kala-azar.

**D-640.** That is not an industrial disease?—I am sorry; I am not a medical expert.

**D-641.** Then you admit that is a mistake?—Yes, I meant Kala-azar.

**D-642.** So that there are no industrial diseases as far as you know?—If that is not an industrial disease.

**D-643.** In your memorandum you say : " Sickness insurance is not practicable." Why do you say that?—I have not worked out the details of this scheme; I have not examined this question thoroughly.

**D-644.** Then do you still maintain that it is not practicable?—I have not yet seen any practicable scheme.

**D-645.** Have you considered the matter at all?—I have considered it but no definite scheme appears to me to be feasible.

**D-646.** Then you have said it is not practicable without having really considered it?—It may be practicable so far as big industrial areas are concerned, but in small areas I believe it is not practicable; I should be very glad to see any scheme by which it can be made practicable.

**D-647.** You say : “ Indian medicines will be much more acceptable to labourers than Western medicines.” What makes you say that?—In the first place, Western medicine is much more expensive; the doctors are much more expensive; secondly, Indian medicine will suit the constitution and the capacities of the Indian worker much better than Western medicines. Because that depends upon diet. Generally Englishmen get good diet, expensive rich food. The Indian peasant and labourer get vegetable foods, poor diet; therefore European medicines in which there are mixtures of minerals, alcoholic and other substances, will not suit the health and constitution of the Indian worker as well as the Ayurvedic medicines.

**D-648.** Numbers of Indians do take Western medicines?—Indian medicine is prepared from Indian plants, vegetable drugs and all these things.

**D-649.** We do not follow that. My next point is that large numbers of Indians attend these hospitals run by the Western system?—I have stated that the first point is that the Western system of medicine is very expensive for a poor labourer. Many of them get 4 annas a day and they cannot afford to pay the doctor.

**D-650.** Dealing with Maternity Benefit Schemes you say that you would strongly support legislation on the lines suggested by Mr. Joshi. How would you arrange the cost of a Maternity Benefit Scheme to be met?—The cost must be met by the employers.

**D-651.** You would not agree to a scheme by which the employer, the employee and the State pay a share each?—I would like such a scheme.

**D-652.** Do you think that the employer will pay his share?—There is no harm if the State, the employer and the employee each pays his share as in the Provident fund system.

**D-653.** Would you agree to the same method as in the case of provision for old age or premature retirement?—Yes.

**D-654.** You say that there is no provision for first-aid. Are there no first-aid depôts or boxes in these factories that you are talking about?—I have not seen any.

**D-655.** You have not seen any; have you ever inspected those factories?—I have seen the indigo factories and the sugar factories.

**D-656.** There are no first-aid boxes there?—No.

*(The witness withdrew.)*

**BIHAR AND ORISSA**  
**FORTY-FOURTH MEETING (Forenoon Session).**  
**KODARMA**

**Lokai Factory near Kodarma.**  
**Saturday, 21st December 1929.**

PRESENT :

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.	MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MISS B. M. LEPOER POWER.
MR. S. LALL, I.C.S., <i>Joint Secretary.</i>	

**AKLI GHATWALIN, girl worker at Lokai Factory.**

**(Mr. LALL interpreting.)**

- D-657.** How old are you?—I do not know.
- D-658.** How long have you been working here?—6 years.
- D-659.** What hour do you come in the morning?—I come at 9
- D-660.** When do you go?—I go at 5.
- D-661.** Do you stop at all to take a meal?—We do not get any interval.
- D-662.** You do not take food at all during the working time?—No, I get no food during the day.
- D-663.** What are you paid?—I am on piece rates and I get weekly wages; last week I got 12 annas.
- D-664.** Did you work 6 days in the week for that?—I get a holiday on Sunday; I work 6 days a week.
- D-665.** How far do you come for your work?—From about 2 miles. I have only a sister here, no one else.
- D-666.** Whom do you stay with at home?—Only my mother is at home.
- D-667.** Have you brothers and sisters at home?—I have one more sister at home.
- D-668.** Are you married?—Yes, but the marriage has not been consummated.



**D-669.** What does your husband do?—He is working in the mica mine.

**D-670.** How long have you been married?—3 years.

*Miss Power* : I should think she is 12 or 14 years old.

(The witness withdrew).

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management :—

Akli Ghalowarni. Age about 12 years. Splitter, piece work.

Village : Bathdiah. Distance : 1 mile from factory.

Rate of pay for the last week Re. 0-14-6 for 6 days.

Period ending—				Rs. a. p.	Days worked.
7th November 1929	..	..	..	0 12 3	5
14th November 1929	..	..	..	0 15 3	6
21st November 1929	..	..	..	0 12 0	5
30th November 1929	..	..	..	1 0 9	6
14th October 1929	..	..	..	Absent.	
21st October 1929	..	..	..	Absent.	
31st October 1929	..	..	..	1 7 6	8

**BALIA GOALIN, girl mica splitter.**

**D-671.** How long have you been here?—I have worked here for a year.

**D-672.** Are you married?—Yes, I have been married for about 8 years.

**D-673.** Have you been to your husband's home?—No, the marriage has not been consummated; I was married when I was a baby.

**D-674.** Where is your husband?—He is working in the mine.

**D-675.** When do you come to work and when do you leave work?—I come to work at 9 and leave at 5.

**D-676.** Do you get any interval in the middle of the day?—At 12 I get half-an-hour's interval.

**D-677.** What do you earn?—I get from 4 to 5 annas a day.

**D-678.** What are you?—A mica splitter.

(The witness withdrew).

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management :—

Balia Gopin, age about 13 years. Splitter, piece work. Village : Karkut, distance about 5 miles from factory. Rate of pay for the last week Re. 0-6-0 for 2 days. Newly engaged.

**SUHURI MUSAHAR, woman mica splitter.**

**D-679.** What do you earn?—Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 2 a week.

**D-680.** Do you get an interval in the middle of the day?—No.

**D-681.** When do you get your meals?—I eat a meal at 8 in the morning and another at 9 at night.

**D-682.** When do you come to work?—At 10 o'clock.

**D-683.** What does your husband do?—He is working in this factory. He is a *sardar*.

**D-684.** What does he get?—Rs. 20 a month.

**D-685.** Have you any land?—Yes, we have at our house.

**D-686.** Where do you live?—I live two or three marches away. I have got a house here where I live.

**D-687.** How often do you go to your home?—After a year or two I go back to my home.

**D-688.** How many children have you?—I have a boy aged about 9.

**D-689.** Does he work here?—No.

**D-690.** Does he do any work?—No, he plays about.

(The witness withdrew.)

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management :—

Sukri Musarini. Age : about 26 years. Splitter, piece work  
Village : Lokai. Distance : living at Company's coolie line.

Rate of pay for the last week : Rs. 3-7-6 for 6 days.

Period ending—				Rs. a. p.	Days worked.
7th November 1929	..	..	..	2 1 6	6
14th November 1929	..	..	..	2 13 3	
21st November 1929	..	..	..	3 2 6	
30th November 1929	..	..	..	4 4 9	
7th October 1929	..	..	..	Absent.	
14th October 1929	..	..	..	Absent.	
21st October 1929	..	..	..	Absent.	
31st October 1929	..	..	..	2 10 0	

**KARIM MIAH, Mussulman, boy mica splitter.**

- D-691.** How old are you?—I am 12 years old.
- D-692.** How long have you worked here?—4 or 5 years.
- D-693.** How much do you earn?—I get 8, 10 or 12 annas a week.
- D-694.** Do you sometimes get a rupee?—No.
- D-695.** Do you get anything else in addition to your pay?—No.
- D-696.** When do you come in the morning?—9 o'clock.
- D-697.** When do you go?—5 o'clock.
- D-698.** Do you get an interval in the middle of the day for meals?—  
I get an interval, but I do not take any food; I have no money to get food.
- D-699.** How long is the interval?—About one or two hours.
- D-700.** Where do you live?—I live 8 or 10 miles away.
- D-701.** When do you start in the morning?—I start at 4 or 5 in the morning. I get home at about 9 at night.
- D-702.** Do you go to your house every day?—Yes, I go every day.
- D-703.** You never sleep here?—No.
- D-704.** Do you work on Sundays?—No.
- D-705.** Do you always work 6 days a week?—Yes.
- D-706.** What do your father and mother do?—I have no parents; they are both dead.
- D-707.** Whom do you live with?—With my uncle; I am an orphan with no brothers and sisters.
- D-708.** Where do you live?—Hirodih.

(The witness withdrew.)

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management:—

Karim Miah (film cutting), piece worker.

Village: Pandaydih. Distance: about 1 mile from Lokai factory.

Age: about 12 years.

Amount paid in the last week: Re. 0-14-9.

Number of days worked: 5 days.

Period ending—	Rs.	s.	p.	Days worked:
7th December 1929 .. ..	0	14	9	5
30th November 1929 .. ..	2	0	3	8
21st November 1929 .. ..	1	4	6	6
14th November 1929 .. ..	1	2	0	4
7th November 1929 .. ..	..	..	..	..
31st October 1929 .. ..	0	15	9	6
21st October 1929 .. ..	..	..	..	..

**ETWARI KANDOO, boy mica cutter.**

**D-709.** How old are you?—13 years.

**D-710.** How long have you worked here?—5 or 6 years.

**D-711.** How much do you get?—13 annas a week.

**D-712.** Do you ever get 15 annas?—No.

**D-713.** How much did you get when you came here first?—About 8 annas a week.

**D-714.** Where do you live?—About 10 or 12 miles away.

**D-715.** At what time do you arrive here?—9 o'clock.

**D-716.** When do you leave your house?—I leave my house at 7 in the morning and I get here about 9. I leave at 5 and get home at 7.

**D-717.** Where do you live?—Pandaydih.

**D-718.** Whom do you live with?—I have a sister at home and my father and mother are at home; they do not work here.

**D-719.** Have your family any fields?—Yes.

**D-720.** Have you ever been to school?—No, but I read at night at home; I am just learning to write but I cannot write my name.

(The witness withdrew.)

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management:—

Etwari Kandoo (film cutting), piece worker.

Village: Pandaydih. Distance: about 1 mile from Lokai factory.

Age: about 13 years.

Amount paid in the last week: Re. 1-9-0.

Number of days worked: 5.

Period ending—				Ra.	a.	p.	Days worked.
7th December 1929	..	..	..	1	6	6	6
30th November 1929	..	..	..	2	12	3	8
21st November 1929	..	..	..	1	5	9	6
14th November 1929	..	..	..	1	5	6	4
7th November 1929	..	..	..	1	7	3	6
31st October 1929	..	..	..	1	5	0	7
21st October 1929	..	..	..	1	0	6	6

Father working at factory.

**JHAMOU HAZAM, boy worker.**

**D-721.** What do you do?—I beat the levers which make the sieve vibrate.

**D-722.** When do you work?—I begin work at 9.

**D-723.** Where do you live?—Fakritanr which is half a mile away.

**D-724.** When do you cease work?—I work till 5.

**D-725.** Do you get an interval?—Yes. I get an interval from 12 to 2 and I go back to my house.

**D-726.** Do you get a meal in your house at that time?—Yes.

**D-727.** What is your wage?—I get 3 annas a day.

**D-728.** Do not some of the others get  $3\frac{1}{2}$  annas?—Yes, some get more and some get less.

**D-729.** How long have you been working?—A year and a half.

(The witness withdrew.)

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management :—

Jhamou Hazam, *alias* Sito Hazam. Newly engaged. Sieving boy.

Age : about 15 years. Village : Paredey ; distance : about 1 mile from Lokai factory.

Amount paid last fortnight, week ending 15th December 1929 :  
Re. 0-12-0.

Number of days worked : 4. Daily rate : annas 3.

**MAHABIR SINGH, man, mica sorter.**

**D-730.** What do you do?—I am a mica sorter.

**D-731.** What pay do you get?—7 annas a day.

**D-732.** Are you on piece work?—No. I am on fixed pay.

**D-733.** When do you come in the morning?—I come at half-past 9 or 10 ; I leave at half-past 5.

**D-734.** Do you get an interval for meals?—No.

**D-735.** What time do you take your meals?—I have my meal at half-past 7 and leave home at half-past 7.

**D-736.** How far away do you live?—About 4 miles from here.

**D-737.** When do you get your evening meal?—After I get back, about 8 o'clock in the evening.

**D-738.** Have you any cultivation?—Yes, about an acre.

**D-739.** How much rent do you pay for your fields?—Rs. 12-8-0; there are five sharers.

**D-740.** How do you cultivate your land?—By co-sharers.

**D-741.** Do you go to your field at the time of the harvest to help?—No.

**D-742.** How long have you been here?—I have worked here for 8 years.

**D-743.** How did you get your job?—I came straight to the Manager and got the job.

**D-744.** Is the factory closed on Sundays?—Yes.

**D-745.** When are you paid?—I am paid weekly and I get it 5 or 6 days after the close of the week.

(The witness withdrew.)

*Note.*—The following statement with regard to this worker was subsequently supplied by the factory management :—

Mahabir Singh I (mica sorter); paid fortnightly.

Age : about 25 years.

Village : Lariadih. Distance : 5 miles from Lokai Factory.

Rate of pay for last week : Rs. 4-6-0. Number of days worked : 10.

Fortnightly pay :

Period ending—	Rs.	s.	p.	Days worked.
15th November 1929 .. .. .	5	11	0	15
31st October 1929 .. .. .	5	14	6	14
15th October 1929 .. .. .	2	8	5	8
30th September 1929 .. .. .	4	2	0	9
15th September 1929 .. .. .	5	0	9	11
31st August 1929 .. .. .	2	1	9	5
15th August 1929 .. .. .	2	8	6	6

Brother working.

**FORTY-FOURTH MEETING—continued.**  
**AFTERNOON SESSION.**

PRESENT :

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

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.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,  
I.M.S., *Medical Assessor*.

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

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**Mr. E. CRELLIN, General Manager of Messrs. F. F. Chrestien and Co., Limited, Mr. D. B. SAHANA, General Manager of Messrs. S. K. Sahana and Sons' mines, Representatives of the Kodarma Mica Mining Association.**

**D-746.** *The Chairman:* Would you in the first place care to say anything to the Commission as to the general position of your industry?—(Mr. Crellin): For the last ten years it has been going to the bad. We have been agitating for protection against theft. We have been endeavouring to get Government to help us in that matter. Theft has gone on for years—long before my time; but it has been going on definitely for the last ten years. Two years ago the local Government took up the matter and introduced a Bill into the Legislative Council, but the legislators would not hear of it. The proposal of the Government was that the Bill should be sent to a committee, but at that time the Legislative Council turned down that proposal. Then the matter was again brought up about 9 months ago, and it has now been sent to a committee. I heard a member of the opposition party say publicly quite recently that they had "scotched" the Bill. We have not much hope, therefore, of this Bill being passed without wrecking amendments, and if your Commission can help us in the matter we shall be very much obliged.

**D-747.** What exactly is the protection of which you speak? I understand that there is a large percentage of loss on your production?—I suppose that 30 people get the mica out of the ground. Up to 2,000 people (dealers) handle it afterwards, before it is exported. There are at least 2,000 traders and 30 miners. We want these 2,000 traders licensed. We want them to keep an account of how they get the mica, where they get it and what they do with it.

**D-748.** What is your estimate of the loss?—The late Secretary of the Kodarma Mica Mining Association went into the matter very

thoroughly and he put the figure at from 40 to 50 per cent. We cannot tell what is stolen, but we know that there is an immense amount of mica going out of the country which is not accounted for in the Mines' returns. Putting it at a modest figure I should say that my Company lose 25 per cent. in this way—not gross weight but net value. The thieves do not steal the coarse stuff because it is not easily handled; they steal the cream and leave us the rest.

**D-749.** That is to say, it disappears through your own workers?—It disappears through some of our own workers and in various other ways, such as poachers. Everybody has a hand in it.

**D-750.** Do you estimate that if that leakage could be in the main stopped it would again put your industry into a prosperous position?—25 per cent. of the gross turn-over would be saved, and the profit that that represents on the capital expended is very great.

**D-751.** Do you imagine that the legislation of which you speak would stop the whole of the leakage?—No, very little, but it would organize matters.

**D-752.** You desire that no body should be allowed to deal in mica except a registered person?—That is so.

**D-753.** And that the license should be withdrawn in case of any incorrect dealing?—The license should be cancelled for good if continuous repetitions of the offence were proved.

**D-754.** What exactly would be the offence?—That a man has mica in his possession for which he cannot account; that he bought mica from an unlicensed person for which the latter cannot account.

**D-755.** Both seller and buyer should be licensed?—Yes. The miner and everybody who deals with mica should be licensed.

**D-756.** Is it an article of such high value that it is easily sold?—Yes.

**D-757.** For that reason you desire legislation to protect the whole industry?—Yes.

**D-758.** What are the arrangements of your firm with regard to financial control? I understand that agents in Bombay really control and finance the industry?—That applies to my firm only.

**D-759.** How far does your Association represent the whole of the industry round about Kodarma, both mines and factories as apart from trading?—I should say that it represents 80 per cent.

**D-760.** Are some of the smaller mines outside your Association?—Yes.

**D-761.** Would Mr. Sahana care to say anything about the general position of the industry?—(Mr. Sahana): The prohibition of woman labour has hit us very badly. By long custom woman labour has



carried the debris out of the small mines. They are now prohibited from doing that and we have found it somewhat difficult to replace that labour force with male labour.

**D-762.** Do you mean to say that where the woman is prohibited from going underground, you lose the man as well?—To a certain extent. The imported labour from the Gaya district will not come singly.

**D-763.** There being no work for the women the men do not come?—Exactly.

**D-764.** And you have had to fill the women's places with men?—Yes.

**D-765.** Do I understand rightly that your chief complaint is that your mines have been dealt with on different lines from the coal mines?—Quite so.

**D-766.** Coal mines have been given ten years for the abolition of woman labour underground, whereas you have been cut off suddenly from the use of woman labour underground in your mines?—Yes.

**D-767.** Did you make representations to the Government of India, as apparently the coal mines must have done, to come under the ten-year reduction and not have an immediate stoppage of woman labour?—Yes, that was done by the Association.

**D-768.** Your plea was not granted?—No.

**D-769.** You had to conform to the Act immediately it came on to the statute book, with no time limit?—That is so.

**D-770.** I understand that this particular rule is a notification under the Act of 1924, and it came into force on the 1st of July, 1929. You had an opportunity of making representations, but your view was not carried into effect?—That is so.

**D-771.** I notice that in your memorandum dealing with the question of wages, you tell us that wages are paid by some firms weekly and by other firms fortnightly. How is it that there is that difference as between firm and firm? Do the people themselves prefer weekly or fortnightly payments, or is it an old custom that the dates of payment differ in that way?—(Mr. Crellin): The reason of the difference is that some mines are very far distant, and there is a good deal of trouble in getting the money out to them. It means in some cases a journey of 30 miles through the jungle. The books and accounts have to be checked. Under these circumstances it is not possible to pay weekly.

**D-772.** Will you tell us about the working hours of the miners?—Miners underground are limited by law to 54 hours a week, and miners overground are limited to 60 hours a week. That is stringently enforced. There are no fixed hours for the men to come and go. All

the labour is done here by coaxing. A man goes to work when he likes and leaves when he likes and stays away as long as he likes. There is no discipline at all, as understood in the West.

**D-773.** How many hours of work do they actually do per day as a general rule?—Five or six.

**D-774.** I suppose the man looks upon his work in the mine as an addition to his income which he draws from the land?—Yes. Fifty per cent. own a little piece of land or rent it and 30 per cent. help their brothers. Therefore 80 per cent. are connected with the land, and they look upon our work as a subsidiary occupation.

**D-775.** I understand that some of your labourers go as far as six miles away in order to work in the mines?—Some of them do, but not many. They generally come from the surrounding villages.

**D-776.** Although they spend a considerable amount of their time on the land they do continue to come to the mines for a number of years. You are not changing your labour every year?—When the first rains come they all clear out and do their ploughing. Then they come back—not with any regularity. They come back in 50's at a time and then they go away again for their paddy cutting.

**D-777.** You have to adapt your arrangements to their customs and wishes in that respect?—Yes.

**D-778.** You give them work when they are willing to work?—We take a second place altogether. Their foremost interest is their farms.

**D-779.** On the whole you consider they work from 5 to 6 hours a day?—Yes.

**D-780.** Turning to the question of your factories as distinct from the mines, in the main you do not employ power in your factories, with the exception of the one we visited where you were cutting by machinery?—That is so.

**D-781.** That brings that particular factory under the Factory Act?—Yes.

**D-782.** Do you often see the Factory Inspector here?—Once a year. It is a long way off his usual beat and it is a small matter really; in fact this factory ought really not to be under the Factories Act at all; it was only the installation of two little electric punches that brought it under the Factory Act.

**D-783.** With regard to the rest, where you employ many hundreds of people, these are not under the Factories Act or under any public inspection at all?—No.

**D-784.** Is there any limit to the hours worked there?—Yes. Seventy-five per cent. of the work there is contract work. Although we say that the men must come at 7-30 and 9, I was down there

this morning at 9-30, and there was not a soul in the factory. Half the men were supposed to be there at 7-30.

**D-785.** Is there a fixed time for closing?—Yes, 5 o'clock.

**D-786.** No work goes on after 5 o'clock?—No, because there is no light.

**D-787.** The position really is that between 7-30 and 5 they work as many hours as they please?—Yes.

**D-788.** But the closing time is rigid and fixed?—Yes, because the sun goes down then.

**D-789.** You have no artificial light?—No.

**D-790.** We were rather struck with the number of young children whom we saw. Is there any lower limit of the age of a child which you take into employment?—There is no lower limit. Those children are apprentices—not in the ordinary way, but they come there and learn their job and eventually they get more money. They do not need to come. We say they may come if they like and they will get so much per pound for the mica they can split. If they start badly and they make too much waste, we say we cannot let them go on. If they do not make too much waste we let them go on.

**D-791.** How young would you take a child—at seven years of age?—If its father and mother are there we might have to take it, but not at 7 years of age. It is very hard to tell their ages.

**D-792.** *Mr. Ahmed*: Would you take them at 9 or 10 years of age?—Yes, but that is not a regular thing.

**D-793.** Would you take them even at seven and half years of age?—No, not lower than nine.

**D-794.** *The Chairman*: How do you keep any limit, if you take all comers, because a small child cannot handle a knife?—The child will make too much waste.

**D-795.** That is the only control there is?—Yes.

**D-796.** Is it a matter of your kindness to the families, or do you think it is an economic proposition to employ such children?—It is not an economic proposition to employ them, but they are in the charge of their friends and relatives; they are in a nice dry place and out of the sun, and if they can make a few annas for themselves so much the better. They will probably cry if we send them away.

**D-797.** You would not object to a limit of age being fixed?—No, as long as the limit was not too low and affected the whole family earnings. If you made it 13 or 15, or anything like that, then these people would be out of employment.

**D-798.** But they come from the same families who have their attachment to the land in the neighbouring villages?—They do not come

when the paddy cutting is going on. We do not see them for months. The children are engaged at home like everybody else is.

**D-799.** I understand that, apart from their absence when the land calls them, they do remain with you for many years?—As long as they care to.

**D-800.** Have you any records of that? I understand that you have men who have been working for many years in the mines?—Yes, we have a record. I know men who have been working in the mines all their lives.

**D-801.** And they bring up their children to the same work hoping that when they retire their children will take their place?—Yes.

**D-802.** With regard to hours, do I understand that the Sunday is always a holiday?—Sunday is a holiday in the factory where the moveable bazaar is in the neighbourhood. With regard to the factory you visited this morning, the bazaar day is to-day, but they were asked to come to work because the Commission was coming. Their holiday is Saturday.

**D-803.** The factories are all closed completely for one day in the week?—Yes.

**D-804.** Are the mines closed for one day in the week?—Yes.

**D-805.** We were told by a witness at Patna that there were no holidays?—If a man works 200 days a year we think he is a very good man. There are innumerable holidays.

**D-806.** They have one day in the week, but in addition to that they have certain extra holidays which they take?—Yes. They have marriage festivals and local festivals and all sorts of holidays.

**D-807.** *Mr. Clow:* Has production gone down substantially since the women were excluded?—It is very hard to say. The rule came into force last July; the cultivation of the land started in July and the paddy cutting is not yet finished.

**D-808.** Have wages been raised this year substantially? Why I am asking that is because you state that the cost of production has increased by 50 per cent.?—(Mr. Sahana) What that means is this: The woman labour has had to be replaced with man labour. The women were paid four annas a day, and the men are now paid from 6 to 7 annas a day.

*Mr. Clow:* I find from the figures given by the Chief Inspector of Mines that in this district there were more than five men for every woman before the notification came into force. I am referring to underground working.

**D-809.** *The Chairman:* You mean clearly that in the individual case where a woman has been replaced by a man the increase in wage cost is 50 per cent.?—Yes.

**D-810.** *Mr. Clow*: Are Messrs. J. S. Mull members of your Association?—Yes.

**D-811.** We have just come from a factory of theirs in which we saw a very large number of small children employed?—As Mr. Crellin has told you children go there to learn the art of splitting. If they do not learn it in their infancy they do not become very good splitters.

**D-812.** Those we saw were not engaged in splitting but on cutting?—Children are never engaged on cutting.

**D-813.** They were engaged in paring the mica with a knife; we saw large numbers of children engaged in mica cutting?—The boys also learn to cut.

**D-814.** Is it necessary that they should begin to learn at 7 or 8 years of age?—No; at 10 I should say.

**D-815.** I notice that you state in your memorandum that children under 13 are not employed?—Those children are not regular workers. They only learn cutting.

**D-816.** But they work every day?—They might not do so.

*Mr. Clow*: They told us they did.

**D-817.** *Mr. Cliff*: In one factory we visited the register showed they did. It showed their attendance and the rate they got for cutting, which was 6 annas per seer. They worked on piece work. In the factory which we visited there was a regular wage book and muster roll for boys, showing the rate for the work they did and their weekly earning?—In the case of piece work we have no control about the age limit.

*Mr. Clow*: I know that, but it is not correct to say that children are not engaged.

**D-818.** *The Chairman*: You say that children are not engaged, and then you say the minimum age is 13 years?—That means that they are not engaged under 13 in those factories which come under the Factories Act. There are no regulations otherwise.

**D-819.** *Mr. Clow*: You mean they are engaged in the great bulk of the mica factories and not in the one where power is installed?—That is the only one which is affected by the Act.

**D-820.** The information that you have given us here relates only to that factory?—Your question relates only to the suitability of regulations affecting children.

**D-821.** Yes, but you say that children are not engaged?—13 years is the limit for children.

**D-822.** Under the Factories Act, a child means a child between the ages of 12 and 15?—There is presumably a mistake in the age taken: 13 years has been taken to be the limit under the Factories Act.

**D-823.** Even in the one factory we saw that was regulated, there are good many duly certified children engaged?—They are all over 13.

**D-824.** Over 12. I mean they have been certified by the Civil Surgeon?

**D-825.** *The Chairman*: There is no doubt of the fact that in the factories which do not come under the Act there are children as young as 7 and 8 employed?—That is so.

**D-826.** *Miss Power*: Could we know what number of women were thrown out of work at the time when women were excluded?—Women are only permitted to work on the surface, but there are several mines in which if they are only given surface work they will not get employment throughout the year. So I cannot give the exact number of women who have been thrown out.

**D-827.** Turning to the Chief Inspector of Mines' report, it is stated there were 1,761 females employed underground in Bihar, and I take it that all these were in respect of mica mines?—Yes.

**D-828.** That number of women must have been displaced?—*(Mr. Crellin)*: There is a book to be had which gives the difference in one mine between the number of women employed before and after the Act.

**D-829.** In the mines under your control how many women were displaced?—*(Mr. Sahana)*: About 200.

**D-830.** You say there has been difficulty in replacing that labour. Have you not been able to get 200 men, for instance, to replace those women?—After great difficulty we have found them, but we had to pay nearly double the wages.

**D-831.** You had to pay the men's rate of wages?—Yes.

**D-832.** Paying men's rate you found no difficulty in getting 200 men?—Yes.

**D-833.** Do you imply that you had difficulty even then?—Yes.

**D-834.** *The Chairman*: But in the course of four months you did fill up your needs with men?—Even now we are having some difficulty.

**D-835.** *Miss Power*: Is there only one factory in this area which is regulated?—Yes.

**D-836.** You would, I take it, be in favour of the other factories coming under the Factories Act?—If the age is restricted to 15, then the splitting work will be very greatly hampered.

**D-837.** *Mr. Clow*: It will not be hampered because under the present Act you can employ children of 12 years as half-timers?—But there are also children who are below 12 years.

**D-838.** *Miss Power*: I take it that you would not object to a regulation which prohibited the employment of children under 12 on this work?—We would not.

**D-839.** If the Act were extended to these factories it would still be possible to employ children as half-timers?—Yes.

**D-840.** *The Chairman:* You do not think that would be harmful to your industry?—It will harm those children who are below the age of 12 because they will not have the opportunity of learning the work of splitting.

**D-841.** *Miss Power:* It would mean that they would have to learn it at a later age; they would learn it from 12 to 15 years instead of, say, from 7 to 12?—(Mr. Crellin): It is just like a girl learning to play the piano at a young age when her fingers are supple. If one wants to learn the art of splitting well one should begin learning it in one's youth.

*Miss Power:* That is an argument that has been used for ages in respect of every increase in the age at which children may be employed.

**D-842.** *Mr. Clow:* In the factories we visited to-day, as far as I remember, we saw no very young children employed in splitting work?—Those that you saw upstairs were all engaged in splitting work.

**D-843.** I am referring to those who were working downstairs; I think they were all doing cutting work?—It is very hard to cut mica unless one is physically fit.

**D-844.** My point is this that so far as I can judge, a minimum of 12 would not really affect the splitting work as it would the cutting?—The age is not a very great point provided these people are not given strict military orders.

**D-845.** Provided they are not limited to six hours a day?—You can limit it to six hours, but what I meant was that you could not ask them to come exactly at 6 o'clock and go at 12. I have tried this and have found that they were not willing to come at 6, even when I offered the rest of the day off.

**D-846.** *Miss Power:* You said just now that you regard cutting as hard work, did you not?—(Mr. Sahana): Cutting is not strenuous; it requires some sort of skill.

**D-847.** There seems to be a difference of opinion among you on that. Would you say that children employed on such work, when it is carried on from approximately 9 to 5, would require an interval of rest in the middle?—They do get it now; they take their meal between 9 and 5.

**D-848.** But in your memorandum you say: "As work in the factory is not strenuous no intervals of rest are needed. Work generally commences at 9 A.M. and closes at 5 P.M. Labourers take their morning meals at home and again in the evening"; that was also borne out by our own interrogation of the workers; they all stated that they took meals before coming to work and the next meal is not taken until they return to their homes in the evening. Do you suggest that no period

for rest and food between these hours is necessary in the case of children from 7—12 years of age?—No; they cannot work so long continuously.

**D-849.** Some of those we saw were of that age. I take it that you would be in favour of a legal rest period and not a continuous work period such as you have at present?—The labour might adapt themselves gradually to the period of rest.

**D-850.** I imagine there would be no difficulty about that?—(Mr. Crellin): If they come early in the morning at 7-30 they get their interval, but they do not all come at 7-30.

**D-851.** *The Chairman:* Where they come from some miles away you can hardly expect them to come very early?—The distance is only a mile or a mile and a half.

**D-852.** I think some come from a greater distance than that?—It is all contract work; if they do not like to come they will not come.

**D-853.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* In the mines no child under 13 is allowed to work?—(Mr. Sahana): That is so.

**D-854.** As a matter of fact, no children under 13 are working in the mines here?—No.

**D-855.** In the factories that come under the Act you are employing only those children who are between 12 and 15 years of age?—Yes.

**D-856.** In the unregulated factories you allow children of any age to come in; you do not turn them out although they may be under 10 years of age?—(Mr. Crellin): Because they may become experts.

**D-857.** In regulated factories they have raised the age-limit within recent years from 9 to 12 because there is machinery. But in the place that we saw to-day there is no machinery. Do I understand you to say to Miss Power that although there is no machinery in the factories here you will have no objection to the age-limit being raised to 12 years of age?—(Mr. Sahana): 10 will be better. (Mr. Crellin): I have no objection to 12 so far as Messrs. Christien and Co. is concerned. (Mr. Smith): So far as the Chota Nagpur Mica Syndicate is concerned, we do not employ children under 12 years of age for the reason that we do no splitting in the factory here.

**D-858.** As regards the employment of women on the mines, formerly they were working underground, aboveground and in open works. Do you employ women now either on works aboveground or on open works?—(Mr. Sahana): It is very hard to engage them on the surface now.

**D-859.** But you can engage them on the surface work if you want to?—Yes, but because they get surface work only for two days in a week they are reluctant to come.

**D-860.** You have been prohibited from employing women underground but not on open works or above ground?—That is so. But as



I said, the difficulty is that if I engage women on the surface only for two days in a week they will not come to work.

**D-861.** I see from the report of the Inspector of Mines for the last year that there were 1,700 women employed underground in Bihar and Orissa. Their services have been entirely dispensed with and you have replaced them with men, I suppose?—Yes.

**D-862.** What is the definition of a mine as you understand?—The definition of a mine would be any cutting below the surface of the ground.

**D-863.** That is to say any excavation is a mine?—That is so.

**D-864.** Can you explain to me why the Inspector of Mines in his report gives only 2,500 tons of mica as having been produced in the mines while as a matter of fact 4,800 tons have been exported from India?—There are some mines in certain remote places that do not come under the Mines Act. They do prospecting work. Secondly, stealing covers a very great extent of that surplus, and thirdly the huge dumps account for a certain amount of surplus.

**D-865.** My point is this: In the report it is stated that the quantity of mica consigned was 2,230 tons and the output was 2,569 tons; that is nearly the same figure. But the exports from India last year were 4,800 tons. Where have the extra 2,500 tons come from?—(Mr. Kirby): The extra must have been due to pilfering; probably some people have obtained that mica illicitly and sold it; they steal from the mines.

**D-866.** Are there a number of mines that do not come under the Mines Inspector?—They are all supposed to come under his jurisdiction. What I meant was that they could get into the forest and pick this mica from there. (Mr. Tuckey, Deputy Commissioner, Hazaribagh): There is a lot of mica taken out from unorganized mines which do not send any returns at all.

**D-867.** On the face of it it seems necessary that there should be some sort of legislation with regard to this matter?—(Mr. Crellin): Every man who owns a mine has to report every year the name of the mine and the output from it to the mines office. That is done now.

**D-868.** But double the amount that is reported is exported?—There is a leakage.

**D-869.** Do you know of any other Acts in India such as you want to have here to prevent the stealing of mica?—In Madras the practice is that every man has to bring his mica to a godown which is just like a custom house. There they levy their royalty and the man is given a pass which permits him to take the mica away.

**D-870.** Is there anything like that possible here? The industry in Madras is very small; it is largely confined to the Nellore District?—It

would mean a number of Government godowns because the area is very big here; I suppose it is 60 miles from one end of the mica belt to the other.

*Sir Alexander Murray* : There is an Act in force in Calcutta known as the Howrah Act under which if somebody is in possession of something which on the face of it he ought not to be in possession of, the onus of proof as to where he got that from and how he obtained it lies on him?—(The witness) : We asked for the Howrah Act in the first place, but it was turned down. Then as a substitute we asked for registration. The Howrah Act would no doubt be a very nice thing, but you should ask for something that you can get most people to agree to. We are 30 as against at least 2,000.

**D-871.** I see a reference in the Chief Inspector of Mines' Report to an increase in wages having had to be given in the mica fields. What was the reason for that?—When they get a little education their wants are increased and they naturally want a little more.

**D-872.** *The Chairman* : Their standard of life is rising?—That is so.

**D-873.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have you had many accidents in the mines?—Very few. I think, on an average, it is less than one a year.

**D-874.** When you have accidents what are they generally due to?—Carelessness in handling.

**D-875.** There are no accidents from splitting or from the use of knives?—No.

**D-876.** *Mr. Ahmed* : Are your mines working throughout the year?—During rains about half our mines stop work for about two or three months.

**D-877.** During that period what do your workmen do?—They take to farming; that is their cultivation time.

**D-878.** In the rainy season it is a bit difficult to go on with the work, I suppose?—We do not work in full always; we have what is called a mining season and off-season.

**D-879.** What is the mining season?—December to June when there is no cultivation or rain. Most of the labourers go when the first rain comes and while the cultivation goes on some come back and some do not, but when the period of cutting comes, all of them go away again.

**D-880.** During the rainy season, because of the rain it is very difficult to work, is it not?—If we can get labour we can put down more efficient pumping plants.

**D-881.** But that will be costly?—We have not tried it, but I know it will be more economic in the end.

**D-882.** These people, I suppose, come here when they have no work on their fields?—Yes.

**D-883.** And they work on contract basis, I suppose?—Some work on contract and some on daily rate.

**D-884.** What is the proportion?—In the factories, I suppose, 75 per cent. are on contract, and in the mines nearly all are on daily rated system.

**D-885.** You said that you are paying a woman 4 annas a day and a man 6 annas. On an average, how much do the people who work on contract get?—Some make 10 or 12 annas and some make only 8 annas.

**D-886.** You said that 75 per cent. of the workers are on contract while 25 per cent. are not. If, as you say, one can earn 10 or 12 annas a day on contract while he is paid only 6 annas if he is a daily rated man, how is it that these daily rated men have not preferred to work on contract?—These 25 per cent. are picked men, and they are paid highly.

**D-887.** Mr. Sahana, you say that your industry has been badly hit on account of the prohibition of employment of women underground, because you find it difficult and more expensive to replace the women by men. You want that you should be given the same time, 10 years, for the complete elimination of women from your industry as in the case of the coal industry and you hope that you would adjust your conditions within that period?—Yes.

**D-888.** Have you not any number of men available to replace the women; have you any serious difficulty in obtaining men?—We have very great difficulty in obtaining men; if all the firms are working at full pace there will be paucity of male labour to a great extent; that contingency has not arisen yet.

**D-889.** Apart from this grievance you have no other?—Yes, we want time to prepare ourselves for the total elimination of women from our industry.

**D-890.** Have you any idea of the living wage of a worker with four dependents on him; will it be Rs. 15 a month per head?—I have no idea.

**D-891.** Do you think that 6 annas a head will be sufficient?—A frugal man can live even on 2 annas a day; if he is a spendthrift and drinks much, even Re. 1 a day will not be sufficient.

**D-892.** Leaving aside the question of liquor, do you think that 6 annas a day is sufficient for a man?—I think it is sufficient just to maintain himself.

**D-893.** Have you any idea of the number of pieces of cloth that he requires per year; do you think that 3 pieces will do?—I have no idea.

**D-894.** So that I take it that for a family of 4 persons at the rate of four annas a day per head you would require Rs. 30 a month as the

minimum living wage. But you pay only 6 annas a day for the man and that is not enough for him and for his family. Is that not the reason why his women and children also work?—Yes, they all work as a family.

**D-895.** Are they not also greatly indebted?—I do not think so; there are no *Kabulis* here.

**D-896.** *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the period of employment can we take it that your labour is available for 9 months in the year?—(*Mr. Crellin*): It is difficult to say definitely; this year the labourers have been away from the middle of June until now, because they have more paddy to cut. On an average you can take it as 9 months in the year.

**D-897.** There is a statement which says that they are absent for 3 months in the year and that the loss of wages is Rs. 45. Can we take it that generally they are available for nine months in the year?—Yes.

**D-898.** Are the rates of wages set out here the average rates of wages for 9 months in the factories and the mines; do they cover all the factories and all the mines? That is to say, do they represent the average for nine months and not for a year?—(*Mr. Sahana*): Yes, the rates cover all the factories and the mines. But we have never made any actual calculations to find out the average rates. At a general meeting of the Association we decided to put the average rates of wages roughly at that figure.

**D-899.** You have not mentioned any rates for children. I saw a lot of children employed between the ages of 7 and 8. Could you tell us roughly what they earn?—They earn 3 to 5 annas a day.

**D-900.** I was talking to children to-day who were earning 8, 9, and 12 annas a week? In one case I saw the register myself; the children in that factory worked for 5 days and got 12 annas; but you say they get 3 to 5 annas a day?—(*Mr. Sahana*): We may take it as 2 to 5 annas at the lowest.

**D-901.** With regard to employment of women in the coal mines, if the coal mines are put under the same restrictions as your mines in that respect, will you be content?—Perfectly content.

**D-902.** *Colonel Russell*: Have you provided any houses to your employees?—We provided some pucca buildings in Sanwan, but they would not occupy them, for they have their own arrangements.

**D-903.** With regard to medical facilities, you say that there is a Government dispensary at Kodarma. Are there any dispensaries in the mining areas?—Messrs. Christian and Company have two qualified doctors, two dispensaries 45 miles apart and a hospital.

**D-904.** The dispensaries are 45 miles apart; the population is spread over the whole area; what is the maximum distance that a sick person

has to walk to get treatment?—He does not have to walk; the doctors go to see him.

**D-905.** Is he a full time doctor?—Yes, there are two full time doctors.

**D-906.** Have you any first-aid posts?—Yes.

**D-907.** Are they compulsory?—No, nothing is compulsory here, in the western sense.

**D-908.** Is there any staff employed who are acquainted with first-aid methods?—There are one or two in each mine, who know enough to take care of the patient till the doctor arrives, just to bandage the wound and so on.

**D-909.** Do the doctors train these men?—They have orders to train men; they train them.

**D-910.** We were in a factory this morning and we found that the latrine accommodation was not sufficient for the 750 people employed there?—That is an effort on our part, but they will not use it. When they do not use it, where is the need for providing more?

**D-911.** They use the surrounding country?—Yes.

**D-912.** Do you employ sweepers to clean the surrounding country?—No. We would have to employ an enormous number of sweepers. We have ten sweepers attached to the factory.

**D-913.** It was quite apparent that there was a considerable amount of hookworm among the children of your employees?—I have not observed it.

**D-914.** Are there any industrial diseases among your employees?—We have periodical outbreaks of small-pox.

**D-915.** That is not an industrial disease; is there any disease due to employment?—We have none.

**D-916.** Are you very much troubled with cholera in this area?—We have it once in two years. (Mr. Sahana): This year there was not much of it.

**D-917.** So cholera does not worry you very much?—If we have a case we send for vaccine from Calcutta by a special messenger and inoculate whole villages at a time.

**D-918.** That is just like locking the stable after the steed is stolen. Have you a protected water-supply?—The doctors visit the mines regularly and inspect the water-supply. That is one of their duties.

**D-919.** Do you have any disinfection of wells?—Yes.

**D-920.** Are the doctors trained for that?—Yes.

**D-921.** *Mr. Cliff*: Do you think that the arrangements for checking cholera are satisfactory?—(Mr. Sahana): On that point we would like to say that the District Board of Hazaribagh does not take any very keen interest in the health of the people here.

**D-922.** *Colonel Russell*: Have they not a Health Officer here?—They have, but he could not inoculate people here.

**D-923.** You say you send for cholera vaccine when you get a case of cholera?—(Mr. Crellin): I was talking of Messrs. Chrestian and Company, but the other people depend on the Government dispensary.

**D-923a.** Do the people readily get themselves inoculated?—(Mr. Sahana): No, they are very superstitious and have to be persuaded a good deal.

**D-924.** *Miss Power*: You say there are 600 mica mines; is there a factory run in connection with every mine?—(Mr. Sahana): Every mine-owner has a factory; a man may own 40 mines but have one factory.

**D-925.** How many factories are there for these 600 mines?—In Kodarma there are about 20 factories.

**D-926.** How many of them come under your Association?—Practically all the principal mine-owners come under our Association; they are about 13 in number.

**D-927.** How many actual factories come under the jurisdiction of your Association?—Messrs. Chrestian alone have more than one factory; they have finishing factories, cutting and splitting factories; they have several factories.

**D-928.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say that you close down the mines during the rainy season: do you close the factories in any part of the years?—(Mr. Crellin). The factories slow down; they are not completely closed.

**D-929.** You speak of closing the mines for three months and re-opening them afterwards when labour is available. Do you advise the Mines Inspector of re-opening of mines?—We inform the Mines Inspector when we re-open the mines.

**D-930.** It is stated that last year 217 mines were closed and 162 mines were opened in Bihar and Orissa. Was that a simultaneous process; when were these 217 mines closed and when were the 162 mines opened?—It means that 217 mines were closed for want of labour and when labour was available 162 of these mines were re-opened.

**D-931.** Does it mean that some of these mines were exhausted and others were opened?—No, the same mines were re-opened. Of course some were exhausted, but they were not a considerable number.

**D-932.** *Mr. Ahmed*: These people do not do any work on Sundays and take other holidays also. Do you pay any wages to them for those holidays?—(Mr. Sahana): No.

**D-933.** Have you any training school for the children to learn the art?—None.

**D-934.** Are not the children liable to cut their fingers if they are not properly trained for the work?—Sometimes they might cut their fingers.

**D-935.** Do they get any compensation when they cut their fingers and thereby become unfit for work?—They do not stop work; if we put a little iodine on the wound they become all right.

**D-936.** Some workers work under you for very long periods, from generation to generation in some cases. Do you give any pension in such cases?—(Mr. Crellin): We give pension in exceptional cases, not as a general rule.

**D-937.** What are those exceptional cases?—For instance, when a man retires after working for a long time and has nothing left to maintain himself.

**D-938.** *The Chairman:* You said that since the prosperity which came in the war time your industry has not been making any profit?—That is so. As far as I know nobody else is making a profit.

**D-939.** Does that apply to other firms in your Association?—(Mr. Sahana): Yes, it does apply to them also; the rates have been reduced since the war boom.

**D-940.** There was a boom here as there was in many other industries during the war?—(Mr. Crellin): Yes.

**D-941.** Was there any recapitalization, I mean writing up values of your industry during or just after the war down to 1920 and 1921?—I do not think there was.

**D-942.** There was no revaluation or refinancing?—No.

**D-943.** Your company is in the same position as regards capital as it was then?—Yes.

**D-944.** Have you individual shareholders of your company or is your capital all held through the Agents?—Our shareholders are in little groups; shares may be held by ten different people; they are not floated on the public.

**D-945.** Yours is a private company?—Yes.

**D-946.** Exactly what is your financial arrangement with the Agents in Bombay? Supposing you make a profit, you pay a dividend to the shareholders and only a percentage to the agents. Are the agents paid on turnover?—The agents are paid a commission on turnover.

**D-947.** Whether you make a profit or not?—They so far have claimed only about 25 per cent. of that to which they are entitled, and the balance (75 per cent.) has been written off in the Company's favour.

**D-948.** When did that arrangement come into force?—Ever since we had the agents. I cannot say when the agents were first appointed; I should think it was about 1922 or 1923.

**D-949.** That is the point. Was it after the end of the war?—After the war, when the affairs of the industry were in a very bad way, the agents were appointed to carry on the business.

**D-950.** Previous to that there were individual firms?—Yes.

**D-951.** They were grouped under your Company?—I suppose so; I do not know definitely. Some of the shares are now held in trust for Christians' family.

(*Note.*—In regard to these last two questions, Mr. Crallin writes: "There was no change in the position or the capital of Messrs. F. F. Christian & Co., Ltd., as the result of the appointment of the managing agents. Before the appointment of the managing agents the Company was a limited liability company registered under the Indian Companies Act with a share capital of Rs. 3,75,000. The position remained exactly the same after the appointment of the managing agents, but in 1923 the Company became a private limited company. There was no increase of capital.")

**D-952.** The agents were appointed in 1920-21 because of the bad state of the industry due to the collapse of the war-time boom?—Yes.

**D-953.** You are quite sure that there has been no writing up of the capital of the companies between 1914 and 1920?—No. It is a private company, a limited liability company whose shares are not sold on the market.

(The witnesses withdrew.)



COALFIELDS.  
SIXTIETH MEETING.

ASANSOL.

Thursday, 23rd January 1930.

PRESENT :

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

*Members.*

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. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LEPOER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL,  
C.B.E., I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Mrs. KAMINI ROY, *Lady Assessor.*

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**At the Bara Dhemo Colliery.**

**A surface coal wagon loader (male) was called and examined (Mr. Birla interpreting).**

**D-954.** *The Chairman:* How long have you worked here?—Only three days.

**D-955.** Where did you come from?—Monghyr.

**D-956.** Why did you come to work here?—Just for two months to make money and then I will go back.

**D-957.** Why do you not wish to work here permanently?—I will stay here for two months, then go home for a month, and then will return again. I work for the agriculturists; I have not land of my own.

**D-958.** Have you cattle?—I have one cow at my home, not here. I have been here before; I knew I could get some money here and therefore I came again.

**D-959.** How much money do you earn here?—Sometimes 12 annas and sometimes 14 annas a day. We are four men working in one gang and my share is from 12 to 14 annas a day. My wife is not here.

**D-960.** How many hours do you work?—I take my meal in the morning and then start work till 6 o'clock in the evening. I get rest in between; I go away at 12 and come back at 2.

**D-961.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : If there are no wagons to load, what do you do?—I rest in my house.

**D-962.** *The Chairman* : Do you come here every year to earn some money?—Yes, I come here every year. I save about Rs. 10 a month after meeting all my expenses. I take Rs. 20 back after working two months.

**D-963.** *Mr. Birla* : Why do you not stay here permanently if you save Rs. 12 a month?—I have a family and my mother is very old; therefore I go home from time to time.

**D-964.** *The Chairman* : Can you earn more here than you could in your village in two months?—Yes. At home I get 4 seers of *dhan* every day. At home I can just maintain myself so far as food is concerned, but cannot purchase clothes. When I come here I borrow money to pay my railway fare and when I have made money I pay off the debt. The *sardar* does not necessarily bring me, but I know the *sardar* and therefore I get the job.

*The Chairman* : What is your name?

*Mr. Birla* : He is afraid to give his name.

(The witness withdrew.)

**At the Dhemo Main Colliery (underground).**

PRESENT :

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

DIWEN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

MISS B. LEPOER POWER.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

SAUKLI (Goala),

SUKH DEV (Ahir), and

AGLA DAS (Gareria),

} miners (men).

(Statement by Saukli.)

I come from Monghyr District; my family is here with me. I have been here on this occasion five months. I stayed at my home one and half months. I have always worked in this mine and I have been here for the last three years. I have never worked in any other mine. I have about an acre of land at Monghyr; it is in my brother's

name, not in my name. I bore the shot holes for the blasting. I get 4 annas for each hole. I came into the mine at about 9 o'clock this morning. I have done no work to-day except clearing a small space of coal.

Three of us make shot holes together, and between the three of us we can do 8 to 15 a day. We are paid weekly. I got Rs. 4-12-0 last week; each of us got that. Our wages depend on the number of holes we make. None of our wives does any work in the mine. None of us has any children. We do no work other than boring holes. We work in alternate weeks on the day shift and night shift. We stay in the mine till about 7 or 8 at night until our substitutes come. We do not work on Sundays. Sometimes we work six days a week, sometimes 5 and sometimes 4; it depends on the amount for which the contractor arranges. We have no cultivation here. We have small bills here with the shopkeeper. Our food costs us Rs. 1-8-0 per week. The debts of all three of us amount to a total of about Rs. 300. We got into debt for various purposes: to pay the rent and on account of marriages and funerals. We have not got our boring crowbars here. The contractor told us to come and shovel away the loose coal. We shall get no payment for shovelling away the loose coal. We shall merely shovel it to one side. We save about 4 annas a week when we economise in our food. I have sent back Rs. 20 to the money-lender to whom I am indebted. The registering clerks ask our names and numbers when we go out of the mine and when we enter it.

(The three witnesses withdrew.)

**Bansi Kurmi, coal loader (with 14 other coal loaders), was examined and made the following statement:—**

I come from Bilaspur; I have been here about a month. I used to work in the Jharia field. I came here this time because other people of my village are working here. My wife is working here with me; we have no children. We get 5 annas a tub for loading. We work in a gang sometimes consisting of 14. On the average we fill two tubs per head and get 10 annas. We are paid once a week. The women get the same wages as we do. I have cultivation in my country, but I have none here. I get about Rs. 4 a week. We work regularly 6 days a week. The bazaar days are Saturday and Tuesday. The arrangement is that those who are on the night shift go to the bazaar in the day. There is no work on Sundays. We work from about 10 in the morning till about 10 at night, but if we can get tubs quickly we can finish our work by 8 o'clock. Three of us came to this colliery the day before yesterday but some of us have been here a long time. We all work for one contractor. I came of my own accord from Bilaspur. Nobody gave me the fare. Before being here I stayed a whole year in Jharia. Our women work because our earnings are not sufficient for us; they work in order to fill our stomachs. I intend

to go back to my home when I have got enough money. I am in debt in my country to the extent of Rs. 100, which I borrowed for a wedding. We save a little money here. We do not suffer from shortage of tubs. I was not aware that women in future were to be excluded from work in the mines. Will the Government feed the women when they are excluded? Men and women do exactly the same work here. I have two wives; they are both working here. I married a second time because I had no children by my first wife. I and my two wives together fill 6 tubs a day. If we got more coal and more wagons we might be able to do more. The haulage is sometimes closed. We have a good house here and like it, it is continually plastered and cleaned. We do not eat meat. \*

(The witness withdrew.)

**Uma Padan Mukerjee, Sarkar, was examined and made the following statement:—**

My duty is to enter up the tubs filled by the miners for payment. I have my register here. (The witness produced his book.) For the week ending the 11th January, which is the last complete week I was here, the number of men at work and the tubs they filled in my section were as follows:—

Day.	Men.	Tubs.
1930, January—		
Monday, 6th ... ..	56	103
Tuesday, 7th ... ..	59	110
Wednesday, 8th ... ..	59	112
Thursday, 9th ... ..	47	47 (The Haulage rope broke.)
Friday, 10th ... ..	58	136
Saturday, 11th ... ..	52	119

Where it says "men" it means men and women. I am paid Rs. 22 a month; I do not get any commission. I alternate between the day shift and the night shift weekly. The amount of work done on the two shifts is about the same, though there may be a tub or two less in the total of the night shift. The figures I have given are for the night shift. I go at 9 in the morning and leave at 9 at night. I do not have any food in the mine. When I am thirsty but not tired I go to the shaft bottom and get drinking water, but there is a drip in No. 7 level and I fill my *lota* from it when I am tired. The *sarkar* on the other shift comes down to the mine and relieves me here. Ludda Singh is the contractor under whom I work. I have always worked as a *sarkar*. I have been in this mine six months. Before that I worked in the Dumra colliery. I left Dumra because it was too far from my house. I was a *sarkar* there. I did the same work in Dumra.

colliery but not under a contractor; it is worked there departmentally. In Dumra I got Rs. 18, and 4 annas surplus commission per ton. This was calculated on the surplus weight over 14 cwt. per tub. The surplus used to yield me between Rs. 8 and Rs. 12 a month.

(The witness withdrew.)

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**Gauri Shankar, coal loader (with other coal loaders), was examined and made the following statement:—**

Our difficulty is that when there is coal we cannot get tubs for it and when there are tubs there is no coal. We heard that you were here and we were coming along to report to you. What we want is that more tubs should be provided and more coal. We have come from Bilaspur. I have been working here for three years and have not gone to Bilaspur in the interval. You can verify from the records that we are old men here and each of us four has been working here 3 years. Yesterday as it was known that the Commission was coming we were taken out of the pit by 8 o'clock at night. Ordinarily if we go in at 8 o'clock we may have to stay in till 3 or 4 o'clock. When it gets very late sometimes we want to get away even if we have not finished our work. But in that case we are sometimes prevented from leaving; the contractor's *baboos* stop us. We were told by the contractor that the Sahibs were coming. The order was given by him that those who come in at 8 o'clock in the morning should leave at 8 o'clock in the evening, and those who come in at 8 o'clock in the evening should leave at 6 o'clock in the morning. A *baboo* whose name is Ram Lal, is one of those who prevented us from speaking to you. For the last three years we have been paid the same rate of wages. Last week I got Rs. 4 for working 6 days. If we only stay 12 hours we only get about 5 annas. It is only by staying beyond that time that we get an adequate wage for the day. I have no land here, but I have land in Bilaspur. I got into debt for a wedding and also in order to get plough buffaloes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(This concludes the evidence taken underground.)

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**Gazia, Rajvaid, Bilaspur, and Thakath of Bilaspur, workers in Dhemo Main colliery, were examined and made the following statement:—**

We came to this mine when it was a very small concern. We have been here for some years. We have our wives and families here. We go to our country once in six months or once a year and stay for a month or so and then come back. We have little land in our country. We have no cattle or land here, and rely entirely on our earnings.

Occasionally we send a little money home, but we do not earn enough for ourselves. The railway fare to our home costs us a good deal of money. If a man and his wife works for a whole day they can earn Rs. 1-4-0, but some days we do not even earn that amount. After having our meals we enter the mine at about 11-30 and come out of the mine at 2 A.M. and sometimes even later. We work for six days in a week, but there are some who do not work six days. After we come out of the mine we go to the *hât* to make purchases. Deductions amounting sometimes to half of our wages are made if the trucks are under-loaded. Our wages are paid by a *baboo*. Some days we do not get enough tubs (Gazia): I am fined for under-loading the tubs 3 annas, 5 annas or 8 annas, last week I was fined 5 annas. Once or twice a year we suffer from cough or fever. We do not get any pay when we are sick; some people get allowance when they are sick, but others do not. We all get medicines if we go to the hospital. The doctor comes to the lines when we are sick. Our women do not get any maternity allowance. (Gazia): I have a boy. I lost one child here. (Thakath): I lost a child in my country. (Gazia): A man from Sitarampur collects a few boys and teaches them. I send my boy to that teacher and pay one rupee a month. I was the man who started this thing first and others joined afterwards. There are 10 to 12 boys studying now. I do not know whether the company pays anything to the teacher. We will welcome a school and many of us will send our children. We are loaders. Our wives work with us; they also load the coal into the tubs. We do not know that a law has been passed which will prevent women from working underground. If our women are excluded from working underground how can we live? Some days we get four tubs and some days not. The days on which we get four tubs we earn Rs. 1-4-0, that is, a man and his wife together. We can hardly save anything.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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**Kanhaimanji, Santhal from Bakura, worker in Dhemu Main colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

I am working in this mine from a very long time. I have a wife and five children. My wife works with me in the mine. If we get four tubs we earn Rs. 1-4-0. Sometimes we get two tubs and sometimes four. We work six days a week. I do not go to my country; I am settled in this place. I have a little bit of land here, two bullocks and some fowls. I grow paddy in my field. It yielded me 2 maunds this year. My children do not go to school. On *hât* days my wife makes purchases; Tuesdays and Saturdays are *hât* days. We do not work on Saturdays. I enter the mine at about 7 A.M. and come out at 2 or 3 P.M. I earn more here than in my country.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Padara of Bilaspur, Sardarin in Dhemo Main colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

I am working in this mine for the last ten or twelve years. My husband came here and died here. I have three children of whom two are small. My first son is a *sardar*. When I save enough money I go to my country. I have no land or property in my country. Two years ago I had been to my home. I am sending one of my children to a school arranged by the raising contractor and pay Rs. 4 a month for his education. I should get Rs. 20 a month as my pay, but I do not get it now.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Lokhimanji of Bakoda Tahsil, Kazipur, woman worker in Dhemo Main colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

I have been working in this mine for the last six months. My husband is also working in this mine. My husband came to this mine of his own accord and also brought me here. We both work together. Sometimes we earn 8 annas a day and sometimes Re. 1. We do not get enough tubs. I have one boy; I did not lose any.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Dr. S. K. Sircar, M.B., D.P.H., Chief Sanitary Officer, Asansol Mines Board of Health, Dr. U. P. Chatterjee, M.B., Chief Medical Officer, Eastern Coal Company, Limited, and Dr. Bonbehari Chattaraj, L.M.P., Medical Officer, Dhemo Main Colliery.**

**D-965.** *Colonel Russell*: Dr. Chatterjee, you are the doctor in charge of a group of collieries?—(Dr. Chatterjee): Yes, I am in charge of 8 collieries all belonging to one company.

**D-966.** And you Dr. Chattaraj?—(Dr. Chattaraj): I am in charge of Dhemo Main Colliery which is one of the eight collieries under the control of Messrs. Eastern Coal Company, Limited.

**D-967.** How long have you been here?—(Dr. Chatterjee): Since 8 years. (Dr. Chattaraj): Since 3½ years.

**D-968.** What is your qualification?—I am an L. M. P. (Dr. Chatterjee): I am an M. B.

**D-969.** Will you explain to the Commission what your duties are?—I get a report from my assistants in the eight collieries about accident cases or any serious cases and I go to the colliery for consultation. From time to time I go to visit the colliery dispensaries and see whether the lines are kept in a proper condition or not.

**D-970.** What are the duties of the colliery medical officer besides dispensary work?—He has to see that the lines are kept properly cleaned.

**D-971.** Is not that done by the Sanitary Inspector under the Board of Health?—Yes with the help of the doctor here.

**D-972.** How often does the Sanitary Inspector visit the lines?—Twice or thrice a week.

**D-973.** Has he got any conservancy staff under him?—Yes.

**D-974.** Can you tell me how many sweepers are attached to this colliery?—8 sweepers and 3 sweeper women.

**D-975.** What relationship have you got with the Board of Health?—In respect of sanitation and epidemics I am guided by the Chief Sanitary Officer of the Board of Health.

**D-976.** Who pays you your salary?—I am paid by the company.

**D-977.** What are the chief diseases that you have in this area?—In the malarial season we get a few cases of malaria, not in every year but in some years, and during summer we sometimes get cases of cholera and small-pox.

**D-978.** Do you get a large amount of small-pox cases?—Not a large amount. We get about 8 or 10 cases for all this area.

**D-979.** What is the total population that you have to look after in the eight collieries?—3,000.

**D-980.** Does that include women and children?—Yes.

**D-981.** *The Chairman:* Do you keep statistics of births, deaths and sickness?—No; the colliery doctors keep them.

**D-982.** Do you supervise that?—Yes.

**D-983.** Are the returns maintained uniform by all the collieries under your supervision?—Yes, we have standard forms.

**D-984.** Do you register a still-birth as a birth and as a death, or do you register it separately?—It is kept separately; it is neither counted as a birth nor as a death.

**D-985.** *Colonel Russell:* Can you tell us what the birth rate, the death rate and the infantile mortality rate for your group were last year?—I will send you the figures later on.

**D-986.** Can you say how many children under one year of age died last year in this colliery?—(Dr. Chatterjee): I think one or two.

**D-987.** *Colonel Russell:* The difficulty is that they do not maintain any regular register at all. Have you got any idea, Dr. Sircar, of what the birth-rate and the death-rate were last year for this area?—(Dr. Sircar): The birth-rate, I think, was 27 and the death-rate was 17.

**D-988.** What was the rate of infantile mortality?—132 per 1,000.

**D-989.** Can you tell us exactly how still-births are treated?—They are registered separately. They are neither treated as births nor as deaths.



**D-990.** I think the general impression we have gained this morning is that the children in this colliery are not quite in as good a condition as some of the children we have seen in other groups. Can you give us an idea as to the disease they suffer from?—Up till now I have not been able to discover any disease that they suffer from, but it may be due to malnutrition, insufficiency of milk or food-stuffs, etc., I cannot say anything definitely.

**D-991.** Do the children here get a sufficient supply of milk?—(Dr. Chatterjee): I do not think so. These labour classes hardly get any milk; they generally depend upon rice water.

**D-992.** Does the population as a whole get a sufficient supply of vegetables?—Yes. Most of them have their own gardens where they grow vegetables; where they have no gardens they buy vegetables from the bazaar.

**D-993.** I think you said this morning that there was a considerable amount of venereal disease. Can you give us an estimate of the amount that is to be found?—The difficulty is that most of the people who suffer from venereal disease do not come for treatment to the dispensary, but I find that most of those who come for treatment of other diseases suffer from venereal disease. I should put the estimate at 50 per cent.

**D-994.** Do you have any *dais* working in this area?—Yes.

**D-995.** Do they report a large number of abortions or miscarriages?—(Dr. Sircar): No.

**D-996.** Do you think that these are being overlooked?—I cannot say exactly.

**D-997.** *The Chairman:* You would expect, would you not, if there was a prevalence of venereal disease to the extent of anything like 50 per cent., to find it registered in the number of still-births?—From my experience of Rangpur District and here I think the prevalence of venereal disease is less here than in Rangpur. The number of still-births will be about 7 per cent. in that District while it is much less here.

**D-998.** Those figures commonly run parallel, do they not? The number of still-births is an indication of the presence of venereal disease?—That is true.

**D-999.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* I find that you have a very low birth-rate here. Is it customary for women to go to their homes for delivery instead of staying here?—(Dr. Chatterjee): Some people who have their own homes in their villages do go.

**D-1000.** *Colonel Russell:* What proportion would that be?—I cannot exactly say.

**D-1001.** One of the witnesses told us that no maternity benefits are given. Is that so?—No.

**D-1002.** What maternity relief is given?—When a woman is five months pregnant, she begins to get 5 annas wages; this she gets till one month after the birth of the child. They also get the help of the *dais*.

**D-1003.** Is this 5 annas a day that is given by the management to pregnant women given only on condition that these women accept the services of the trained *dais*?—No.

**D-1004.** They can use any *dai* they like?—As far as possible we try to prevent these women using untrained *dais*.

**D-1005.** *The Chairman*: Are the services of the trained midwife supplied free?—Yes.

**D-1006.** *Colonel Russell*: Have you any child welfare centres for looking after the health of the babies?—No.

**D-1007.** Have you any woman health visitor or lady medical officer to supervise maternity relief and child welfare work?—No.

**D-1008.** Do you think that it would be of use to have health visitors and a lady medical officer under the Board of Health?—(Dr. Sircar): We can organize things like that, but at present the midwives when they have no specific work to do, go round the area and examine all the children and the women in the lines. They make enquiries about pregnancies and the diseases associated with pregnancies. For every delivery case they attend for at least a week, and for a longer period if necessary. This is how we keep in touch with the women working in these collieries.

**D-1009.** At present all that work is supervised by you. Would it not be better to have all that work supervised by a lady medical officer?—I cannot say.

**D-1010.** You know perfectly well, just as I do, that Indian women do not freely consult a male doctor when they suffer from any disease?—Yes; but, as I said, the midwives attend to this work.

**D-1011.** A midwife is not a medical officer?—No.

**D-1012.** So, do you not think that it would be better to have a lady medical officer doing that work and generally supervising midwives and organizing child welfare work and so on?—It may be organized; it would be better indeed.

**D-1013.** *The Chairman*: From the reports we have it would seem that the work of the Mines Board of Health is mainly devoted to the prevention of epidemics?—It is not exactly limited to that. We take up many things—prevention of epidemics, registration of births and deaths, free vaccination, giving help in times of delivery, training of midwives, holding baby shows, clinics and so on.

**D-1014.** How much of the work of the Mines Board of Health can be said to be devoted to what might be called welfare work amongst

the children apart from purely medical work?—We can say that the midwives' part of the work and the vaccination can be said to relate to the children.

**D-1015.** Does your Mines Board of Health in this district prescribe model dwellings?—We have got standard plans for *dhowrahs*.

**D-1016.** Do you prescribe them or recommend them?—We recommend them, and the collieries are expected to build according to the specifications given therein.

**D-1017.** *Colonel Russell*: Does the Chief Medical Officer of your Board condemn lines where they are not satisfactory?—If a *dhowrah* has been occupied I do not think the Chief Sanitary Officer has got the power to say that it must be vacated, but in the case of *dhowrahs* which have been left unoccupied and are in the course of repairs, I think the Chief Sanitary Officer has the power to recommend that the repair work should be done in such and such manner and according to such and such specification.

**D-1018.** You do not permit the construction of back to back houses?—No.

**D-1019.** *The Chairman*: Do you limit the number of houses in any one row?—Practically there is no limit. The plan shows that two should be built but usually they build more than 4 or 5 in a row.

**D-1020.** Do you consider that the brick walled houses that we saw this morning are more healthy than the *kucha* ones that the Santals have themselves built?—Yes.

**D-1021.** *Colonel Russell*: What is the general source of water-supply in these collieries?—(*Dr. Chatterjee*): Generally wells.

**D-1022.** How is it prevented from being a source of danger to the people who use it?—It is sterilized every alternate day.

**D-1023.** But not all the year round?—Yes.

**D-1024.** In what way do you sterilize the water?—By putting in bleaching powder.

**D-1025.** There has been no attempt to fix to individual wells a water pump and to prevent this promiscuous drawing of water?—No.

**D-1026.** Are there any latrines on the colliery lines?—No.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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**Mr. C. HEATH, Manager of Dhemo Main Colliery.**

**D-1027.** *The Chairman*: What is the total number of persons employed here?—Daily underground 750 persons and on the surface

about 150 persons. There are 750 men, women and children on the colliery estate, and in addition to that we draw from the surrounding villages probably 250 people.

**D-1028.** Will you explain your system of contractors?—The colliery is worked by means of a raising contractor, who is paid so much per ton; he is paid monthly. He supplies labour for coal getting and haulage work. He looks after the actual coal getting, raising to the pit head and loading into wagons. He also looks after recruiting. Under him he has petty contractors. He also supplies labour for machine cutting.

**D-1029.** The arrangements he makes with his labour are not regulated by you?—No, we leave that to him.

**D-1030.** How do you reckon the tub for wages?—14 cwt. That depends upon the size of the tub. The tub we use here, just level loaded, gives us about 14 cwt. That has always been the custom here.

**D-1031.** *Mr. Clow*: You work 2 shifts of 12 hours each?—Yes.

**D-1032.** A number of men below complained to us that occasionally owing to shortage of coal and tubs they were kept down considerably more than twelve hours on occasions?—As a rule I do not think they are down below all that time. There may be some trouble occasionally but their actual work does not take them 12 hours. The average loading per person works out at 2 tubs. If they are there to time, if facilities are good and the coal is there they can easily do that work in 4 or 5 hours. The rest of the time is spent waiting on their own account and probably for lack of facilities. Of course that is not general.

**D-1033.** When the night shift finishes, you do not compel every man on the night shift to come out as the day shift comes in?—It is the understood thing that they should come out, yes. On the 1st April we shall start the proper 12 hour shifts.

**D-1034.** You have no separate contractor for recruiting?—The raising contractor is responsible for recruiting.

**D-1035.** There is no commission paid on surplus weight?—No but that goes to his credit if he makes it.

**D-1036.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have only one contractor and he does everything?—Yes, everything, raising to the surface and loading into wagons.

**D-1037.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What check have you on the hours worked?—We keep attendance clerks at the pit head to keep the time of ascending and descending.

**D-1038.** So that a man can work 6 days a week on the 12 hour shift?—No. The rule is that their hours are totalled up at the end

of the week and if a man appears to be exceeding the limited number of hours he is not allowed to go down towards the end of the week.

**D-1039.** Who keeps that register?—The attendance clerks at the pit head.

**D-1040.** Is the attendance clerk under you or under the contractor?—He is our man.

**D-1041.** How many tons do you raise per day?—We average about 650 tons per day.

**D-1042.** You have no responsibility with regard to the wages the workers earn?—No.

**D-1043.** What do you pay the contractor for the coal he raises?—It averages about Rs. 2-6-0 per ton.

**D-1044.** *Mr. Clow* : If you were to work on what is called the *sarkari* system, i.e., directly without a contractor, would raising cost you more?—We reckon it will come out about the same. The raising contractor system is used to increase the labour force available. They are supposed to handle the labour better and thereby give better results the labour being more or less their own people.

**D-1045.** *The Chairman* : Have you experience of the two systems?—No. I have only experience of this system.

**D-1046.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What is the difference in rate for coal getting by machine and by pick?—Coal getting by machine includes blasting and a lot of extra work.

**D-1047.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Do you supply the powder?—If powder is given for machine cutting work it is deducted from the rates allowed.

**D-1048.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : The coal borer gets so much per hole?—Yes.

**D-1049.** What does the man who uses the coal cutting machine get?—It varies; sometimes he is paid at so much per ton and some times the machine crew are paid so much per day.

**D-1050.** *Mr. Cliff* : If a man turns up to work 6 days a week, do you ever turn him away on any one of those days?—Yes, if his hours of work exceed 54, but we do not often find that happenings. The attendance is very poor.

**D-1051.** Do you limit the number of hours you allow them to remain in the pit?—If in the first five days of the week they look like exceeding the number of hours permitted per week they are not allowed to descend on the 6th day.

**D-1052.** Supposing we were shown a book which indicated that 47 to 58 men were raising about 100 tubs a day, and the men have

told us that they are in the mine each day for 12 hours, how do you regulate the hours?—Only by the check of the attendance book at the pit head.

**D-1053.** Do you call men out once they have 'gone in?—No. In that case they would not be allowed to go down.

**D-1054.** Will you show us the register so that we can check that?—Yes. (The witness produced the register).

**D-1055.** With regard to the men who are unable to get tubs or to get coal, would you be opposed to the fixing of a minimum wage?—I do not think it would be satisfactory. If facilities are so bad that a man gets a very small proportion of what he might earn the raising contractor gives *khoraki*. There is not a definite rule, but it is the general practice. The allowances are made in what are thought to be bad cases. In some cases we should ourselves pay the men. A few days ago I signed a chit for *khoraki* for people whose number of tubs was deficient. That was on the west side.

**D-1056.** What would you give them for *khoraki*?—3 or 4 annas per head.

**D-1057.** If that is justifiable, could not that be regulated and the men assured of a minimum wage where they were unable to work not owing to any fault of their own?—It may be, but of course one has to take into consideration the people you are dealing with and decide as to whether it is justified or not.

**D-1058.** Some men complained to me that they had to spend more than 12 hours in the mine in order to get their average earnings. Do you think that such a man is entitled to some minimum wage?—I shall have to find out exactly what that means. The man would probably think he was justified in asking more than the average earnings. On the whole I think the labour do get the average earnings. If they become dissatisfied they go elsewhere.

**D-1059.** *The Chairman:* Do they ever make representations to you that they are being unfairly dealt with in that respect?—Yes.

**D-1060.** And you deal with them directly?—Yes.

**D-1061.** *Mr. Cliff:* Does that mean that you give them *khoraki*?—Yes, or if there is any trouble with regard to tubs or coal the trouble is looked into and put right as far as can be.

**D-1062.** Is there any difference of pay having regard to the distance from the coal face to the pit shaft?—No, because the getting and the withdrawing from the faces are separate jobs. If the loading lead, i.e., the distance between the coal face and where the tub stands, is more than the average the contractor makes an allowance.

**D-1063.** Is there any regular scale of allowances?—Nothing definitely set down.

**D-1064.** Is that at the sweet will of the contractor?—Yes.

**D-1065.** Does the Company exercise any jurisdiction at all as to the rates of wages paid?—No, I do not think so.

**D-1066.** *Mr. Birla* : I find from your daily register that in some cases the workers work as many hours as 73, 67, and 68 in a week. Is that correct?—I do not think so.

**D-1067.** If you will look at your register you will find that on almost all the pages there are records of workers working more than 60 hours?—A few work more than 60 hours, but the majority do not.

**D-1068.** *The Chairman* : Do you say there are some who work more than 60 hours?—Yes, possibly so.

**D-1069.** *Mr. Birla* : Is that within your knowledge or without your knowledge?—Without my knowledge.

**D-1070.** Then may I take it that you do not look into this daily register to check whether a worker is working more than 60 hours?—Yes, it is part of my duty to check it.

**D-1071.** *Mr. Ahmed* : If that is so, I suppose it will be within your knowledge : you must have checked the register and seen that men are working more than 60 hours?—Yes, in a few cases.

**D-1072.** How many tubs make a ton?—One and a half tubs per ton.

**D-1073.** The men told me they get  $7\frac{1}{2}$  annas per tub?—Yes.

**D-1074.** You told us you pay Rs. 2-6-0 for raising?—That is paid for getting, raising and loading into wagons.

**D-1075.** How much do they get for carrying?—For carrying the coal from the face into the tub they are paid 5 annas.

**D-1076.** That will be  $7\frac{1}{2}$  annas a ton?—Yes.

**D-1077.** And for cutting the coal they are paid about 11 annas per ton?—Yes, for getting.

**D-1078.** Do the *sardars* bring these coolies?—Yes. The raising contractor first of all has to pay what we take to be 3 or 4 annas per ton recruiting expenses. Over and above that he has to pay 4 or 5 annas per ton to trolley-men to move the coal from the face to the surface, and he probably has to pay another 3 or 4 annas for loading into wagons. He also has his staff to pay and incidental expenses.

**D-1079.** *The Chairman* : Do your workers move from colliery to colliery?—Yes, they do to some extent

**D-1080.** There is nothing to prevent them?—No; there is no restriction.

**D-1081.** What is the movement annually?—The raising contractor here has been in that position for 5 years. From the time he took the contract till now he has probably recruited 3,000 or 4,000 labour. We have at present 600.

**D-1082.** You mean that the whole labour force has been turned over five times in that period?—Yes, on the figures.

**D-1083.** Therefore the average permanency of your labour force is something less than a year?—Yes, taking them consecutively.

**D-1084.** There is a constant change?—Yes, coming and going.

(The witness withdrew.)

#### **SOHAN SINGH, Contractor's Manager.**

**D-1085.** *The Chairman:* What do you estimate the cost of recruiting to be?—4 to 6 annas per ton. I recruit them from Bilaspur. At Bilaspur I have to spend money on the *chaprasis* who are sending them down; I collect the workers; I have to keep them and feed them for three or four days there; I bring them down by train and pay their fare; while on the journey I have to feed them. That is how I spend money.

**D-1086.** Do you agree that on the average the labour force changes entirely in the course of each year?—They keep coming and going. I pay their fare coming here but they go back at their own expense. Those who come of their own accord pay their own expenses.

**D-1087.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Tell us what the men who have given evidence before us earned last week or the week before. What did Khassia earn?—(Mr. Heath, Manager:) He is a *sardar* who controls approximately 152, who, between them, raised 339 tubs, which is an average of 10 or 11 annas a day.

**D-1088.** *Mr. Cliff:* Will you send us particulars as to payments made to the men under Uma Padan Mukerjee in the week from the 6th to the 11th January?

**D-1089.** *Mr. Clow:* Do Nunias come here?—I recruit Nunias. Some occasionally come here of their own accord.

(The witness withdrew.)

#### **At Bhutdova Colliery of the Bhagirathi Ghusick Coal concern.**

Suku (Santhal), Hupna (Santhal), two miners (men) were examined and made the following statement:—

We come from Kalajharia; we live about five miles away. To-day four of us men have filled 4 tubs. We have finished our work and



we are going home. Our women are at our home. We get up in the morning and walk here arriving here about 10 or 11 o'clock. We leave at about 2 or 3 o'clock and go back home. We work 4 or 5 days a week. I have got 5 bighas of land, one cow, two bullocks and some chickens. I worked two days last week. Just now we are threshing the rice crop. We have worked in the mines since we were lads, and we have lived all our lives in Kalajharia.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. S. K. SAMUNDAR, Manager of the Bhutdova Colliery.**

**D-1090.** *Mr. Cliff:* How do you book the men going into the mine?—There is a man there who keeps a register, the underground report and other records prescribed by the Department.

**D-1091.** How do you check them in the morning?—He issues the oil and the miners go down. He keeps a rough register and enters it from that into the regular register.

**D-1092.** In some weeks this book is totalled up completely while in other weeks it is not; it was not totalled in some weeks in November. Do you pay wages weekly?—Daily.

**D-1093.** You can show us your wage register, I suppose?—Yes, it is in Bengali.

**D-1094.** *Mr. Clow:* What do you pay for a tub?—7 annas and 2 pice as commission. They used to get 7 annas a tub and 2 pice extra for one tub and other miners who came from the neighbouring places used to get 8 annas per tub.

**D-1095.** Is that for cutting and loading into tubs?—Yes. Lots of other things were given them last year. They used to get 4 or 5 annas on Saturday as *bakhshish* or extra payment. I have calculated that they are getting about 10 annas a tub, adding all the *bakhshish* and other costs. On Sundays and Wednesdays they used to get some *bakhshish*.

**D-1096.** Do you pay them for Sunday?—I pay them for Sunday as *bakhshish* and commission.

**D-1097.** *Mr. Cliff:* Do you have to spend money on recruiting?—Occasionally I do. Here is an entry in the register of 14 tubs of coal at the rate of 8 annas per tub, which comes to Rs. 7. That is paid to the miners. The *bakhshish* is also entered though it is not marked here as *bakhshish*. The *bakhshish* is paid in addition to the rate.

**D-1098.** *The Chairman:* Why do you pay them *bakhshish*. Is it to keep them contented?—Yes, to work in my colliery.

**D-1099.** Has your colliery been closed lately?—Yes, during the last week of January, when there is a festival among the miners.

**D-1100.** You do not employ any contractors?—I do not.

**D-1101.** Have these men worked for you for many years?—Yes.

**D-1102.** Do they ask for *bakhshish*?—If I do not pay them they will not work and will not come again.

(The witness withdrew.)

**At the West Niga Colliery, owned by Mr. H. B. MAWARI.**

PHILA MANJHI (Santhal), trammer, was examined and made the following statement:—

I was born here and have worked here since I was a lad. I am a trammer. I work for 6 or 7 or 8 hours a day. I have not been down the mine to-day yet, but I am going soon. I get 2 annas for each tub. I get a little *bakhshish* at the end of the week and on holidays. I get 8 annas *bakhshish* weekly. I have got about 2 bighas (about half an acre) of rice land here. I have one cow, two pigs, and some chickens; I have no goats. There are 8 to 10 of us in the gang and we get anything from 18 to 40 tubs a day. I only worked one day last week because of the Bandhni festival. The mine was closed for a week owing to the festival. My wife does not work on the mine. She used to work but she has a baby now which was born three days ago. I have not yet received any allowances in respect of the birth of the baby; I have not asked for it; I may get it.

(The witness withdrew.)

PANU (BAURI), Mistri, was examined and made the following statement:—

I am a fitter; I look after the working of the machinery. I learnt that work after working in different mines for two or three months. My father was not engaged in this work. I was originally a fireman. I get Rs. 32 a month. I have no fields. My assistant gets 8 annas a day; he works from 7 to 12 o'clock and then after an interval of two hours he works till 5. I work from 6 till 12, I then go off work for 2 hours and then I work till 5 o'clock. There is no night work in the mine, the work finishes at about 6.30.

(The witness withdrew.)

In the presence of Mr. Clow, Mr. Cliff, and Miss Power, a party of women workers who were examined made the following statement:—

We are Santhals. We live about 2 miles away. We get about 5 annas a day for carrying coal to the coking yard. We came to work

at about 10 o'clock this morning and we shall go away in about an hour's time. We have done this work for a long time. Our husbands work in the mine. This little girl (apparently aged about 14) gets 5 annas.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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LAKLI MAJIN (Santhal), woman coal carrier, was examined and made the following statement:—

I have five children. None of my children have died. My last child was born two years ago. When that child was born I did not work for one year. When I was three months pregnant I stopped work for a year; I stopped work until 4 or 5 months after the child was born.

(The witness withdrew.)

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MAKU MAJIN (Santhal), woman coal carrier, was examined and made the following statement:—

I have two children; one has died. My youngest child is 6 months old. I stopped work about two months before that child was born and I resumed work about three months after the birth. I have been here for about 6 months; before that I was at the Moslia Colliery. I get 5 annas a day. My husband is working in the mine.

(The witness withdrew.)

# BIHAR AND ORISSA.

## SIXTY-FIRST MEETING.

### DHANBAD

Friday, 24th January 1930.

#### PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon'ble 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. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Lt-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,  
I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

#### *Assistant Commissioners.*

MR. JAMES MACKIE, Agent, Eastern Coal Company, Limited.

MR. M. N. MUKHERJI, Chairman, Indian Mining Federation,  
Calcutta.

MR. SIBAKLI BOSE (Indian Colliery Employees' Association,  
Jharia).

MR. K. N. SENGUPTA (Indian Colliery Employees' Association,  
Dhanbad).

#### *Lady Assessor.*

MRS. KAMINI ROY.

#### *Joint Secretaries.*

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S.

MR. A. DIBDIN.

#### **At Loyabad Colliery.**

**Statement by BARJUMAIN, Mussalman; JIWAN, MAJHI, (Santhal);  
PARBHU, MAJHI, (Santhal); and three miners (men).**

(First miner) : I have worked 22 years at this colliery. (Second miner) I have worked three years at this colliery. (Third miner) I have worked here since I was a boy. Two of us work here permanently; one of us goes home and then returns. We work underground; we cut coal by hand with picks. The tubs are filled by

labourers. Two of us cut two tubs a day and get 14 annas, 7 annas to the coal cutter and 7 annas to the loader. If there is any stony coal in the tub we do not get 14 annas, deductions are made for shale and stone. The deductions are made occasionally, they are not made every day. One of us had one tub deducted last week out of 7 tubs. Another of us was not here last week, but had gone home. The supply of tubs is not sufficient, and so we only fill two tubs in a day. Daily there are not sufficient tubs. We do not get tubs and we have not time to fill up tubs. When we get the tubs at 6 o'clock in the evening how can we fill three tubs?—Four tubs are put down in the name of one man though it is the work of four or five men. When the village miners go away to their homes then we get sufficient tubs; it depends upon the agricultural season. We go down the mine at 6 in the evening and we are just now coming up. (It was then 10.10 A.M. Standard time). Those who go down at 6 in the morning come up from 7 to 10 o'clock. The two shifts do not stay in the mine together. When the night shift goes down the day shift comes up. So long as our work is not finished we wait in the mine until the other shift comes down. The night shift have to wait until we have finished filling two tubs. From 7 in the morning to 6 in the evening we should be able to fill three tubs if we could get the tubs. We take a little rest when we have no work to do. Until we get the tubs we go on collecting the pieces of coal that we have cut. From 10 to 12 men live in one *dhowrah* (room). Six people are living in my *dhowrah*. (Second miner): There are five people in my *dhowrah* at present. (Third miner): There are four people in my *dhowrah* including one child. There are two outsiders among those four people. We do not start work unless we have two tubs: what is the idea of our earning only 3 annas?

**D-1103.** *The Chairman*: Is there anything you wish to say to us?—There are all sorts of difficulties we have to meet. Formerly men driving used to get Rs. 3 or Rs. 3-8-0; now we get 8 annas a foot. Even if there is water we only get 8 annas a foot for men driving. We get no money when we are ill, but we get *khoraki* in the hospital. By '*khoraki*' I mean merely food. I have never heard of the trade union. We are fined: when coal commences to fall from the roof we are fined Rs. 3 or Rs. 4, and sometimes 3 or 4 annas. I was not fined last week, but two months ago I earned Rs. 3 and I was fined Rs. 3. We are all fined. We do not have to pay any money to the *sardar* or to any employee of the Company. The *sardars* get 1 pice commission per tub out of which they meet the expenses of the workers who come the first time. The Company pays that commission.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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Nonkukul and Chand Manji, two miners (men) were examined and made the following statement:—

When we are on the night shift we go to work at 6 in the evening and when we are on day shift we go to work at 6 in the morning. The time we come up depends on the tubs we get. Sometimes it is late and sometimes it is early. It depends upon the tubs, and usually it takes us 12 hours to fill up our two tubs. We work in No. 9 pit. We are both coal cutters, miners. We work in two shifts in alternate weeks, day and night. We both work under Sona *sardar*. There is a school near the *baboo*'s quarters here. Some of our children go to the school. This year I have gone home once or twice. Sometimes I go for four or five days to my home which is near Giridih. We have been paid no *dadān* (advances) for being recruited, neither have we paid any advances. We have not been paid *khoraiki*. I live in Giridih district, but I have never worked in Giridih itself. It is some distance from the bazaar where I live.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. R. FENWICK, Manager of the Loyabad Colliery and JITU RAM, Attendance Clerk at the Loyabad Colliery.**

(The evidence of Jitu Ram was interpreted).

**D-1104.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Will you show us your register (same produced). There are two men named Nankukul and Chand Manji working under Sona *sardar* in No. 9 pit. Will you find their names in the register?—(Jitu Ram): Nonkukul came up this morning at 7.20 o'clock.

**NONKUKAL**: I came up at 6 o'clock this morning. I saw this *baboo* at 6 o'clock this morning. It was daylight when I came up.

**D-1105.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How did you come to enter this as being 2.20 o'clock?—(Jitu Ram): I have got a list. I was told that these people must be marked 8 hours and must not be marked 11 hours or more. I have got that list at home.

**D-1106.** Will you go and get that list?—Yes. (Jitu Ram went away to fetch the list) (Mr. Fenwick): It is difficult to get them to turn out in this cold weather before 8 o'clock in the morning.

**D-1107.** *The Chairman*: I notice that many people are marked in the register as beginning work at 7.2 o'clock and that sort of time?—They are trolley men who are paid daily and we can get them down to time better than the miners. The *baboo* writes up this register afterwards.

**D-1108.** Is there any school attached to the mine or maintained by the mine?—There is a very small primary school; there must be about 20 children going to it.

**D-1109.** Are they miners' children?—Yes, it is open to any one who cares to go. We pay the salary of the school master.

**D-1110.** Are those 20 children as many as can be taught there?—  
In the building, yes.

**D-1111.** Then they do take up the accommodation as far as you supply it?—Yes.

**D-1112.** Is there any unsatisfied demand for education on the part of the miners' children?—No, they make no direct demand themselves.

**D-1113.** But the one school you have supplied is fully occupied?—  
Yes.

**D-1114.** We have had evidence of a demand and of their actually clubbing together to obtain education for their children. Have you tested whether you could maintain more than that one school?—I think we could. There are cases where a *munshi* will set up a small school for himself. For instance, there is one on the road-side, as you passed a crossing there and the children go to that school. He charges a small fee; I do not know what it is.

**D-1115.** Is your supply of labour generally such as you require or are you constantly short of labour?—We are short from June to September, and after September almost to the end of the year, according to the crop.

**D-1116.** Those people are really agriculturists and only come here to earn extra money?—Yes.

**D-1117.** What percentage of your labour is settled labour?—I should say about 60 per cent. are people who live here all the year round. Some are absolutely permanent, but we do not get the benefit of that labour because there are patches of land which we allow them to cultivate, and many of those are working half-time although they are permanently settled, and the other half are working on the land. They do not by any means go down the mines 6 days a week. They work a full shift when they do go down. Even in the busy times I should say our average attendance per miner would be about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  days per week. They do not work on Sundays; on Tuesdays perhaps 60 per cent. work; as the week goes on they gradually increase in attendance. The pit is open to them to go on Monday, but out of 700 miners we may get 35 down,—5 per cent.

**D-1118.** So that they could earn very much more in weekly earnings than they do?—Yes, they could. They seem to provide for their immediate needs and nothing more. Drink is a factor with some classes of miners principally the Santhals and Chamars, but not the Mahars. We have a Government liquor shop about half a mile away and you can see people there in hundreds all day on Monday and on Monday night. Then they are not fit for work on the Tuesday.

**D-1119.** Have you made any endeavours to get rid of that evil of the liquor shop in the immediate neighbourhood?—No, because if we did we should lose the labour that desire it.

**D-1120.** Do you mean it is their habit to drink regularly once a week and you recognize that?—Yes.

**D-1121.** Do you really mean you would not get the Santhal labour unless the opportunity for drink was there for them?—No; they would make it in their villages; they make it themselves.

**D-1122.** Have you attempted to teach them not to take drink?—I should not attempt it. I should not like any one to tell me I ought not to have a peg of whisky.

**D-1123.** *Mr. Clow*: The register we saw showed every man as being down for an exact period of hours with no odd minutes in any single case. That cannot be accurate?—That cannot be accurate. What happens is that the man issues the oil to a large number of people. He cannot write it all down then, but after they go away he enters it from his oil book into the register. He writes the names of a batch of 10 or 12 men. Only 8 men are allowed to travel in the cage at one time and there is winding every two minutes.

**D-1124.** The register seems to show that it is practically unknown for any one to work more than 9 hours. Is that correct, because the men tell us they work in two shifts?—They call it two shifts, night and day.

**D-1125.** Ordinarily do the men work more than 9 hours?—Some men can work 12 hours a day, not exceeding 54 hours a week.

**D-1126.** What do they actually do?—It varies very greatly. They go down from 7 in the morning till 10 o'clock. Some come out at 4 and they struggle on until sunset.

**D-1127.** The register does not show them as being down the mine more than 9 hours?—There is no reason why they should be down more than 9 hours for the work they do.

**D-1128.** Is the register an accurate representation of the facts?—I could not say. I do not keep that register. It depends on the man whose duty it is to keep it.

**D-1129.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose*: But you are responsible for this?—Yes, in a way, but I cannot be at all places at the same time.

**D-1130.** Why do miners go back to their country; do they get better wages from agriculture than in the colliery?—I do not know; I am not a cultivator; I suppose they prefer working on the land.

**D-1131.** How long have you been in the colliery?—Twenty-two years.

**D-1132.** Do you think they get better results from working on the land?—I should not say they get better results from cultivation because it is only a matter of three or four months and they come into the colliery when they have nothing to do on the land.



**D-1133.** If you paid them better wages, do you think they would go to the villages?—I should think many of them would; they wish to maintain their land.

**D-1134.** But most of them have not got any land?—No; they work for some one else. I do not know what wages they get for cultivation.

**D-1135.** Do you run your mine by means of a contractor—No, by the *sarkari* system.

**D-1136.** Which do you think is the better system?—In my experience the *sarkari* system is better for the labour and better for the colliery. We pay each man individually.

(*Baboo Jitu Ram returned, bringing with him his letter of appointment*)?—(Jitu Ram): I went to one of my superiors with this letter; I said "Am I to enter the actual hours of those men who remain down 12 hours a day?" He said "You are not to enter 12 hours a day."

**D-1137.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Where do you work in this colliery?—(Jitu Ram): First I was at No. 6 and now I am at No. 9 pit.

*The Chairman*: This letter which he produces instructs him to keep the register according to law; it is his appointment to keep the register required by the Act and it says: "Failure to do this will render you liable to prosecution in accordance with the penalties laid down."

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Asumania, Santhal, a woman, ex-worker in the Loyabad Colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

My husband, who is now dead, was a coal cutter in this mine, and I used to work with him. I had a son who died a few years ago. I have nobody to look after me. I am disabled and cannot work now. I am in this mine ever since it was started. When Mr. Lietch was the manager of this mine I used to get an allowance of Rs. 5 a month and a blanket and a pair of *sarees* a year. After the departure of Mr. Lietch I am not getting anything. I do not know why my allowance has been stopped. The children of my daughter feed me.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mokshada, a woman worker in the Loyabad Colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

I was born here and from my childhood am working in this colliery. I have no husband. I have a blind son who earns Rs. 2 a week for pulling the bellows in a smithy shop. I work with miner belonging to the Central Provinces who blasts the coal and I load it

into the tub. For filling in one tub I get 3 annas. I can fill up, and have sometimes filled up 4, 5 or 6 tubs when there are not sufficient coal cutters, but very often I do not get more than 2 tubs. Yesterday I went at 6 in the evening and got out at 6 this morning. It was all wet and I could not find any room to sleep. Last night I was able to fill only one tub. I earn up to Rs. 2 a week. I have sometimes earned Rs. 2-8-0 a week. The earnings of myself and my son come to about Rs. 4 a week, and I spend this amount in purchasing rice, *dal*, tea, etc. I spend one rupee for rice only. I do not pay any house rent. I live in one of the *dhowrahs*. I get a free supply of coal for cooking purposes. I do not know that women will be prohibited from working underground after a period of two or three years.

(The witness withdrew.)

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**Ahalya, a woman worker in the Loyabad Colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

I have been working in this mine for the last 10 or 12 years. My husband was a blacksmith working in a different mine, and when he died I came and found employment here. My duties are to carry coal from the depôt to the smithy shop. Being old I cannot work very hard. I have another woman to assist me, and we both earn 6 annas a day. I work from 6 to 12 in the morning and again from 2 till dusk. I live in one of the *dhowrahs* here. I have no children. I live alone. I do not get any blankets or cloth free.

(The witness withdrew.)

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**Sabodhi, Santhal, from Dumka, a woman worker in the Loyabad Colliery, was examined and made the following statement:—**

I came to this mine 10 or 12 years ago with my husband. My husband is a cutter and I am a loader. I have got three children. When I go to work my elder son takes care of the little boy I have now with me. I go to work at 6 in the morning and return at 10 in the night. I did not go to work 5 or 6 weeks before and 2 or 3 months after the baby was born. I got only Rs. 4 on the birth of the child and nothing else. I paid Rs. 2 to the *dai*. Myself and my husband go to work together. For cutting and filling one tub we get 7 annas. Sometimes we fill up 2 tubs and sometimes 3. We do not always get sufficient tubs. When any one in our family is ill we do not usually go to the doctor; we take native medicine prepared by ourselves; we go to the jungle, collect herbs and prepare medicines that we know. The doctor comes round the lines, but we do not generally make use of his services.

(The witness withdrew.)

**At Kirkend Colliery, owned by Indra Narayan Chandra and others.  
Mr. K. K. Baksi, Manager of Kirkend Colliery.**

**D-1138.** *The Chairman* : How long have you been Manager here?—I have been here since 1921.

**D-1139.** What is your output of coal here?—About 70,000 to 80,000 tons yearly.

**D-1140.** How many workers have you?—At present about 350 including surface and underground labour.

**D-1141.** Is your labour supply sufficient for your needs?—For the present it is quite sufficient.

**D-1142.** How do you recruit your labour?—We have *sardars* who are generally paid from the office a certain amount weekly. They go to their native places and do the recruiting.

**D-1143.** What is your method of coal raising ; do you have a contractor?—Yes, we have a contractor, to whom I pay so much a ton for raising and loading into wagons.

**D-1144.** You pay the contractor and he pays the labour?—Yes, and there is certain labour which is under our own control.

**D-1145.** Have you always used the raising contractor system here?—Yes.

**D-1146.** Do you consider that to be a better system than the *sarkari* system?—Yes; and it gives me more time to supervise the work; the work is distributed between the contractor and myself; he looks after the miners and the raising and I look after the safety and other things.

**D-1147.** Have you employed the same contractor for many years?—Yes, he has been here several years.

**D-1148.** Does he work for the whole of your colliery?—Yes.

**D-1149.** Is this a company or a private concern?—It is a private company; it is not a limited liability company; there are four shareholders.

**D-1150.** Do you control the wages that your contractor pays to the men or do you leave that entirely to him?—We give him some latitude about paying the miners, but there are certain fixed rates which must be paid.

**D-1151.** How many houses have you?—I have about 250 houses for our labour force of 350.

**D-1152.** Where do the others live?—The others generally go back to their villages.

**D-1153.** Do many come in from the villages?—Yes, all of them come from the villages. They stay here for some time and then go away again.

**D-1154.** Have you any workers who come in each day from their villages?—No.

**D-1155.** They all stay here for some length of time?—Yes.

**D-1156.** Have you any who are permanent residents here?—Very few.

**D-1157.** Most of them go back to their country for periods?—Yes.

**D-1158.** In what period of time have you a complete change of your labour force?—I cannot say.

**D-1159.** What proportion of your workers are semi-permanent and come year after year?—About 90 per cent. go back to their villages and rather less than 10 per cent. settle here.

**D-1160.** *Mr. Ahmed:* What do you pay to your contractor for coal raising?—I pay the contractor Rs. 1-10-0 per ton. But he pays the miners 8 to 10 annas per tub for raising only, not loading. The man who goes underground and fills the tub gets 8 to 10 annas. The loaders are paid according to tonnage; a loader loads one wagon of 20 tons and he gets so much per ton. He would get about Rs. 2-8-0. The tub contains 12 cwt.

**D-1161.** *Diwan Chaman Lall:* They work in batches of two?—Yes.

**D-1162.** *The Chairman:* How many tubs in a shift do they ordinarily fill?—Generally three tubs in 6 to 8 hours. I have two shifts, the day shift and the night shift.

**D-1163.** *Mr. Birla:* What profit does the contractor make per ton?—He makes about 2 annas per ton. One and a half tubs make a ton.

**D-1164.** *Mr. Ahmed:* At Dhemo Main Colliery they told us they pay the contractor Rs. 2-6-0 per ton which covers all the expenses to the contractor. You tell us that you pay Rs. 1-10-0 per ton to the contractor. I suppose your contractor does the same work as the contractor at Dhemo Main Colliery?—Most likely. But there may be local difficulties there; there may be water or gas.

**D-1165.** When was the rate paid to the contractor reduced?—It was reduced the year before last.

**D-1166.** What were you paying?—Rs. 1-12-0.

**D-1167.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose:* Then I suppose at that time the contractor's profit was 4 annas?—No; at that time the miners were getting 10 to 12 annas per tub, while now they are getting 8 to 10 annas per tub. The rate paid to the miners varies according to the length of lead, and because there is water in some of the workings.

**D-1168.** *The Chairman:* The miners are paid 8 annas and an extra 2 annas in cases of special difficulty?—Yes.

**D-1169.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is that 8 annas for cutting and loading?—Yes, cutting and loading in the tub.

**D-1170.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you any machine cutting?—No.

**D-1171.** *Mr. Cliff*: How long do they work?—Generally 6 to 8 hours.

**D-1172.** Are there periods in the day and night when there is nobody working?—There are very few hours when there is nobody working, because when the miners come out the trolley men are working the tubs out or in.

**D-1173.** The register (taking the figures for yesterday, Thursday) indicates that the night shift men went in from 21-10 o'clock to 22-30 o'clock, and they were out between 5-20 and 6-45 this morning. The day shift went in from 8-10 o'clock to 9-45. According to that record between 6-45 and 8-10 o'clock there was nobody in the mine?—The miners were not there, but other people were. For instance, this trolley man worked from 8-00 to 16-00.

**D-1174.** Are there any tram men to relieve them?—No, because if the trams are out there is no necessity for the men to be there.

**D-1175.** Does not this record of the day and night shift show that there are two periods when there is practically nobody in the mine?—Yes.

**D-1176.** Will you show us your last week's wage register?—I can, but I cannot show you the contractor's records; the contractor pays the miners. I can only show you the *sarkari* record.

**D-1177.** Is the contractor here?—Yes.

**D-1178.** Generally speaking, according to this record your miners and trammers work roughly 8 hours?—Yes, about that.

**D-1179.** What is the average load in 8 hours?—Three tubs generally.

**D-1180.** Generally speaking, do they cut the coal and load and raise three tubs a day?—Yes, that is the average; some do more; some produce even 6 tubs.

**D-1181.** Is that 6 tubs coal cutting and loading?—Yes. The miner has an assistant; if he has two helpers he will give more coal.

**D-1182.** If there are three tubs at 10 annas, there will be 30 annas. Is that equally divided between the two men?—It is generally a man and his wife.

**D-1183.** Can a man and his wife raise three tubs?—Yes.

**D-1184.** But sometimes they raise more?—Yes.

**D-1185.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Can you give the total raising last week?—The contractor is paid monthly and I will show you the contractor's bill for the month.

**D-1186.** What is the total number of men working during the month?—Generally 350 labourers.

**D-1187.** *Mr. Birla* : Can you not give exact information?—I have not added the record for the month. The contractor has gone for his records.

**D-1188.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Are you ever short of tubs?—No.

**D-1189.** Do your workers not complain sometimes that you do not give them enough tubs?—Yes, sometimes, because there are times when more men come than we can provide with tubs, for instance during February when we have larger numbers working.

**D-1190.** But in the sowing season when your labour is less you have plenty of tubs?—Yes, they generally get two tubs at a time.

**D-1191.** *The Chairman* : There is therefore some limitation to their output?—Yes.

**D-1192.** *Mr. Clow* : Do you tell us that every man and woman together fill at least three tubs a day at 10 annas a tub?—Yes, that is the average—24 to 30 annas.

**D-1193.** Why does your contractor pay people so much more than other contractors do?—There are difficulties at places; the tram line may not be near and the lead may be a little longer, or there may be a little water in the gallery and similar difficulties.

**D-1194.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : You pay 5 annas for the *hazira*?—It is 5 annas for women and pickers. Unskilled labour generally gets 7 or 8 annas.

**D-1195.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy* : When you get a lot of men you cannot give them enough work; why do you engage so many?—Because we get more coal raised. Even if we get one tub less per pair of workers, we still get a greater total.

**D-1196.** It means that the men have to wait?—Yes.

**D-1197.** That means a loss to the men, though it is some gain to you?—Yes, though it means loss to some men it means that other men are able to earn money. Some of the men think that two tubs are quite enough. If I were to prevent miners from coming down, it would mean that some miners would get three tubs but others would remain idle.

**D-1198.** Could you not have the exact number, that could work the tubs?—No, that is not possible.

**D-1199.** *The Chairman* : I suppose if you are not able to provide tubs enough for them to earn what they think are fair wages, they will

go off to another colliery?—They do not generally go because other collieries also during that time will have hardly enough tubs. During February most of the collieries are full of miners and every colliery finds it difficult to provide sufficient tubs. Therefore the miners generally think it is better to get two tubs than to get none.

**D-1200.** Do you turn away any labour that comes and offers to work?—No.

**D-1201.** You accept all the labour which comes and offers to work?—Yes; for which I have enough room. February is the maximum raising month.

**D-1202.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose*: I find from your *hazira* book that the rate for your *hazira* coolies varies from 5 to 7 annas for unskilled labour?—Yes.

**D-1203.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta*: Have you any maternity provision in your colliery?—No.

**D-1204.** Have you any school for your miners?—Yes, I have a Bengalee lower primary school.

**D-1205.** Is that for miners' children?—Some miners' children take lessons there but mostly they do not attend.

**D-1206.** Do the female labourers stay at your colliery during their confinement?—Very few; they generally go away to their native places at that time.

**D-1207.** What arrangements do you make for the female workers who remain here during their pregnancy?—No special arrangements are made; there are Indian *dais* here who look after them.

**D-1208.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy*: Are these *dais* trained?—No.

**D-1209.** Are they engaged by you?—No; they are allowed to remain in the colliery and they are engaged by the people themselves.

**D-1210.** Does a doctor visit the lines?—Not daily, he comes to the colliery every day and attends my dispensary. When a case is brought to his notice he goes to it but not otherwise.

**D-1211.**—Is it not a fact that these miners do not want English medicine?—That is a fact; Santhal miners generally do not take English medicine.

**D-1212.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta*: What is the total number of tubs you have got in your colliery?—I have got about 170 tubs.

**D-1213.** Your average number of miners is 350?—The miners are a little more than 200; I have also got surface workers.

**D-1214.** You cannot provide tubs for all your miners?—At present I can, but during one month of the year I cannot.

**D-1215.** But you have only 170 tubs?—The tubs are taken round and then again sent back to the pit and so they can get enough tubs.

**D-1216.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Can three or four tubs be loaded in one day?—Yes, but one minor is not given three tubs at the beginning.

**D-1217.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : What is the cost of raising per ton?—About Rs. 3, which includes establishment and other costs?

**D-1218.** If you ran the colliery departmentally would you not be able to decrease the cost?—Yes, it would decrease by at least 2 annas which we give the contractor as his margin, but it would not decrease more than that because there may be other difficulties. The contractor manages things which in the first instance it would be difficult for us to manage.

**D-1219.** *The Chairman* : I suppose you would require to make more payment to your office staff if you worked without the contractor?—Yes, I should have to make special arrangements.

**D-1220.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : You have no labour trouble in your colliery?—No, they are satisfied.

**D-1221.** Your output at the colliery has never decreased for want of labour?—It decreases during the periods of festival and harvesting.

**D-1222.** If you ran the mine departmentally and the 2 annas profit which you give to the contractor, or part of it, were given to the miners, would you not expect that there would be no decrease in output?—I do not think so, because when they got more wages the output was not more than it is at present. Two years ago the wages were about 10 to 12 annas but the output was the same.

**D-1223.** At that time the cost of food was higher?—Very little; in the coalfield prices are about the same.

**D-1224.** Why does the labour leave the colliery for agriculture?—Because most of them are agriculturists and have their own lands. I have asked my miners about that.

**D-1225.** They go to work on other people's land because they get better results from working on the land than from working on the colliery?—No. The miner during the harvesting period provides himself with rice. He requires money for his other requirements and so he comes here; that is the idea of the miner.

**D-1226.** Do you mean to say they cultivate land sufficient to earn their livelihood?—No, it is not sufficient.

**D-1227.** They have to come here?—Yes. A miner generally tills about 2 to 3 bighas of land and gets 15 to 20 maunds. Whenever a miner can save money he buys land.



**D-1228.** *Mr. Mackie*: You say the contractor usually has a margin of about 2 annas. Is that not seasonal?—No, that is all the year round.

**D-1229.** When labour is scarce he has to provide more inducement?—Yes; he does not get 2 annas every month; that is the average.

**D-1230.** You said you had 200 miners and about 170 tubs. You work your miners in two shifts. So that you never have 200 miners down the mine at once?—No.

**D-1231.** Therefore there are usually more tubs than miners per shift?—Yes, I have generally 100 miners in the day time and 100 in the night time, and then the 170 tubs are taken round and round until the demand is filled.

**D-1232.** How many times does each tub go in and out during a shift?—Two to three times.

**D-1233.** *Miss Power*: Do the women who are working regularly for you get any bonus when a child is born?—No. Re. 1 is paid when a child is born.

**D-1234.** Is that paid for a boy child or for both a boy and girl child?—Both.

**D-1235.** When they are off work are they paid any portion of their wages?—No.

**D-1236.** For what period are they usually off work?—About four months.

**D-1237.** Is that the average?—Yes, but I cannot tell you exactly because most of the women go to their homes.

**D-1238.** How long are the women, who do not go to their homes, off work?—About three months.

**D-1239.** How much do they pay the *dai*?—I could not tell you. Generally a woman pays 21 seers of rice for the 21 days she is confined and about a rupee or two at the most.

**D-1240.** So that the services of the *dai* actually cost the woman considerably more than she gets from you as bonus for the child's birth?—Yes.

**D-1241.** What is the cost of 21 seers of rice?—Rs. 2 to Rs. 3.

**D-1242.** Then her confinement probably costs her anything up to Rs. 5?—Yes, at the most. The payment is not Rs. 2 in all cases; it is sometimes Re. 1.

**D-1243.** Is there any special work given to women when they return after child-birth and are still nursing their child?—There is no special arrangement for them, but they generally go picking on the surface and that is very light work.

**D-1244.** Do you make any special arrangements for a nursing mother?—No.

**D-1245.** She may be going down the pit with her husband?—That is not generally allowed.

**D-1246.** Have you a definite rule?—I have no definite rule but the men do not allow them to go down. I have never seen a woman with a small child working down below.

**D-1247.** Is the woman at liberty to choose what work she will do?—Generally she is given picking work during that period.

**D-1248.** You said you had a school on the colliery. Is that a school run by the colliery?—Yes; the Pundit gets some wages from the colliery and from the local board.

**D-1249.** He is paid partly by the colliery and partly by the local board?—Yes, he gets Rs. 15 from the local board and about Rs. 10 from our colliery.

**D-1250.** How many pupils are there in the school?—Not more than 20 or 25.

**D-1251.** Do you know the total school population you have on this colliery?—I could not tell you because the miner's children generally do not go to school.

**D-1252.** How many children of school-going age, that is to say, up to the age of about 14, have you on the colliery?—It cannot be more than 50.

**D-1253.** Are the children who are attending the school all children of miners or of clerks?—Most of them are children of clerks but a few are the children of miners.

**D-1254.** Is any encouragement given to children to go to school?—Yes, we tell them it is better that their children should be a little bit educated and we advise them it is better to send them to school; but there are some people who say that if they send their boys to school they may die. We try to instruct them that it is better to have some learning so that they can keep a record of their own earnings.

**D-1255.** What is the average earning of a woman for a full day's work?—About 6 to 8 annas.

**D-1256.** That is if she can get as much work as she can do in the day?—Yes.

**D-1257.** How many days does she generally work?—Five days in the week.

**D-1258.** *Mr. Clow:* Do you say these men here get 15 annas a day?—Yes.

**D-1259.** If I ask these men who are standing around, do they all get 15 annas a day?—No, these are not miners. The miners generally give three tubs and get 24 to 30 annas. They sometimes divide the money equally between them and sometimes two-thirds and one-third, that is, 12 to 15 annas a day.

*Mr. Clow:* That is much more than anywhere else.

**D-1260.** *Mr. Birla:* You distributed a statement in writing in which you say that the male worker gets Rs. 1-8-0. What do you mean by that?—I mean not only the miners but trolley men and other people as well. That is the average.

**D-1261.** The average is Rs. 1-8-0 a day?—Yes.

**D-1262.** *Diwan Chaman Lall:* You first of all stated that the miner makes 15 annas?—I said they generally get 30 annas between the two of them.

**D-1263.** In the statement you say the daily earning of an underground male worker is Rs. 1-8-0. How do you reconcile those two statements?—It is about Rs. 2 for the two workers, male and female.

*Diwan Chaman Lall:* Here is the contractor who has his clerk with him, with his daily sheet showing the number of tubs and so on.

(Read out from the register.)

Name of the gangman.	Amount of work done.	Day.
Balumahath.	16 tubs.	Thursday last week.
	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ tubs.	Friday „
	20 tubs.	Saturday „

**D-1264.** Will you tell us the number of men who worked under that gangman during those three days?—As the gangman is not present here it is not possible to give that information.

**D-1265.** Let us take a man who is present?—Yes. Chakku Sow, gangman, did 13 tubs and 10 tubs on Thursday and Friday respectively; he did not go down on Saturday.

**D-1266.** How many men were working under you, Chakku Sow?—(Chakku Sow): Five men, including myself, were working.

**D-1267.** How much did you get for a tub?—As. 7.

**D-1268.** You said that it comes to As. 10 a tub?—(Manager): As. 10 is a special rate. If there are difficulties in the working, then a special rate is given.

**D-1269.** The ordinary man does not get it?—No; the rates vary.

**D-1270.** *The Chairman:* What is the lowest standard rate?—As. 7 a tub for those who cut pillars.

*Diwan Chaman Lall*: You said a little while ago that the lowest figure was As. 8, and now you say it is As. 7.

(The witness withdrew.)

CHAKKU SOW, Gangman, in the Kirkend colliery was examined and made the following statement:—

I cut pillars. I go down at 7 or 8 in the evening and come up at 7 or 8 in the morning; after the sun sets I go down and when I come out of the mine the sun has already risen. I went last night at 7 o'clock. When I came out this morning the sun had already risen.

(In the register Chakku Sow is marked No. 46. On the 23rd, according to the register, he went down at 22-40 and came up this morning at 6-55.)

(The witness withdrew.)

BITHAL, Muchhi,  
SOBHI, Musahar, and  
LEDOU, Dosadh;

workers in the Kirkend colliery were examined and made the following statements:—

(BITHAL). I am a *khalasi*. I work the engine.

(SOBHI and LEDOU): Both of us are loaders, working on the surface. Four of us work in a gang. We get only 7 pice per ton ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  tubs). To fill one wagon it takes us 12 hours, and we work 12 hours a day. The capacity of the wagon is anything from 20 to 25 tons. The contractor pays us. We work for five days in a week, and we get about Rs. 2-8-0 per head per week. There is no work on Sunday.

(BITHAL): I get Rs. 17 a month. I work 8 hours a day. I get a holiday a week when the engine is stopped. In my *dhowrah* four members of my family are living.

(SOBHI): In my *dhowrah* four of my children, my wife and myself live.

(LEDOU): In my *dhowrah* six members of my family are living. No outsider is living in my quarters. My wife works in the picking department. Sometimes when there is no coal to load there is no work. I have been working in this mine for the last 12 or 14 years.

(SOBHI): I am working in this mine for the last 8 years.

(BITHAL): I have been working in this mine for the last 14 years. None of us have any land.

(SOBHI and LEDOU): We have never worked underground and we do not want to work underground. We are afraid of accidents. We remain here for 6 or 7 months in a year and go home for three or four months. During our stay in our village we work as agricultural labourers. We get no advance from the management here. We cannot work for six days in a week because the men who work underground do not work for six days, and there is no coal to load.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

In the presence of Sir Alexander Murray, Mr. Birla, Miss Power (Commissioners), Colonel Russell (Medical Assessor), and Mrs. Kamini Roy (Lady Assessor),

KOLLI, woman worker, holding a child (with another woman worker), was examined and made the following statement:—

I work as a loader above ground; I load the railway trucks; I fill the basket and my husband carries the basket and loads the railway wagons. I have never worked underground. We are paid 1 anna 9 pies per ton. We load a wagon containing up to 20 tons in a day. There are 9 or 10 people loading one truck. Generally from 10 to 12 men load a wagon and then divide the money amongst so many men. I and my husband get 14 pice a day; that is 3 annas 6 pies a day. There is not sufficient work. If I could get sufficient work I should make more money. When I get more work we make 4 annas per head. My child here is 3 years old; she has been ill. I have had no children since this one. I was one month off work before this child was born and one month after it was born. I got nothing from the Company when I was not working. When the baby was born I got nothing. I had the baby on the colliery premises. I had a *dai* to attend me and I had to pay the *dai* Rs. 4. I gave the *dai* rice every day she was with me; as long as she stayed in the house she got her meals with us with the family. The *dai* lives in lines No. 5. I live in the lines. I have no land. I am paid weekly. The contractor's *baboo* gives me my pay; I am a contractor's woman.

(The witness withdrew.)

(This concluded the evidence taken at Kirkend Colliery.)

**Mr. P. C. BOSE, Secretary; Mr. B. MITTER; SHANI GHERIA (a woman miner); CHOTAN KORA (a miner); GOBINDA GORAI (pumpman); representatives of the Indian Colliery Employees' Association, Jharia.**

**D-1271. The Chairman:** Mr. Bose, when was your Association founded?—In 1920.

**D-1272.** What is the membership of your Association?—About 2,000 at present.

**D-1273.** Has that number been pretty uniform during the 10 years of its existence?—No. The Association has a chequered history. It was started in 1920 and it had its office at Dhanbad under some pleaders. In 1921 there was a trade union congress at Jharia. After that congress the Association ceased to exist. In 1923 it was revived and went on with a membership of 200 to 300 up to 1924 and it again collapsed in 1925. I joined the Association towards the end of 1925. There was some good work done in 1926 and the membership rose to about 1,500 when it was first affiliated with All-India Trade Union Congress. It increased still further in 1927 when we did some welfare work and gave some lantern lectures to the miners. Now the membership stands at 2,000. But we could not collect subscriptions regularly although about 15,000 miners are willing to pay their small subscriptions. We cannot go to the spot for collecting subscriptions. So that 2,000 is the actual number of people from whom we have collected subscriptions; although we have the names of other miners on our list we do not count them as members.

**D-1274.** Do I take it that 2,000 miners paid their subscriptions last year?—Yes.

**D-1275.** Do they pay once a month or once a year?—The miners pay through their spokesmen or their *sardar* one pice a week. They are irregular in their payment. The other outdoor staff, the skilled labour pay 2 annas a month. They are regular in their payment. The clerks are also members of the Association and they pay 4 annas a month.

**D-1276.** Out of these 2,000 members, taking last year, how many of them were miners and how many were members of the clerical staff?—At present there are about 1,500 miners and 500 others from the clerical staff and skilled workmen.

**D-1277.** Has your Association been registered under the Trade Unions Act?—Not yet. We appointed a committee to frame rules and regulations in conformity with the requirements of the Trade Unions Act. That committee has not yet done its work. We are trying to have it registered.

**D-1278.** You say in your memorandum that in your view recruitment of labour is no longer necessary now. Would you like to explain that a little further?—There is plenty of labour in the coal areas. Many of them are unemployed. Some are recruited from here to Assam and other places. Therefore it is unnecessary to recruit more labour for work on the coalfields. The Chief Inspector of Mines also has made a similar observation and stated that at present the mines are over-manned; the miners do not get enough tubs and have to wait for 10, 12 and 14 hours before they get sufficient number of tubs.

**D-1279.** Is that due to the closing of a number of mines owing to the recent depression of the industry as a whole?—It is partly due to that.

**D-1280.** You have told us that about 300 collieries have been closed within the last several years. Those I take it, are the small ones employing a small number of men?—Not very small collieries. In one of them there were 400 people working. It has gone out of order; the surface has subsided and no one is working there. Only one man is stationed there to look after the materials.

**D-1281.** How many men have been affected by the closing down of these small collieries?—I cannot say accurately.

**D-1282.** Would it be 2,000 miners, over all these collieries?—It will be more than that; I have no accurate figures.

**D-1283.** According to the figures that we have the total number of miners employed has remained fairly steady, so that presumably the other collieries have been employing more men?—Yes, it may be.

**D-1284.** In your memorandum you refer to a system of paying commission to the supervising staff on surplus stock. You say that the system is to be deprecated. Would you explain what you mean by paying commission on surplus stock?—Every colliery has got a number of tubs of their own sizes; some are 14 cwts., some 16 cwts. and some 18 cwts. When these tubs are overloaded the coal raised will be more than 14 cwts. On the surplus thus raised the contractors and the supervising staff get a commission.

**D-1285.** You mean paying a commission to the staff on the surplus raised over measurement?—Yes. The Company also gains by it because they need not pay the full rate.

**D-1286.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* How does the Company gain by this; do they not pay the full amount?

*Mr. Mackie:* The Company pays the contractors on the despatches whether there is surplus or not.

**D-1287.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* So that the Company pays the amount fully; it may be that the men do not get it, but the *sardars* and others get it?—What Mr. Mackie says applies only to collieries where there are raising contractors. In such collieries the contractors and the supervising staff get the benefit of the surplus coal raised this way.

**D-1288.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* But not the Company?—In collieries where there are no raising contractors the company gains. But the position of the miners in both types of collieries is the same. They lose. They are forced to overload at the risk of their tubs being cancelled completely.

**D-1289.** *The Chairman:* If there are short tubs they are fined, they are compelled to overload and they get no payment for the surplus?—Yes.

**D-1290.** With regard to housing you remark that it is very unsatisfactory?—Yes.

**D-1291.** I suppose you are acquainted with the Jharia Mines Board of Health. Do you think that the work of the Board has been good?—We have said that the houses are up to the standard of the Jharia Mines Board of Health, but they are quite insufficient for a family to live in.

**D-1292.** Would you like to see the standard raised?—Yes. There should be more room for the people. At present they have only one room for cooking, sleeping and so on.

**D-1293.** You make some remarks about the infant mortality in the coalfields. Could you say how many women leave the collieries to go back to the villages at the time of confinement?—I think the majority of them do so. It may be 75 to 80 per cent.

**D-1293a.** Does the woman come back after 3 or 4 months with a small child with her?—Yes, they do that.

**D-1294.** So that if a child died before it was an year old it would be counted as a death in the colliery village whereas the birth has been counted in the country village. Would not that be so?—Yes, it will be so.

**D-1295.** Therefore in so far as the majority of women go back to their villages for confinement the figures that we have would be of doubtful validity if the birth is registered in one place and death in another?—If the child was all right for some time after its birth and if it died after the mother came to the colliery it must be assumed that it was due to the mother's work in the colliery.

**D-1296.** I am suggesting that the proportion between the births and deaths in that case is not accurate?—No, it is not accurate.

**D-1297.** You also make some remarks about the drinking habit of the miners. What have you to say as to the facilities Government affords for the miners to drink? Do you think that they should be reduced or that it is necessary for some of these miners to drink?—Speaking personally I do not think that it is necessary for these miners to drink, but they have been accustomed to it. The only way is to reduce the quantity consumed gradually and close the liquor shops one by one.

**D-1298.** You know of course that the recent amendment of the Indian Mines Act provides for a system of shifts coming into operation in April this year. Do you think that there will be an improvement and presumably an end to the working of very long hours underground?



—Yes, if it is rigorously observed. Even now there is a limit of 54 hours for work underground I do not think it is observed strictly. The miners have to wait for 10, 11 and 12 hours a day before they get sufficient tubs. The total works out to more than 54 hours a week.

**D-1299.** Are you aware of collieries where the miners work 6 days a week?—Yes, there are collieries where they work 6 days and 7 days a week, but generally they work 5 days. On Sundays and Mondays they do not work. The whole of Sunday they are engaged in receiving payment; the last man perhaps receives his wages at 6 o'clock in the evening. On Monday they are engaged in shopping. But on occasions of necessity they work on Sundays and Mondays also.

**D-1300.** Dealing with wages you say: "Reports from many collieries are also received to the effect that payment is not made even after two or three months of the time of work." I suppose the reports are received by your Association?—Yes.

**D-1301.** Could you give us instances of such collieries?—I have a list of them, but I do not think it will be proper for me to disclose their names.

**D-1302.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Could you not give their names?—One colliery here has been habitually delaying payment for two or three months for the last 2 years. That has gone into liquidation recently during the last 2 months.

**D-1303.** Which collieries are not going into liquidation but are making a practice of delaying payment for two or three months?—In the collieries on the Jumagara side the skilled labourers do not get their wages regularly every month.

**D-1304.** *The Chairman*: Perhaps you would be good enough to send us a list of collieries where payment of wages is delayed for more than a month?—Yes, I will make out a list and send it on to the Commission.

**D-1305.** *Mr. Cliff*: Will that include the colliery that has gone into liquidation?—Yes, that will also include the south Kujama colliery which has gone into liquidation.

**D-1306.** *The Chairman*: It follows from what you have said that you are in favour of legislation regarding prompt payment of wages?—Yes, I am.

**D-1307.** Dealing with the question of trade unions you said that your Association is not recognized by the employers, and that you have not got your Association registered as a trade union. Apart from it being recognized by the employers do you or your officials come into contact with the managers of individual collieries where you have grievances to represent? Are you yourself received if you go to a colliery by the manager?—It is different with different collieries. Some

do not put any obstacles in my way; others put much hindrance in my way. I went to a colliery to look into the condition of a man who was sick and could not pay his market debts. I was practically driven out of the colliery. I went to another colliery to collect subscriptions during office hours but I was ordered to go out. As a rule we are not recognized and we are not allowed to go and collect subscriptions from collieries.

**D-1308.** That is rather another question. If you write to the manager of a colliery representing something that you considered to be wrong is your letter replied to?—Nowadays we get replies to our letters. But there are letters on our record from managers where they have said: "Do what you like; we are not going to reply to your letters."

**D-1309.** You tell us that things are rather better now?—Things are improving, I admit.

**D-1310.** *Mr. Clow:* In your memorandum dealing with recruitment you refer to the arrangements by which *zamindars* exercise compulsion over miners to work in certain mines and you say also that "some of the colliery owners also have acquired *zamindari* rights to compel the labourers living in their *zamindaris* to work under them in their own collieries." Could you give us any specific instances of that?—The Bengal Coal Company have got a *zamindari* on this side and they compel the people to go to their collieries to work.

**D-1311.** Did they actually acquire the *zamindari* rights for recruitment?—Yes, they did.

**D-1312.** Do you know of any other instances?—I can cite the instances of the East India Coal Company, the Martin and Company and the Equitable Coal Company.

**D-1313.** Do the East India Coal Company still hold the villages that they acquired for that purpose?—Yes.

**D-1314.** In your memorandum you say that there is unemployment among miners. Mr. Mitter in his memorandum dealing with "methods of recruitment" refers to scarcity of labour. We have had complaints from colliery owners also that there is scarcity of labour. If there is scarcity how can there be unemployment?—I do not think Mr. Mitter says that there is scarcity of labour. He only observes that if conditions are made comfortable and attractive for the miners there will be no difficulty. He does not say that scarcity actually exists. Even if there are plenty of miners there is difficulty felt in times of harvest and sowing and if these facilities are given to the miners they will permanently settle on the coalfields. That is what he means.

**D-1315.** Does your union take up workmen's compensation cases?—We have contested a number of cases.

**D-1316.** Have you been successful?—We took one case to the Patna High Court, but we were defeated. The Company went into

liquidation in the meantime. The Company was all right when the case was proceeding in the Dhanbad Court; we lost the case in this court; but when we took the matter up to the High Court the Company went into liquidation. Even if we had won the suit it would not have been of any use to us.

**D-1317.** *The Chairman:* Was that a case of death?—It was a case of serious accident—one leg damaged.

**D-1318.** Are you aware that a mere plea of misadventure is not a defence? You do not have to prove that the employer was directly responsible for the accident?—If they can prove that the workmen went into a prohibited area they are not entitled to compensation.

**D-1319.** What do you mean by misadventure?—They say that the miner cut coal from a difficult place which was prohibited and was clearly marked as a prohibited area.

**D-1320.** In the opinion of your union although the miner infringes the regulations of the mine he should be entitled to compensation from the employer?—If it is a serious accident the employer should be liable. Why are the supervisors there in the mines? The miners are illiterate and it is the duty of managers and under-managers to put them in the proper way.

**D-1321.** In your memorandum dealing with "mines inspection" you say that there is a widespread impression not altogether unfounded that false prosecutions are conducted against the poor workers by the mines inspection staff at the instance of the management. Can you substantiate that statement?—I have no cases on record. But such cases have come to my notice in the past. An accident takes place in a particular spot. Immediately the management gets the place fenced and later on plead that the miner went to a prohibited place and got injured. The fencing is easily done; it takes less than half an hour. When the Inspector goes there the next day he sees it fenced and naturally believes that the miner disobeyed the regulations of the employers.

**D-1322.** You do not mean to suggest that mines inspection staff knew that the case was a false one?—No, they do it at the instance of the management. The management wants to evade the liability by fencing the place after the accident occurred.

**D-1323.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Why do you prosecute a man who gets injured?—For violating the regulations. Further he does not get his compensation.

**D-1324.** You have no record of these cases?—No, I have none on record. But I have had to contest several cases like that.

**D-1325.** Have you won any case?—Not all cases. It depends on the witnesses.

*The Chairman:* We shall pursue the matter with the Chief Inspector of Mines.

**D-1326.** *Mr. Birla:* With regard to unemployment have you come across many cases of miners, loaders and so on who have got work only for 2 or 3 days in the week and have to remain idle for the rest of the week?—There are no such cases in the Jharia field at least.

**D-1327.** You think that the collieries do not have more men than what they actually require?—Sometimes they get a greater number of miners. They raise the coal and stack them. If there is no place to stack them they are dismissed. As far as I know there is no such under-employment of men.

**D-1328.** You do not say that it is a deliberate policy of the employers to keep more men on the staff so that in times of scarcity they might not feel any trouble?—I do not think it is a deliberate policy of the owners.

**D-1329.** How do you suggest will the establishment of an employment bureau help to solve the problem of unemployment?—The coal-fields are very extensive. Ranigunj field is 500 square miles and Jharia field is 125 square miles; It is difficult for miners seeking work to know where work is available; nor can the owners seeking men know where men are available. A central agency will put the two together and solve the problem.

**D-1330.** You think that the supply of labour is equal to the demand and that there is no scientific distribution of labour?—Yes.

**D-1331.** Do you know of mines where they do not employ contractors?—Yes. There are mines which do not employ contractors.

**D-1332.** Are the workers in such mines in a better position than those in contractor collieries? Do they, for example, get higher wages?—No, I cannot say that.

**D-1333.** What is the disadvantage under which labour suffers with contractors?—If the miners are in direct touch with the owners, in times of prosperity they would raise the wages at once. But where there is an intermediary contractor this is not possible. 80 per cent. of the raising work is done by contractors with the result that they set the standard for wages, and even the collieries which have no contractors do not raise their wages above this level.

**D-1334.** You say that the condition of workers in mines not employing contractors is the same as that of those in which contractors are employed. How then can you improve the condition of the miners by simply abolishing the middlemen contractors?—These middlemen serve no useful purpose; they take a portion of the earnings of the industry which might as well go to the miners.

**D-1335.** Are you in favour of reducing the actual working hours in the mines?—Yes, we have demanded that this should be done.

**D-1336.** You also say that although according to law they should not work more than 54 hours underground they are actually working

more. Do they actually work all the time, or do they have to wait?—They do not actually work all the time, but they have to wait for a long time. They do not get facilities for work.

**D-1337.** How many hours' actual work do they do?—6 or 7 hours a day.

**D-1338.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How much coal will one man raise in one shift?—2 or 3 tubs of coal of 14 cwts. to 16 cwts. each.

**D-1339.** *Mr. Birla*: If the number of hours were reduced then the work turned out by them would become, still less?—If proper facilities were given they would do more even in less hours. They will finish their quota much earlier. But at present they have to wait a long time for tubs and when they get the tubs they speed up the thing and accidents occur as a result.

**D-1340.** Do you agree that reduction in working hours must as a matter of course mean increase in cost of production?—No.

**D-1341.** Do you mean to suggest that wages should be reduced proportionately?—The miners are paid on the piece work system. Given better facilities they would do the same amount of work or even more within the limited time. I know of a miner who used to cut more than 5 tubs of coal a day, that is more than 2 tons.

**D-1342.** You think that if the hours were reduced the efficiency of the workers would increase?—Yes.

**D-1343.** And there will not be an increase in the cost of production?—There will be no increase.

**D-1344.** *Mr. Joshi*: In your memorandum you say that the miners are paid so much per tub of coal of various sizes without any standard. Is there no standard tub?—No.

**D-1345.** What is the difference between the various tubs?—The tubs are of various sizes; the minimum is 12 cwt. and the maximum is 1 ton.

**D-1346.** Would you prefer that the miners were paid by weight?—Yes, I prefer weightment.

**D-1347.** In your memorandum you say that "there are still many collieries in the Jharia coalfield which have not yet taken connection for filtered water. Could you give us specific instances?—I think collieries on the eastern side of the railway line have not taken any connection at all for filtered water. The workers there drink the impure water from wells and tanks.

**D-1348.** Is the Board of Health concerned with that area also?—Yes. They insist on taking connections for pure water supply, but every year they are giving them grace for another year. And this has been going on for the last several years.

**D-1349.** The Board of Health knows this and yet tolerates this?—Yes, that is so.

**D-1350.** I suppose you are aware that under section 10 of the Mines Act there are Mining Boards and Committees appointed. Are you aware that on the Mining Board the miners are not represented at all?—Yes, I am aware of that.

**D-1351.** Has your union considered that question?—We have been passing resolutions and sending them to Government for action.

**D-1352.** Would you like that the miners should be represented on the Board?—Yes, certainly.

**D-1353.** Section 11(c) of the Mines Act requires the local Government to nominate representatives of labour to the Committees appointed under that section. Do you know of any representatives of workers nominated by the local Government?—No. The only nomination we got was in connection with the enquiry into the Mudidih accident. Beyond that we have no knowledge of any other Committee.

**D-1354.** You do not know who represents the workers' interests at all?—I do not know.

**D-1355.** Would the workers be willing to have a sickness insurance scheme?—Of course, yes.

**D-1356.** If necessary would they be prepared to pay a contribution to a sickness insurance fund?—Their wages are so low that even if they are willing to pay they cannot pay anything. They are at present unable to pay their house rent and so on. I think the employers should contribute for the workers also.

**D-1357.** I shall put it to you this way. Suppose the workers were given a choice between paying a small contribution and having the benefits of a Sickness Insurance Fund and paying nothing and having no Sickness Insurance Fund at all: which would they prefer?—I think the workers would certainly prefer to pay a small contribution and have the benefits of the Fund.

**D-1358.** With regard to old age pensions, would workers go on strike if Government were to levy a contribution from them on this account? Would you yourself ask your men to go on strike?—I do not think the workers will go on strike if such schemes which are in their interests are introduced.

**D-1359.** *The Chairman:* Are you quite convinced that they will understand the series of deductions from their wages?—Yes, they will understand.

**D-1360.** *Mr. Joshi:* Some deductions are made even now from their wages and they have not gone on strike on that account?—Yes, deductions are made for festivals, fines and so on. I have heard some complaints about them, but they are not serious.

**D-1361.** It is stated in some quarters that large amounts are sent by money orders from the mining areas thereby implying that the wages of miners are good and they are able to save something to send to their homes. Do you know that these amounts are actually sent by the miners?—My idea is that these figures are taken from the post office. The post offices are in the towns and the merchants, clerks and skilled labourers send their money home by money order. The only one section of miners who send money home is the Bilaspur miners, many of whom come here single and do not bring their families with them.

**D-1362.** It is stated in many of these statements that latrines are not provided on the mines because the miners do not like to use them? What is your opinion about it?—Unless latrines have been actually built we cannot say anything definite about it. I am sure that the workers will use them if they are cleaned regularly. The people living in the towns are at present using the latrines. I am sure if there are good latrines the workers will use them.

**D-1363.** In Mr. Mitter's memorandum he refers to one of the sources of income of the contractor, namely "the lowering of the wages of labour; the labourers have to work as they cannot go away being bound by "Dadans" What is meant by "Dadan"?—Is there any legal compulsion on the worker to work for the contractor?—(Mr. Mitter): Just before the worker leaves the village for the mine the contractor gives him an advance perhaps to clear off his debts in the village and for other incidental expenses. The worker undertakes to work for the contractor till he clears off his debt. Though there is no legal compulsion on the worker, he feels himself morally bound to work off his debts to the contractor.

**D-1364.** It is said that the workers go back to their villages in the rainy season. But do the mines themselves work at full stretch during the rainy season?—(Mr. Bose): The mines have to be partly closed during heavy rains. They cannot give full work for the miners during the rainy season.

**D-1365.** Therefore, it is quite possible that the workers leave for their villages because there is not sufficient work for them in the rains?—Yes, quite so.

**D-1366.** *Miss Power*: You said that you had 1,500 actual working miners as members of your Association; have you any women members in your Association?—No, we have not.

**D-1367.** Who is the lady who has come with you on this deputation?—She has been newly enlisted. There are no other women miners on the Association.

**D-1368.** Have you attempted to enlist the wives of the men miners who also work with their husbands in the mines?—We have not attempted to do that. Obstacles are put in our way of preaching trade unionism

to the miners. Moreover the men say : " we pay one pice as subscription, take that as subscription for our women also." However we have not made serious attempts to enlist the women.

**D-1369.** Has any attempt been made to explain to the women miners the reason behind the exclusion of women from the mines?—Yes, we have done that. We asked Government to pass a law like this. The women are perfectly willing to remain on the surface and not to work underground. Of course they are compelled to work for their wages ; otherwise they do not like to go down the mine leaving their children behind on the surface.

**D-1370.** I have questioned a good many men and women miners and, except in very rare cases, I have not found a man or woman who understood that this exclusion was to be completed within a certain period of years. You say that the majority of the women really understand this?—I think they well understand this. Messrs. Purcell and Mardy Jones asked them several questions on this point and they all said that they would rather remain on the surface looking after their children and preparing food for the family.

**D-1371.** Has there been a large number of exclusions in this area already?—This year they are beginning to exclude.

**D-1372.** Is there any system of selection when the exclusion is made taking into consideration the varying needs of the families?—Now they are excluding the women who are willing to stay away. Some women are old and do not want to go underground. Next year there will be some trouble on this account.

**D-1373.** Is it the practice for the miner ordinarily to work 5 days a week?—Yes.

**D-1374.** Supposing he worked 6 days when the women are excluded, could he earn as much as he does now in five days when working with his wife?—By working only for one day more he cannot cover all the work done by his wife in 5 days. Unless there is an increment in his pay he cannot earn as much as he does now.

**D-1375.** Dealing with weights carried by women you say that they carry 50 to 60 lbs. Is that the result of observation or have you actually weighed some of the baskets carried by the women?—I have actually weighed them and found them to be as heavy as that.

**D-1376.** Have you found any variation in the weights carried by young girls and older women?—There is no variation.

**D-1377.** At what age do they begin to carry these weights?—13 to 15 years.

**D-1378.** Do they begin as early as 13?—Yes, they do.

**D-1379.** Would you be in favour of any regulation as regards the weights carried by younger girls?—Certainly I would be in favour of it.



**D-1380.** What is the average length of absence from work of women before and after child-birth?—Those who go away to the villages for delivery generally come back after 2 or 3 months. Those who remain on the colliery generally work after one month. It happens sometimes that they work right up to the day of delivery and delivery takes place underground. Until the labour pains commence they go on working. They come out of the mine as soon as pains commence. After delivery they take some time to go back to work.

**D-1381.** Are any women employed for pushing wagons?—Yes, they are employed for pushing tubs.

**D-1382.** Is that work generally done by men?—Yes, it is generally done by men.

**D-1383.** How much does it cost to have the services of a *dai* during child-birth?—The *dais* here are paid very little—Rs. 2 to 3.

**D-1384.** Is the woman paid anything in kind?—Sometimes she is given a piece of *dhoti*.

**D-1385.** Have you come across cases of women who are regularly employed being paid a portion of their wages when they are absent on account of child-birth?—If they are absent they do not get anything.

**D-1386.** Do they get any bonus at the birth of the child?—No, there is no regular practice like that. The general rule is: no work no pay. But there are some collieries which give a fixed sum of Rs. 2 or so. I have seen that in some cases.

**D-1387.** Are there any qualified women doctors who are attached to any mines?—I have not come across any.

**D-1388.** Do you think that the women workers would use the services of a woman doctor if one were available?—Yes, they would.

**D-1389.** Where there is a trained *dai*, do they use her services?—Yes, they call her.

**D-1390.** Take the question of education. At Asansol we came across a group of workers who were paying for the services of a teacher; some of them were miners and others were *sardars* and so on. Have you come across any instance where the workers are running a school themselves because no other body maintains a school for them?—There are some primary schools maintained not by miners but by the collieries and high class employers in the coal area. The miners' children are not allowed to go there; at any rate they do not go there.

**D-1391.** Are they not allowed to go there, or do they themselves fail to go there?—The condition of the school is such that they do not find it attractive to go there. Generally the higher classes send their children to those schools; the miners' children are unclean and they are considered to be untouchables in a way.

**D-1392.** Are there cases of miners' children who would go to school if they were allowed to go but who are not allowed to do so by their

parents?—Nowadays the miners do not object to their children going to school. I know one Bilaspuri miner's boy who is appearing at the Matriculation Examination next year. He is reading in the Jharia school. And as a result this Bilaspuri miner who came from the Central Provinces has become neat and clean and has improved his standard of life. Some other miners' children also have joined the Jharia school. But as a rule ordinary miners' children do not attend school for want of facilities.

**D-1393.** *Mr. Joshi*: Is that due to the low wages they get?—If a boy has to go to school he requires some clean clothes, slates, books and so on. The miner finds it difficult to provide these materials out of his poor income. Therefore he fights shy of sending his children along with other well dressed boys.

**D-1394.** *Miss Power*: With regard to housing are there many houses which are occupied on the shift system, one set of people occupying them during day and another set during the night?—It is not so general. It happens on occasions for a short time when there are numerous miners.

**D-1395.** It is not a thing that happens regularly every busy season?—It happens casually once or twice, that is all.

**D-1396.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy*: When women are excluded from underground work the family earnings will be reduced. Can you think of any other surface occupation for women, not necessarily colliery work, which will enable them to supplement the earnings of their husbands underground?—I have thought over this question very seriously ever since this question was before the Legislative Assembly. I see the collieries purchase many stores from Calcutta such as cane baskets and so on. The women here may be made to manufacture them and some occupation may be found for them. But I have no definite idea in the matter.

**D-1397.** I asked some colliery men and women what they would do if women were excluded from underground. They say they would not leave their villages at all to go to the mines. They want to work together—husband and wife—and get more wages. It is only with that idea that they say they leave their villages and if they cannot get more there is no meaning in leaving their villages. They would as well remain behind. The Sonthals for instance, have become permanent residents here. Anyhow if wages are increased and conditions of life improved they will stay on the mines permanently.

**D-1398.** *Mr. Mukherji*: In your memorandum you refer to the migration of miners from one colliery to another and say that nowadays it is not so frequent. When did this migration stop?—I think since the War. Before the War it was frequent.

**D-1399.** Is that due to improvement in the conditions of work and increase in wages?—On the side of the collieries it must be said that

they have improved the conditions a little. Labour also has adapted itself to circumstances; they understand that there is inconvenience of one kind or other in every colliery and stick to one place only unless the conditions become unbearable.

**D-1400.** Therefore the conditions have undoubtedly improved?—They have improved now, there is no doubt about it.

**D-1401.** You say that most of the miners have become permanent inhabitants of the coalfields and that 50 per cent. of them occasionally go back to their villages?—I take them also as permanent inhabitants because they only go home on leave.

**D-1402.** Why do they go back at all?—They have some connection with their villages; they go there to see their relatives and to attend marriages and festivals.

**D-1403.** Do you mean to suggest that they have ceased to be agriculturists altogether?—Some go there to attend to their lands; but even those who have no lands go there for other purposes.

**D-1404.** You say that recruitment is no longer necessary for the coal industry. Do you know there was a serious shortage of coal raisings in November and December with the result that the Railway Companies thought of stopping a few trains?—Recently there was a great demand for coal and there was a rise in the price of coal.

**D-1404a.** *Mr. Mukherji:* That was due to shortage of coal and nothing else. The collieries wanted to raise more than their general raisings and labour was not available for them at once and that is why they felt that there was a scarcity of labour.

**D-1405.** The Government of Bihar and Orissa and the Chief Inspector of Mines say that the collieries have necessarily to spend some money on recruitment. In the light of that statement would you modify your statement that recruitment is not necessary for the coal industry?—No. I am not going to modify my statement. In connection with the establishment of employment bureaux I said that some collieries might find it necessary to recruit more men. But I have seen many miners wanting work and how can I modify my statement which is based on close personal observation?

**D-1406.** You have said that some miners are compelled to leave for Assam?—Yes.

**D-1407.** You remember the Chairman telling us that there has been no reduction in the number of miners employed in the collieries in spite of the closing down of 300 collieries. In fact the raisings have increased in recent years. In the face of that do you still maintain that there is unemployment among the miners?—Do you mean to suggest that all the miners who have been unemployed on account of the closing of certain collieries have been employed in other collieries?

**D-1408.** Have you any figures of unemployed miners?—I have no accurate figures, but I have seen many miners wanting jobs. If the total number of miners employed in the collieries is the same as before, perhaps some collieries might have employed labourers from outside the coalfields leaving the miners already on the coalfields unemployed.

**D-1409.** You have stated that advances, *bakhshish* and various other items are deducted from the wages of miners, whereas the Chief Inspector of Mines says that not only were they not deducted but long standing advances were remitted. In view of that would you modify your statement?—I had a talk with many contractors and they have said that they deduct such items from the miners' wages. I have not said anything in my memorandum which is not based on my personal knowledge.

**D-1410.** You object to the employment of contractors in collieries, but you said just now that the terms which the miners receive at the hands of contractors are not different from those which they receive at the hands of the employers themselves. Would you therefore modify your statement and withdraw your objection to the employment of contractors?—No, I am not prepared to withdraw my objection to the employment of these intermediary contractors. They take a profit out of the industry as a whole; that can be saved and diverted to the pockets of the labourers.

**D-1411.** Are you sure that the collieries would be prepared to throw away that money?—Yes, the labourers would surely benefit by the abolition of the contractors.

**D-1412.** About 80 per cent. of the total output of coal is raised by contractors, so that this system of getting money out of the wage earners exists, according to you, throughout the coal industry?—Yes.

**D-1413.** If the contractors are abolished do you not think there will be no difference between the terms that the miners receive at the hands of the contractors and those that they will receive direct at the hands of the employers?—That is a different question altogether.

**D-1414.** You say that the contractors pay miners at much lower rates than they receive from the employers and they use tubs of various sizes. Is it not a fact that only tubs of two sizes are used in all the collieries, namely 30 c.ft. and 27 c.ft.tubs?—There are various other sizes also. But these two tubs are generally in use.

**D-1415.** *Mr. Cliff*: Do you mean to say that these two tubs are generally in use or absolutely in use?—They are generally in use. In collieries where they use the electric cutters they use one ton tubs.

**D-1416.** *Mr. Mukherji*: By these 3 sizes of tubs you mean various sizes?—Yes.

**D-1417.** Do you agree that generally they use only the 27 c. ft. and 30 c. ft. tubs?—No, I do not agree.

**D-1418.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : Are the union officials allowed to hold meetings in the colliery?—We hold different kinds of meetings; if we go to hold hygienic meetings and that sort of thing, they allow us, but if we go to hold trade union meetings they do not allow us.

**D-1419.** If workers take an active part in the work of the union are they harassed by the management?—There is no specific case of that kind on record, but there are times when such things occur and we hear of things like that.

**D-1420.** Is your union recognized by the employers?—No.

**D-1421.** Has your union requested the employers to recognize your union in order to create a better understanding between employers and the employed?—Yes, we have passed resolutions which we have sent to the employers requesting them to recognize our union.

**D-1422.** Have you received any reply to those requests?—No.

**D-1423.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : To what employers have you sent those requests?—To the employers' bodies, the Mining Federation and the Mining Association.

**D-1424.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : Do you think it is necessary in order to improve the relations between employers and employees that your union should be recognized by the employers?—Yes, of course.

**D-1425.** You have said that the contract system should be abolished. Has the contract system any demoralising effect upon the management?—In other words, does it give rise to any bribery or corruption?—It may do, but we have no personal knowledge of that; it is generally believed to do so.

**D-1426.** Are there many accidents owing to the contractors trying to increase the output?—I cannot say, because we hold the employers to be the responsible persons with regard to accidents. The Manager, who is employed by the company and not by the contractor, is the responsible person; if any accident occurs, we hold him to be responsible.

**D-1427.** But are there some accidents due to the contract system?—It may be so.

**D-1428.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Are there more accidents in the mines that have contractors than in the mines that have none?—I have no statistics as to that and I cannot say. Whether the accidents are due to the contract system or not I cannot say.

**D-1429.** *Mr. Sibkali Bose* : If the contract system were abolished do you think the conditions of the workers would be improved? I should like to remind you of the huge profits that are earned nowadays by the contractors. If that profit went partly into the pockets of the workers, do you not think their conditions would be improved?—At present the conditions of the workers under the contract system and

under the non-contract system are the same. Whether the abolition of the contract system would lead to an improvement of the conditions of the workers I cannot say. To improve conditions we shall have to fight; we cannot improve conditions simply by abolishing the contract system.

**D-1430.** Do you think the employment of women underground should be abolished immediately?—Yes; I have said so in my memorandum.

**D-1431.** Do you think the employment of women underground has an adverse effect upon their health and that of their children?—Yes, no doubt it has a great effect.

**D-1432.** Drinking water is now supplied in the collieries by the Water Board. Is that for drinking purposes alone? Is it that the workers are not being allowed to use that water for bathing and cleaning utensils, etc?—The workers use it for drinking; they cannot bathe at the road-side hydrant, but they draw as much water as they like. It is open day and night. They bathe in the tanks near about.

**D-1433.** Are not those tanks unclean and do they not affect their health?—Yes; that is why these waterworks were started.

**D-1434.** Do you not think water is wasted in the bungalows and other places?—I have no measurement of the water they use in the bungalows.

**D-1435.** Do you think the minors, clerks and staff are overworked?—Yes.

**D-1436.** Do you think education would improve the conditions and efficiency of the labourers?—Yes, of course it will.

**D-1437.** Do you think a scheme of maternity benefits is necessary?—Yes.

**D-1438.** Would your Association support a scheme by which 6 pies per ton should be levied for maternity benefit and child welfare work?—We support the scheme, but Government is responsible for levying the cess and Government will do that. We are not prepared to promise support for any particular cess without going into the whole thing with the committee of the Association.

**D-1439.** Do you think a provident fund scheme should be introduced?—Yes.

**D-1440.** Is there any such scheme now in any colliery?—There are some provident funds in collieries for the salaried workers but not for the labourers.

**D-1441.** Do you think there should be labour representation on all local bodies and legislatures?—Yes.

**D-1442.** Do you think children who cannot accompany their parents underground are sometimes given opium?—Yes, a report to that effect came to us some time ago and we protested in the Annual Report.

**D-1443.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Is any commission paid to miners for surplus coal?—No.

**D-1444.** How does the surplus coal come into existence?—The miners are made to over-load. If a tub can hold 20 baskets of coal, they are made to load 22 baskets.

**D-1445.** The entire profit derived from that surplus coal goes to the management or to the contractors and none to the miners?—Yes.

**D-1446.** Can you give us an idea of the income and budget of a miner?—The earnings of a pair, a man and woman, are generally Rs. 4-8-0 to Rs. 5 per week. The miners of this eastern part of the country I have seen purchase generally Rs. 2 worth of rice; those who belong to what is called the up-country, or western side, purchase more flour.

**D-1447.** *Mr. Cliff* : How many seers do they get for a rupee?—They generally get 12 seers of rice for Rs. 2. Another 8 annas they spend per week on oil and *dal*. Re. 1 is spent on vegetables for the week, which they generally purchase on Monday. They generally take meat once a week; they pool the money of several men and buy a goat or something like that. They purchase about Re. 1 worth of meat and liquor per week; that is 8 annas are spent on liquor and 8 annas on meat. The total comes to about Rs. 4-8-0.

**D-1448.** So that they can save very little?—They have nothing to save.

**D-1449.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : What about clothes?—To buy clothes they get into debt and when the debt is too pressing they economize on their food. There is a typical woman miner here and she can say what her conditions are.

**D-1450.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Do they borrow money to meet emergencies?—Yes, they borrow from the notorious money lenders of this area at very high rates of interest; sometimes the rate of interest is 2 annas per rupee per week, which works out at 600 per cent. per annum.

**D-1451.** *Mr. Ahmed* : Can they repay that money?—They go on paying the interest; I do not know how long it takes them to pay back Rs. 10.

**D-1452.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : You advocate fixing minimum wages. How would you do that?—In my opinion it will be good both for the labourer and for the industry, because, so far as my information goes, the owners compete among themselves: they undersell their coal and curtail wages whenever they want to decrease the cost.

That would not be done and that would benefit the miners. If the owners find the cost is settled to a certain extent, then the rate of sale will be settled also to a certain extent; that will be to the advantage of all: the consumer, the proprietor and the labourer.

**D-1453.** You know the miners work on the piece work system?—  
Yes.

**D-1454.** Then how can you fix the minimum wage?—

**D-1455.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Could you not say annas 10 instead of annas 7?—Yes, we want to increase the tub rates.

**D-1455a.** *Mr. Khetra Nath Sengupta*: You say in your statement that the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act should be extended; in what way?—Here is the detailed amendment we have suggested.

**D-1456.** *The Chairman*: We have that fully before the Commission already in the correspondence. You replied to Government, I think, with regard to an amendment of the Bill?—Yes.

**D-1457.** *Mr. Mackie*: Do you think the high percentage of infant mortality on the coalfield is probably due to the better way in which statistics are now kept?—I think we have taken the figure quoted in our memorandum from the figures given as to those places which are under the Mines Board. Villages are included as well as the coal area; therefore if we are to say it is better in the coal area, we must say the same Board has a better arrangement in the village areas. I really do not accept your view that the statistics are better kept in the coal area.

**D-1458.** In view of your criticism of the medical facilities provided, I presume you do give us credit for spending large sums of money on medicines, medical staff and hospitals?—I think I have made reservations in my statement. There are collieries which have good arrangements, but generally there are no arrangements.

**D-1459.** What are the collieries which are not supplying medical aid?—I can give the names of those who are really supplying medical aid; the number on the other side is so heavy that it would be difficult to name them; it would be a very big list.

**D-1460.** In dealing with the question of the "extent of medical facilities provided", you make the sweeping statement that all cases except the very simple ones are treated at the civil hospital in Dhanbad. That is not the case. Have you proof that all cases are taken to Dhanbad Hospital?—I think we got that statement from the maternity scheme which was drawn up by the Chairman, Jharia Mines Board of Health.

**D-1461.** Then that is only second-hand information and I tell you it is not the case?—It may be that there are exceptions but this statement is not wrong generally. One or two exceptions do not logically make it wrong.



**D-1462.** Do you agree that a big number of collieries have schools of their own?—A small number of collieries, not a big number.

**D-1463.** And also that quite a number of children of miners and menials attend?—There are some schools of primary standard where there are some miners' boys.

**D-1464.** Do you realise that at least one company has a pension scheme for Indian staff?—Yes, the information that it has been introduced has been received very recently, but that is for the salaried office people.

**D-1465.** I beg your pardon, it is for the menials and everybody?—Not for the miners.

**D-1466.** We already have a miner's widow on a pension.—Yes, I had information only the day before yesterday about this. I do not know whether it is already in vogue.

**D-1467.** It is in vogue. You say that the rate of agricultural wages is from annas 10 to annas 12 a day; I suppose you can substantiate these figures. For how many days of the year are they able to earn these wages?—For two or three months, not more than that.

**D-1468.** *Mr. Cliff*: What months are those?—During the Monsoon and harvesting seasons.

**D-1469.** *Mr. Mackie*: Is it the case that the membership of your Association includes coal merchants, small colliery owners, pleaders and medical men?—Yes, there are some special members; there is a rule to that effect.

**D-1470.** How can they be called colliery employees?—Under the Government Trade Union Act we can get some outsiders in as members to help us.

**D-1471.** In your description of the employers' associations, you say they consist of two: one Indian and one non-Indian. Do you realise that in what you call the non-Indian association there are 11 Indian members?—I am sorry I am subject to correction, because I had no information like that before; it was our idea that one is Indian and the other European.

**D-1472.** With reference to accidents and compensation you were rather vague about "misadventure". I do not think there have ever been many cases under "misadventure" where compensation has not been paid?—There are cases; I cannot give you the number. If it is found to be the fault of the workman, he is not paid under the present Act; we want to improve that.

**D-1473.** *The Chairman*: I think what you meant was that in cases where it might be alleged to be the fault of the worker, but he was still under the control of the management, compensation ought to be paid?—Yes, that is what I meant.

**D-1474. Mr. Mackie :** In dealing with the question of the " extent of strikes and lock-outs ", you speak of a general strike and a general increase of 50 per cent. in wages. As far as I can find, it was in 1920 that the colliery owners, both the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation, awarded a 50 per cent. increment?—No.

*Diwan Chaman Lall :* It was 25 per cent., not 50 per cent.

**D-1475. The Chairman :** Do you adhere to your statement in your paper that it was in 1921?—I was not in the Association at the time. I took it from Diwan Chaman Lall's statement and he can correct me.

**D-1476. Mr. Mackie :** Can you give proof of the statement that there was a strike for 4 days?—Yes, there was three days' session of the Trade Union Congress and one more day they did not work.

**D-1477.** Do you call that a strike?—Yes. I was working at the colliery at that time; they did not work. You may say it was not general throughout the whole field.

**D-1478.** Then this is again a sweeping inaccuracy?—60,000 men did not work.

*Mr. Cliff :* May I draw your attention to the statement on this matter made by the Inspector of Mines, who was officiating.

**D-1479. Diwan Chaman Lall :** Was not there a very serious case of compensation in which you and your Association took an active part?—Our Assistant Secretary of a branch informed me over the telephone that there had been a serious accident at Mudidih Colliery. I got that information at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, but the accident took place early in the morning. I at once spoke to the Chief Inspector of Mines on the telephone. He said : Yes, there was an accident. I asked his permission to visit the place, but he told me it was not within his jurisdiction to give me permission, that I must have permission from the colliery manager. I was then Secretary of the Association. I telephoned to the General Manager of the colliery but could not get him. On the next day early in the morning I again telephoned and then I went to the place. I met the General Manager there, but he said he could not give me permission unless I got permission from the head office at Calcutta. I said it would be quite useless for me to see the place after three or four days, so that it was better for me to go away without seeing it. So I came back. The Government then started the enquiry committee. We met the Government officers and wrote a letter to the Government; the Government allowed two of our members to sit and watch, but not to take part in the proceedings. After that I left India for 3 or 4 months. Two of our members attended the committee. The committee finished its work and submitted its report to the Government, but the Government did not publish the report for about 6 months. On no other committee have we been able to send our representatives. Whenever there is a serious accident, in accordance with the Mines Act the

Government nominates members and appoints a committee of enquiry. The law is that after 6 months there can be no prosecution so far as we know. There was no prosecution; it was really hushed up.

**D-1480.** *Mr. Clow* : The sitting of the committee did not prevent any dependents from filing a claim under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No. Some of them got compensation afterwards.

**D-1481.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : What was the Government's finding on the committee's report?—The management was certainly in fault.

**D-1482.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Are you in favour of a comprehensive revision of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Yes, I have submitted a report.

**D-1483.** In answer to Mr. Mukherji you said there has been some improvement in conditions. Are you aware that "Wages and Prices", a Government publication, states that the miners' wages in 1897 were Re. 0.54 per day, while in 1920 they were Re. 0.57 per day, and according to your statement the wages are less than that to-day. According to you wages are now less than 8 annas per day, because you say wages are Rs. 4-8-0 for two persons for a week. Has there been any improvement, if those figures are correct?—What I meant by improvement was that housing and water-supply had improved.

**D-1484.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Is it your experience that where housing has improved there has been more permanency of labour?—Yes.

**D-1485.** In the matter of education has there been any considerable improvement since the holding of the Trade Union Congress here in 1921?—Since that time, as far as I know, two or three schools have been really earnestly started; that is all.

**D-1486.** Are you aware that at the time you were being referred to, the general strike in 1921, a demand was put forward on behalf of the workers for a 25 per cent. increase?—Yes.

**D-1487.** Would you be prepared to correct your statement and say 25 per cent. instead of 50 per cent.?—Only 25 per cent. was given.

**D-1488.** Has there been a decline in wages since that period?—Yes, after that increase was given they were getting more than they are getting to-day.

**D-1489.** So that with regard to wages there has not been an improvement?—No.

**D-1490.** Are you aware that at that time, when the Congress was held here, both the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation sent messages to Government asking them to prohibit the Congress within a radius of 200 miles of Jharia?—Yes, I have stated that in this report.

**D-1491.** I will now read an extract from a circular sent out by the Indian Mining Federation: "I am also to intimate that it has

been suggested to the committee that individual action might be taken by colliery agents or proprietors, either direct or through their agents, under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure by laying an information before the Magistrate of Dhanbad calling upon him to prohibit meetings in anticipation of a serious breach of peace and danger to property. Section 144, which is subjoined below, give very wide power to the Magistrate on his being reasonably satisfied that such action is justified". Are you aware that such action was contemplated by the employers?—Yes, it was.

**D-1492.** If that was the attitude of the employers at that time what improvement has there been in their attitude since then in their dealings with your Union?—The improvement is this: that nowadays we get replies to some of our letters. Before that Congress meeting there was no union, and in the beginning nobody cared even to send a reply. Nowadays the mining officials send replies to our letters.

**D-1493.** Is there only one mine in this area where a system of pensions has been started?—Yes, that is my information and that was started very recently.

**D-1494.** The Coalfields Committee reported that as far as coal was concerned it was a national asset, but as far as the coal miner was concerned he was of secondary importance?—Yes.

*The Chairman:* That sounds rather a disjointed sentence.

*Diwan Chaman Lall:* This is the actual sentence: "Coal was a national asset", but that on the question of labour, which the Committee regarded as only of secondary importance, it has decided nothing beyond approving the system of shifts in mines.

**D-1495.** Do you, as representing the workers, regard the coal miner to be equally a national asset?—Yes, of course.

**D-1496.** Have you ever considered this question from the point of view of the conditions of life of the coal miner, namely, the nationalization of the mines?—Yes. I have thought over it. It is a very difficult question. Unless the conditions are properly studied nothing can be said definitely; but I was reading the other day that some scheme of rationalization is proposed. I think rationalization will not be possible in the coal industry for various reasons, and I think ultimately it will have to be nationalized if this industry is to be kept alive.

**D-1497.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Your point is that it will have to be nationalized in order to be rationalized?—Yes.

**D-1498.** *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Are the conditions of life and labour of the working classes in the coal mines such that legislative action should be taken to put their wages on a proper basis so as (1) to give them a living wage, (2) make education compulsory in mines and (3) place welfare work on a compulsory basis?—Yes.

**D-1499.** *Mr. Cliff:* The months of July, August and September are the monsoon season. Then is there any special reason why in the month of November the amount of coal raised should be reduced considerably below the average?—In November the workers have their festivals and begin harvesting, cutting paddy.

**D-1500.** You were asked a question which indicated that at certain periods there had been a great shortage of labour. Have the collieries offered additional rates of wages in order to attract labour at these seasons?—It happened during the boom period. Within recent times it has not taken place.

**D-1501.** *The Chairman:* Do they in some cases give some *bakhshish* in addition to the rate of pay?—Never to the miners.

**D-1502.** *Mr. Cliff:* If when dealing with labour departmentally the cost is As. 3½ per ton, whereas by dealing with it through contractors there are cases where the cost is from As. 4 to As. 6 per ton, would not a change to the departmental method mean a saving in the cost of recruitment?—Yes.

**D-1503.** Is any opportunity offered to the Union officials to test the amount paid by the contractor to the miner for raising coal and the amount paid to the contractor; have you ever been able to test those figures?—I have an idea but I have no actual knowledge of their books and accounts.

**D-1504.** Are the relations between your Union and the collieries such that they would welcome your having an opportunity of checking the figures in order to safeguard the interests of the miners?—No, we are never allowed to do that.

**D-1505.** We were told yesterday that where a miner had not an opportunity of filling the number of tubs that he could fill because of a breakdown on the railway, allowances were made to him by the contractor. Is that common?—If it really happens that the miners cannot work during the whole shift because of the breakdown of the railway they may get some *khoraki* of As. 2 per head or something like that, but that is not general; it is sometimes paid and sometimes not paid.

**D-1506.** Do you think it would be a reasonable proposition that where men are prevented from working through no fault of their own they should be guaranteed a minimum earning?—Yes.

**D-1507.** Is not that principle rather accepted in the grant of that *khoraki* allowance?—No. In a case of very great difficulty, for instance, where a man is seriously ill and cannot work for several days, he goes to the office and asks for help and gets some *khoraki* or something like that.

**D-1508.** But where there is a breakdown in the tramway and the miner cannot earn what he would have done if there had been no breakdown, is payment made to the miner?—It depends solely on

the employer, the contractor or the management; if they like they can pay him; if they do not like there is nothing to make them pay.

**D-1509.** That means there is no regular system?—There is no system.

**D-1510.** If the conditions are as stated by the employers, that the miners only work 6 or 7 hours a day, is there any practical difficulty in reducing the maximum daily hours below 12?—Our idea is that hours must be reduced to 8.

**D-1511.** Is your Association applying for an 8 hours' day?—Yes

**D-1512.** Is it your opinion that if the hours were reduced below the present postulated number of 12, the miners could do their work?—Yes.

**D-1513.** Have you any experience as to how the registers of attendance are kept?—I have no personal experience, but so far as my information goes the register is not accurately kept; it is sometimes filled up in the office.

**D-1514.** Where do you get that information from?—From any man in the colliery; even the attendance clerks sometimes say so, that they have to do that because it is difficult to keep it in order; they say "The time the men remain in the mine is not the time we are to enter in the book."

**D-1515.** Are arrangements made in all collieries that the men must pass through an office before they go down the shaft?—No, there is nothing like that; they come from their *dhawras* and go directly to the pit. In some collieries they have tokens to carry with them.

**D-1516.** *The Chairman:* Is there any objection on the part of the men to having token so that their time can be properly registered?—No, they make no objection to that.

**D-1517.** *Mr. Cliff:* How are wages actually paid to miners?—They are paid weekly.

**D-1518.** By whom are they paid?—If there is a contractor, the contractor's cashier pays them and if it is a direct arrangement the colliery cashier pays them.

**D-1519.** Are there any cases in which the contractor pays the *sardar* and he pays the miners?—There are some cases in which the *sardars* of the miners, the heads of the groups, take the whole payment and then distribute the money among the miners.

**D-1520.** Is that distribution on a regular basis according to a set standard?—Yes. The *sardars* sometimes make something out of it—their regular commission; otherwise it is all right.

**D-1521.** When you say "regular commission", what do you mean?—There is system under which the *sardars* who are in charge

of bands of men of 20, 30 or 40, are paid commission out of the men's wages, viz., two or three pice per tub.

**D-1522.** What is the system on which the payment of 2 pice per ton is based?—If a *sardar* has 20 men under him and it is found at the end of the week that those 20 men have cut a load of 200 tubs then the *sardar* gets 400 pice out of the wages of the labourers.

**D-1523.** Are there many collieries in this area that refuse to recognize your Association?—Yes, none of them recognize us.

**D-1524.** Have the employers in this area demanded that your Association should be registered before being recognized?—No; we have never received any reply from the employers' bodies. We have sent resolutions many times and written letters many times to them, but they have not replied.

**D-1525.** Do you say that neither Association has replied to your letters?—They have not replied.

**D-1526.** *Mr. Ahmed:* Do they allow any holidays with pay?—No, never.

**D-1527.** When we were examining a colliery this morning a man told us he had served for 14 years continuously and had not got any pension. I suppose in Government service in all cases they get pensions after serving a certain number of years and are entitled to get their pensions?—Yes.

**D-1528.** But no pension or gratuity is given to the miners?—No.

**D-1529.** Yesterday when we were inspecting a large colliery near Asansol, we were told that they had been paying the contractor Rs. 2-6-0 per ton, while here at one colliery we were told that they pay Rs. 1-10-0 per ton. If instead of paying this money to middlemen or contractors, the colliery proprietors were kind enough to pay it direct to the workers, do you think the workers would be benefited?—Yes.

**D-1530.** Apart from the two pice commission which the miners pay out of their own pockets, if legislation were adopted to abolish these contractors and set up public agencies for recruitment, do you think that would be beneficial?—Yes.

**D-1531.** Colliery managers have told us that the children do not want to go to school; if compulsory education of boys from the age of 6 to 11 years were adopted, I suppose the children would take the opportunity of receiving education?—Yes.

**D-1532.** From the national point of view it would be a good thing to give these poor people a little education?—Yes.

**D-1533.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Mr. Cliff put a question to you implying that if there is a breakdown of machinery the employer should

pay the miners for the lost time. What was your answer to that question?—I said it was entirely at the option of the proprietors.

**D-1534.** If the employer has his plant there, has made all his arrangements, has sold his coal for delivery say in November, and then his miners choose to go away to work in the paddy fields and his production declines from 100 tons to 50 tons, purely as the result of the miners going away, what do you think should be done?—We believe that if proper arrangements are made for the comfort of the workers the workers will not suddenly leave in that way; they would take leave and go as others do, not going all together. If they are supplied with all their necessaries and with adequate comforts they will keep to the collieries and not go back to their paddy land.

**D-1535.** You said something about the register being written up in the office and not at the pit head. I think you were in the mine yourself for some time?—I was.

**D-1536.** In the course of your experience have you come across a case of that kind?—I was not working in connection with pay books.

**D-1537.** What were you in the mine?—I was general assistant; payments were made by the cashier.

**D-1538.** May I take it that in the course of your six years' experience, you have come across no case of that sort, namely baboos writing up the *hazira* book in the office?—When I was in colliery service there was no system of underground register; it has been newly introduced.

**D-1539.** Do all the collieries shut down on Sunday?—Some collieries work if necessity arises, but usually on Sundays they are closed down and underground work is not done. The clerks generally work on Sundays.

**D-1540.** In your memorandum you say, "The Indian miners will not be found inferior to the British in any way". As a matter of fact the figures which you give there are not comparable because the figures you give for Great Britain and Japan are with reference to colliery workers above ground and below ground taken together, whereas the figures you have given for India are only with reference to workers underground. That is not a fair comparison?—I show that the daily average output of coal in Great Britain is 1 ton per head whereas in India it is 2 tons. That is quite different from the annual rate because if our information is correct, in Great Britain the miners work 6 days a week whereas here our men only work 5 days a week.

**D-1541.** In Great Britain 221 tons per man per annum are raised; as a matter of fact in 1928 in England 250 tons per annum per man were raised. Here you only raise 134 tons per person employed per annum. So that even though here they only work 5 days a week as you say, while in England they work 6 days a week, you are still very far out?—It means that we lose 52 days a year and you have to add that output.



**D-1542.** I think Miss Power suggested to you that the miners might be able to earn more if their women were prevented from working underground. As a matter of fact at the present time only about one-third of the workers underground are women?—That is so.

*Mr. Mackie :* It is 29 per cent. really.

**D-1543.** *Sir Alexander Murray :* I see from the report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India that the miners earn Re. 0-13-6 per day in December. I also see that on the average they only work 42 hours a week; if they were to work 54 hours a week they would earn a great deal more money?—We do not agree with these figures.

**D-1544.** *Sir Victor Sassoon :* The industry admittedly has not been prospering lately, so that I take it you would not like to increase the cost of production if that might lead to an increased closing of mines?—If the cost of production simply meant wages we should certainly want to increase it. We want the owners to sell coal at a higher price and pay higher wages.

**D-1545.** It is rather difficult to insist that your customer shall pay you more than he needs. We were told this morning that there was a shortage of tubs, and I asked one of the colliery proprietors why more tubs were not provided. He pointed out what appears to me a very good reason for that: he said "we cannot afford to provide tubs if they are not going to be used for the greater part of the year." I think he is right, because when I look at the figures of the number of men I notice that in July you have only produced 601,515 tons in Jharia district, whereas in March you had produced 1,103,658. The curve of production varies between those two months by as much as a million tons. Surely you could not expect a colliery to provide a lot of tubs which perhaps could only be used during two months in the year. I asked him whether the existing tubs could not be used more efficiently and he told me they could. He said: "If the workpeople directly they get a tub or before they get a tub would win the coal, and directly they get a tub and fill it would send it back, that tub could be used again and there would therefore be more actual tubs usable by the men; but the men refuse to begin unless they have two tubs by them"?—The miners do that: they do not cut coal unless they are supplied with one tub because it is their experience that if they cut a certain quantity of coal one day and cannot get a sufficient number of tubs in which to fill up the whole of the coal, that coal is stolen by the men of the next shift and they lose it; therefore they do not care to cut it.

**D-1546.** Could not they start cutting one tub?—It is not unusual in the colliery for a miner to get not a single tub during the whole shift. Miners have come out without having a single tub during the whole shift.

**D-1547.** I take it that that occurs in the rush months, January, February and March?—Yes.

**D-1548.** Would it not be the answer that during those months you have too many miners coming into the mines and that the colliery owners should not allow so many miners to come into the mines?—Perhaps that depends upon the demand for coal; they employ more men because they want to raise more coal.

**D-1549.** But they cannot raise coal if the men sit down and do not cut coal because there are no tubs to move the coal. Would you say that that was bad organization on the part of the employer?—January and February are the end of the contract year and towards the end of the contract year it is generally the desire of the contractors to get as much coal as possible.

**D-1550.** But they are not getting any more coal if the men are not cutting it and the tubs are not moving it?—They can sometimes speed up work.

**D-1551.** It must be very difficult for you or anybody to find out the real wage which a man can earn, because I was told to-day that a lot of miners only raise 2 tubs a day whereas I think you told us it is possible to raise 5 tubs a day?—Yes.

**D-1552.** So that there must be a big variation in output. Would your workpeople prefer to cut their coal quickly and get out of the mine or have a long time for cutting it and rest and smoke in the mine?—They do not like to stay underground in that atmosphere.

**D-1553.** I was told to-day that if men got their two tubs early and filled them they would not come up with those two tubs but they would wait until the end of the day smoking and sleeping and come up at the end of the day with the others?—We do not believe that; in my experience I have never seen anything like that.

**D-1554.** Do you think perhaps the miner is hoping to get a third tub?—It might be that.

**D-1555.** *The Chairman:* You tell us that, of your 2,000 members at present on your books, 1,500 are miners. I presume the other 500 consist of office staff employed on the mine?—Yes.

**D-1556.** Can you of your own knowledge tell me the total number of miners in the Jharia coalfield?—Is it correct that it is 95,000?—Yes, about that.

**D-1557.** Of that number your present membership is 1,500?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

# BIHAR AND ORISSA.

## SIXTY-SECOND MEETING

### DHANBAD

Saturday, 25th January 1930.

PRESENT :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.

Lt-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,  
I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

*Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. JAMES MACKIE, Agent, Eastern Coal Company, Limited.

Mr. M. N. MUKHERJI, Chairman, Indian Mining Federation,  
Calcutta.

Mr. SIBAKLI BOSE (Indian Colliery Employees' Association,  
Jharia).

Mr. K. N. SENGUPTA (Indian Colliery Employees' Association,  
Dhanbad).

MRS. KAMINI ROY, *Lady Assessor.*

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**At the Jealgora Colliery.**

**Statement by Nuni Manjhain, Thakuri Man'hain, (Santhal) and Lilmoni Manjhain (Santhal), women workers in the Jealgora Colliery.**

*Nuni Manjhain* : My husband was a *sardar*; he is dead now. I do whatever work is given me by the contractor. I fill the baskets and load the tubs underground. I go to work with a gang of women workers. I am paid weekly. I get Re. 1 to Rs. 1-4-0 a week. I have been working here even before the colliery was opened. I used

to clear the jungle and make a small hut to live in. Now I have got a masonry building to live in. We live 4 or 5 people in the same *dhowrah*.

*Lilmoni Manjhain*: I have two children. One died and two are living now. The last child was born here in the *dhowrah*. I stop working 2 or 3 months before confinement. I do not resume work for one year after confinement. I resumed work since six months back. The child is 18 months old now. I did not get any bonus for child-birth. I had a *dai* from Bagdigi. I paid her Rs. 5 and a piece of cloth for the 7 to 9 days that she was with me. I did not go to the hospital when I was ill. The Doctor does not go round the lines. I borrowed some money to pay for the *dai*. My husband is here working with me underground. I have not paid off my debt. I got it from a Muhammadan shopkeeper. The interest is one anna per rupee per month. I pay As. 5 a month as interest. Besides this I have other debts. I had to borrow for my food, because I was not working for some time. I owe Rs. 60 to Rs. 80. Sometimes we do not get tubs and sometimes we get one or two. I and my husband earn Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-8-0 per week. We have never earned Rs. 5 a week between me and my husband. We try to work every day. We do not work on Mondays. Coal cutters do not go down on Mondays. If others go I also go down on Mondays. I cannot go by myself. On Sundays I get my wages sometimes at 12 o'clock and sometimes at 2 or 3 o'clock. I have to wait till my turn comes. I do not pay any money to the contractor or to the *sardar*. We go at 5 or 7 o'clock on Sunday evenings or on Mondays for shopping. Sometimes I am paid very late on Sundays so that I cannot do shopping on Sundays. There is a market on Sunday and Monday every week. My husband has no land. I have no house in the village. I live here permanently. Besides the single *dhoti* I am wearing I have another torn cloth which I use when I wash this *dhoti*. I buy 2 *dhotis* a year costing Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 1-8-0 each. I manage with 2 because I cannot afford to buy more. I have heard that women will not be allowed to work underground. When I go down the mine I leave my children behind; the elder boy looks after the younger one and feeds him. I work in No. VII pit. I have been working there since the *kachi* contractor has taken up work.

We do not give opium to the children when we go down the mines.

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**Statement by Sakaram (from Raipur, Central Provinces), Karurai (from Bhagalpur District) and Jarimeya, men workers in the Jealgora Colliery.**

*Sakaram*: I have been working here for 10 years. I work on short firing. My wife is here and she works with me underground. I come from Kaspri, District Raipur. I have never been back to my village even when my brother died. The return fare is Rs. 14-18-0 for two people and I cannot save enough to pay my fare. We do work hard.

I get annas 7 per tub. I have to supply my own gunpowder and fuse, costing annas 13 a seer. We are able to save nothing. I work for 5 or 6 days. Sometimes we get tubs, sometimes we do not. We all worked last night in the mine. Today we all came out at 6 o'clock when the sahib came in and sent us up. Sometimes it is 10 o'clock when we come out. The sun is up when we come out; also the light glows red and from that we come to know that day has dawned. Last night after taking our meals at about 6 o'clock we went into the mine. It was just dark. We filled 3 tubs between three of us. The sahib came and said "The sahibs are coming, you had better go". Sometimes we do not get tubs, sometimes we do not get coal. If both tubs and coal were available we will fill 6 tubs between three of us if the lead is not long. It is not necessary that there should be two tubs in front of us; even if there is only one tub we will fill it up. I and my wife earned Rs. 5 last week. I am amazed at the amount of work I have done already, how can I do more? We want to say to the Commission that we do not get enough to eat and that some arrangements should be made for us. It is up to you to make the necessary arrangements: we look upon you as the guardians of our interests. We drink the water that drips in the mine and as a result we suffer from disease. The water is collected inside the mine and pumped up. It is then filtered, stored in a tank and supplied to us. We are not given the pipe water although there is a connection in the colliery. We did not go to the Deputy Commissioner to complain about this. None of us went there to complain about this. I do not drink. I do not even smoke. I do not know that there is work on the surface on Rs. 15 a month. I am used to work underground. A loading coolie on the surface gets a hazira of annas 10 a day, but that work is not to our taste. The drinking water pipe is turned off between 12 and 4 every day. The sweepers clean the latrines. We get our wages between 10 and 4 on Sundays. The contractor does not begin payment before 10 in the morning. I borrowed Rs. 20 from a *shahukar* in order to release my land from mortgage. I borrowed another Rs. 20 from various other people here. All of us would like to have our rates raised and given a free pass home. We would go there and return to the collieries. When we are very ill we go to the Doctor, otherwise we treat ourselves. If the rates are raised we would work harder.

*Karurai*: I have been working here for 9 years. I load the machine and cut coal. I have been working in the same mine. I am married and my wife is in my village. I do not get sufficient food then how can I send money to my wife? My wife lives with my parents in the village. During the 9 years that I have been here I went home twice. I came from Ganora village, Bhagalpur district. The last time I went home was 3 years ago. I work as hard as I can for 6 days a week. I work on Mondays also. I get annas 4 per tub. I do not know that there is work on the surface on Rs. 15 a month. That is much better work and I will prefer to do that if it is available. Both of us are willing to do that work. I have a debt of Rs. 100 which I borrowed from a

mahajan of my village partly for my brother's wedding and partly to live on when I had not sufficient money with me.

*Jarimeya* : I have been here for 4 or 5 years. I have been working in the same mine. I am married and my wife is in the village. I do not get enough to eat, then how I can send money to my wife. She lives with my parents in the village. I come from the district of Monghyr. I go home once or twice a year and remain there for 5 or 6 days and then come back. I work hard for 6 days a week. I work on Mondays also. I get annas 4 for a tub. I do not know that there is work available on the surface at Rs. 15 a month. If such work is available I am willing to take it up. I have a debt of Rs. 60 which I borrowed from a mahajan of the village.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. D. Black, Manager, Jealgora Colliery, and Mr. P. B. Dandekar, Raising Contractor.**

**D-1558.** *The Chairman* : Mr. Black, how long have you been manager here?—[Mr. Black] 10 years.

**D-1559.** Mr. Dandekar, when were you appointed as contractor on this colliery?—[Mr. Dandekar] : I started work on 1st December 1929. I recruit labour and I am responsible for the cutting, raising and despatching of coal. I receive payment from the Company at so much per ton raised and I pay the labour myself.

**D-1560.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Black, have you had any experience of mining work at home?—[Mr. Black] I started work when I was 17 years of age. I have had about 25 years experience. I was a miner, trammer and an under-manager. I have been here a little over 10 years as manager with this company.

**D-1561.** How many miners have you?—(Mr. Dandekar) : 240 men and 69 women.

**D-1562.** Did you employ this contractor?—(Mr. Black) : Yes. He was the most successful tenderer.

**D-1563.** Have you any other contracts besides this?—(Mr. Dandekar) : I am a partner of a firm of contractors who have contracts in the Gopalichuck West Colliery and East Colliery. We have other contracts also but they are run under different names.

**D-1564.** When did you come to Bihar and Orissa?—I came in 1923 and ever since that I have been connected with mines.

**D-1565.** Can you tell us from your registers how many tubs Lilmoni Manjhain (women miner) has raised during the last few weeks?—I cannot say that by a reference to my registers. Lilmoni raises coal with Telga, her husband on some days and with another miner by name

Sam on other days. My register shows the following entries against Telga :

Week ending :	25-1-1930.	18-1-1930.	11-1-1930.	4-1-1930.
Monday	...	...	...	...
Saturday	2	...	...	2
Wednesday	...	...	...	2
Thursday	2	...	...	...
Friday	2	1	...	...
Saturday	...	1	...	...

The week before he was absent altogether.

**D-1566. The Chairman :** Does that mean that Telga did not work on all the days when he could have worked?

(Telga, miner was called and examined and made the following statement.)

I have worked here for a long time. I have been working in No. VII pit. I went down 4 days this week. I did not get any tub one day. I have raised 6 tubs this week. Yesterday I raised 2 tubs, the day before 2 tubs, and on Wednesday I did not get any tubs, on Tuesday 2 tubs and on Monday nothing. Last week I went down two days only,—Friday and Saturday. I raised two tubs of coal and three tubs of coal-dust. On other days I did not go down because, there was a festival. The greatest number of tubs I have ever raised is 3 in one day. I do not remember how many I would have raised in one week. I and my wife earn Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 3 a week. Sometimes I feel pain in my hands and on those days I do not go down. My wife goes down with another man.

THAKURI MANJHAIN was re-examined and made the following statement.

She said she worked with Thakur. She did not go down this week because she was ill. Thakur had gone home since September last. Barsa has been working in Thakur's name. (The following items of work stood in the name of Thakur.)

Week ending :	25-1-1930.	18-1-1930.	11-1-1930.	4-1-1930.	28-12-1930.
Monday	...	...	...	2	...
Tuesday	2	...	...	4	4
Wednesday	1	...	3	5	5
Thursday	1	...	...	4	5
Friday	...	...	...	...	4
Saturday	...	...	...	2	6

**D-1567.** Why is there such a large number of tubs against his name on some days?—(Mr. Dandekar): Perhaps Barsa worked with more men.

(Barsa was called and examined. He said he went alone for work. Kamin used to follow him. Even she did not follow him this week.)-

**D-1567A.** Mr. Cliff: If a man went down the mine and if no tubs were available do you make any allowance for him?—(Mr. Dandekar): No, I make no allowance.

**D-1568.** Do you control the distribution of tubs?—Generally I try to get as many tubs as are necessary for the miners. But if due to any unforeseen circumstance after the work is started, the tubs fall short I cannot help.

**D-1569.** Do you stop a man from going down when you are not able to supply tubs?—Yes.

**D-1570.** Sir Alexander Murray: When did you last fail to supply tubs to anybody? How many tubs are there in No. VII pit and how many miners work there?—I have 175 tubs in No. VII pit where 125 people work during day and 125 people during night.

**D-1571.** How many times a day can they fill the tubs?—They can fill twice during day and twice during night. They can easily fill at least three times in 24 hours.

**D-1572.** Your books show some miners filling 5 or 6 tubs a day; how can it be?—Generally two or three miners raise the tubs in the name of one person—their *sardar*. Perhaps in that particular gang there were more men.

**D-1573.** May it be that in one portion of the colliery you have got a number of tubs and in another portion you have not got any?—No, we try and distribute the tubs uniformly in accordance with the requirements of the number of miners working there.

**D-1574.** How many tubs of coal on an average do you raise from No. VII pit?—About 6,400 tubs per month.

**D-1575.** The Chairman: If a man and his wife—assuming that his wife works with him—worked 6 days a week and did reasonably hard work—I do not mean extra hard work—how much could they earn?—About Rs. 7 to 8 or Rs. 28 a month.

**D-1576.** How many days a week on an average do they work? Will it be 4 days?—They generally work 5 days a week.

**D-1577.** When do you pay the wages on Sunday?—I start payment at 8 o'clock in the morning and go on till 12 o'clock. Generally the workers do not fail to come before 12 o'clock; but if they do, I pay them whenever they come to me. The miners do not come promptly and take their wages. I have to call their names twice or thrice before they take payment. If all of them were ready I could finish payment in 2 hours. Within 2 hours I could pay about 300 to 400 people.



**D-1578.** Is that the number that you actually have?—In addition to the miners and loaders I have to pay the *hazira* coolies.

**D-1579.** You could therefore make the whole payment between 8 and 10 on Sunday morning?—Yes.

**D-1580.** Could you pay the last shift also?—The last shift for the week comes out of the mine on Sunday morning. The mine is closed on Sunday morning and night. I could pay the last shift also on the same day. They do not allow me to have any balance with me. They want the wages to be completely paid.

**D-1581.** *Mr. Cliff*: Do you yourself pay the wages?—Yes. I pay them directly.

**D-1582.** Do you make any deduction for fuse and gunpowder?—There are two systems. In one case we use our machines and break the coal. The miners simply raise the already fallen coal. They are paid 4 annas a tub and 2 pice commission. In the other case there is a class of the miners from the Central Provinces, who use their own crowbars and fuse and gunpowder. They are paid a higher rate of 8 annas a tub and 2 pice commission per tub. When we pay them we deduct the cost of fuse and gunpowder.

**D-1583.** *The Chairman*: Is that because it is their custom to do so?—Yes.

**D-1584.** Do you employ men as *sardars* or *sarkars*?—Yes.

**D-1585.** Do you pay them a commission for surplus coal?—I have never got a surplus yet and I have not paid any commission to anybody.

**D-1586.** How do you pay them?—I pay them as commission of 2 pice per tub raised no matter what the weight is. We do not take into consideration the weight of the tub.

**D-1587.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If the weight is less do you not make any deductions?—I generally do not make any deductions. I warn them three or four times. I have stationed men underground to see that the tubs are properly loaded.

**D-1588.** What is the average weight of a tub?—About 13 cwts. Three tubs make two tons.

**D-1589.** Take Thursday the 23rd, day and night. In No. VII pit you have 175 tubs and you have raised 391½ tubs of coal and 66 tubs of slack. Can you in consultation with the manager give a note showing the number of men who went down and the tubs raised and so on?—Yes, I will do so.

**D-1590.** *Mr. Clow*: Do you pay the gang yourself?—I pay the head of the gang.

**D-1591.** *The Chairman*: Mr. Black, we have had two complaints made to us. One is with regard to the water-supply to the miners underground.—We do not supply them water. When they go down they take the water with them. The water-supply on the surface is turned on between 7 and 9 in the morning, 11 to 2 and 6 to 8 in the evening, because the water is not really used at other times.

**D-1592.** Is water really so expensive here?—We pay a cess on every ton of coal raised.

**D-1593.** Have you any system of maternity allowance?—No, we do not pay any maternity allowance.

**D-1594.** Have you considered the desirability of making a provision for that?—No, I have not considered that.

**D-1595.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is there any co-ordination between you and the contractor as regards the supply of tubs and the number of men allowed to work?—The contractor arranges for his own tubs and brings his own labour.

**D-1596.** I understand this contractor came here two months ago. Had you any other contractor before?—Yes

**D-1597.** You never worked departmentally?—No.

**D-1598.** You have no concern with the fixing of rates for labour and the payment of wages?—None whatever.

**D-1599.** What is your attitude towards trade unions?—I have nothing to say against it at all.

**D-1600.** Would you welcome if one was formed here?—Yes.

**D-1601.** I understand that some time ago some of the clerks organized themselves into a trade union. Have you any knowledge of that?—No, I have no knowledge of it.

**D-1602.** When a man is not able to earn through no fault of his own, does the colliery make any allowance to him? I am thinking of men who are willing to work and go down the mine but are unable to work for want of tubs and so on.—We take pretty good care to see that there are sufficient number of tubs. In No. VII pit we have 195 tubs, not 175 only.

**D-1603.** *The Chairman*: I think I am correct in saying that the tub question occurs in most mines in Great Britain.—Yes.

**D-1604.** You yourself would have suffered from want of tubs?—Yes, I have.

**D-1605.** *Mr. Cliff*: Since your time, Mr. Black, they have got a minimum wage. Have you any objection to that principle in this country?—I have not considered that at all.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. J. E. PHELPHS, Agent, Jealgora Colliery.**

**D-1606.** *Col. Russell:* Why do you turn off the water-supply except for 8 hours in a day?—It is a matter of economy. There is a very considerable waste taking place. The miners generally prefer to wash their clothes under the taps. We have to conserve the supply of water and see that it is not wasted.

**D-1607.** You pay a water cess based on the number of tons of coal despatched?—Yes. The Water Board gives us a free allowance of 1,200 gallons per rupee of cess paid by the colliery. Beyond that we have to pay at the rate of 12 annas per 1,000 gallons. That is why we have to see that the water is not wasted. As far as my knowledge goes the miners get enough supply of water.

**D-1608.** *The Chairman:* Do I take it that the water-supply at the source is not unlimited?—It is not unlimited. It is only monsoon water stored there. There is very little of spring water and it cannot give an unlimited supply to all the collieries. If we gave an unlimited supply it might happen that the supply at the source might run out and result in complete stoppage.

**D-1609.** The water at the source is not adequate for an unlimited supply to all the collieries?—No, it is not adequate and therefore it has to be controlled.

**D-1610.** Is your limitation of 8 hours one that is general over the whole field, or does it obtain on your colliery only?—I believe that economies are general over the whole field. I have a big bazar here which consumes a tremendous amount of water. That water is part of my free allowance and in the course of the year it totals up to a high figure. That water would be so much less if I could give it to my labour.

**D-1611.** *Mr. Sibakti Bose:* Do these restrictions apply to the bungalows and the *baboos'* quarters?—Yes.

**D-1612.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Have you not had some correspondence with the Board of Health with regard to this water-supply?—Yes, here is the correspondence which I had with the Board. In order to conserve the water I put into operation our own filter plant which we had been using five years ago when we had no Government water-supply. The water is filtered on up-to-date methods, chlorinated and then supplied to the labourers. We want if we could, to supply our labourers entirely with our own water. The consumption of water was very great and if we had gone on taking the Government water-supply at the same rate as in the first 5 months of the year we would have had to pay half lakh of rupees for these collieries including the cess. We pay a cess of Rs. 19,000 for this colliery. There is a chart which explains the consumption of water in the different months of the year. (A chart was shown and explanations given.)

**D-1614.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose :* You discontinued taking extra water from the Water Board on grounds of economy and not because the Water Board was unable to supply you the required quantity?—Quite so, on grounds of economy.

**D-1615.** *Col. Russell :* It has been said that the water you supply from your plant is not good and is causing illness. Have you had your water tested? My information is that you have had it tested three times?—We have had no bacteriological reports from the Board. The Chief Medical Officer said that the water was not good. (A chart was produced and explained showing that the health of the labour had not suffered).

**D-1616.** *The Chairman :* You have given us a letter which gives your views to the Board of Health claiming to continue the use of your water. I gather that they have not given you permission?—I have permission to continue my water-supply till the 31st January. I have undertaken to cut it off after the 31st.

**D-1617.** We will have to discuss the matter with the Mines Board of Health. Perhaps you will be good enough to submit a note on the point before we meet them.—Yes, I will do so.

(The witness withdrew.)

# BIHAR AND ORISSA

## SIXTY-THIRD MEETING

### DHANBAD

Monday, 27th January 1930

PRESENT :

*The Rt. Hon'ble J. H. Whitley, (Chairman).*

*Members.*

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.	Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. ( <i>Medical Assessor</i> ).

*Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. JAMES MACKIE, Agent, Eastern Coal Company, Limited.	Mr. SIBAKLI BOSE (Indian Colliery Employees' Association, Jharia).
Mr. M. N. MUKHERJI, Chairman, Indian Mining Federation, Calcutta.	Mr. K. N. SENGUPTA (Indian Colliery Employees' Association, Dhanbad).

*Lady Assessor.*

Mrs. KAMINI ROY.

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. | Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. N. P. THADANI, I.C.S., Chairman of Jharia Mines Board of Health, Chairman of Jharia Water Board, Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, and**

**Dr. RYLES, Chief Medical Officer of the Jharia Mines Board of Health.**

**D-1618.** *The Chairman:* Mr. Thadani, how long have you been Chairman of the Mines Board of Health?—2 years and 9 months. In 1925 I officiated for 5 months, so that my total experience is 3 years, 3 months.

**D-1619.** You have been acquainted with the work of the Board of Health from its inception?—Not from its inception; I came here in 1925, and I have been keenly interested and have studied the labour problems in the coalfield.

**D-1620.** The Mines Board of Health came into being chiefly to combat serious epidemics which had swept over the coalfields?—Yes. The Jharia coal industry may be said to have been started in earnest from 1901; from then until 1914 or 1915 the industry encountered great difficulties largely due to scarcity of labour and intermittent epidemics. Labour would not stay in sufficient numbers; conditions were very bad in the beginning. The labour would get frightened, and if two or three deaths occurred at a colliery, two or three hundred workers would leave over-night quietly without permission. The consequence was that the industry was in a state of dissolution. It therefore occurred to those who controlled the industry that they must take in hand the amelioration of labour conditions; that appeared to be the only solution of the labour problem. That gave rise to the Mines Board of Health. At first there was a committee which operated for some two or three years; finally we had Government assistance and Government gave the services of the District Officer as Chairman of the Board. The functions of the Board have been first and foremost the prevention of epidemics, chiefly cholera and small-pox. Next in importance comes sanitation on the colliery premises, in the bazaars and other places which are subsidiary to the mining industry all over the coalfield. Included in sanitation are housing accommodation for labourers and other matters. After the scheme had operated for a number of years it was found that all attempts at sanitation directly were not of much avail against epidemics; we did not succeed. Then the necessity was appreciated of a supply of sufficient pure drinking water. The industry made a huge sacrifice to organize this scheme of water-supply; the Jharia Water Board scheme has cost about 66 lakhs in loans from Government, and altogether the industry is paying Rs. 4,44,000 interest per annum on those loans, and now we have succeeded. The Water Board is the child of the Health Board. I regard water-supply as a part of the health work and as part of the work of the Board, but because the child was much bigger than its parent, we had separate finance; the finance of the two Boards is completely separate. We have nominated two Boards with separate membership, though the majority of the members of both Boards are the same persons. I will not say the water-supply is adequate from everybody's point of view, but probably nine-tenths of the needs are supplied. The Jharia Water Board scheme is probably the most costly in the world, and so the industry has to pay a very heavy cess. There is a widespread inclination to economize on water. The memorandum on behalf of the Jharia Mines Board of Health was prepared by Dr. Ryles and submitted through me as Chairman. Dr. Ryles is directly responsible for the enquiries necessary for the collection of this information. I concur with most of the memorandum though there may be words and phrases

with which I am not in agreement. The water-supply is in more senses than one restricted, but the essential needs are supplied. For instance, labour would like to have water for bathing, but they are not allowed to use the water for that purpose. Labour would like to have a more plentiful supply while the collieries do in fact economize on water.

**D-1621.** In your view is there ample drinking water?—Drinking water is plentiful.

**D-1622.** I understand the method of charging is based up to a certain point on the output of coal?—Yes, the Water Board cess is based on the raising of the coal of the previous year. At present it is 9 pies for every ton of coal raised. For every rupee of cess paid during the previous year we give an allowance of 1,200 gallons of water, and no further charge is made for that, it being considered as having been paid for by payment of the cess. Beyond that 1,200 gallons a water rate is charged. The cess is fixed having regard to the normal requirements of the collieries. If any colliery requires an exceptionally large quantity of water it is considered to be only fair that they should pay for it in water-rate.

**D-1623.** Where there is a bazaar which consumes a large quantity of water, is any arrangement made for that or is that included in the 1,200 gallons?—It depends. Throughout the coalfield in congested *bustis* and bazaars we have put stand-posts from which water is supplied free of all charges to the public. The bazaar consumption is separate and additional to the 1,200 gallons allowed to the collieries. The Water Board supplies it free though industry indirectly has to pay for it. There are also some bazaars situated on colliery premises; the people in the bazaars were the tenants of the collieries and therefore the collieries undertook to supply them with water from their own stands; so that they are consuming colliery water for which the collieries pay. There are two kinds of bazaars.

**D-1624.** We had in evidence last week a complaint in a certain quarter that the water was cut off except for 8 hours per day. We were told that one of the reasons for that was that the consumption in the bazaar took a large part of the colliery allowance of water and that the colliery were under a heavy charge for the additional water required. In that case it is true, I understand, from what you say that the consumption in the bazaar on the colliery premises does come out of what I may call the colliery's free allowance?—Yes. Originally the people in the bazaar on the colliery premises were the colliery's own work-people; but labour may leave a colliery and labour also lives in adjoining houses in *bustis* and bazaars. The collieries bear the cost of the water-supply to bazaars situated on their own premises.

**D-1625.** Then there is no reason for the restriction of the drinking water-supply to 8 hours other than a question of economy in order to diminish the water-rate for the extra supply?—That is true, but various

factors operate. The colliery which used to raise, say, 40,000 tons may have decreased its output to 5,000 tons. In fact a colliery may be nearly closed down. Yet the bazaar people who have settled down at the colliery may be still there and still want water. The output having diminished so much, the colliery may no longer be willing to supply water to the same extent, and therefore the colliery may cut down the supply to 6 hours, 4 hours, or even 2 hours. Bazaar people have complained to me that the colliery manager is supplying them with water for only 2 hours, and then the colliery manager will justify his action by pointing out how small the output of coal from his colliery is. In such cases I always recommend to the Board that we should put up a public stand-post as early as possible.

**D-1626.** I understand that your Board has in some cases given permission for the use of water drawn from the mines, filtered and dealt with in certain ways?—No, it has not given permission; I have myself written letters requiring the immediate discontinuance of such a supply. Such supplies have been condemned by the Medical Officers of Health after analysis; they are always found unsatisfactory and unfit for consumption.

**D-1627.** Then how comes it that that water has been in use until the end of the current month?—Because the Colliery Superintendent has asked for a little time in which to change the supply.

**D-1628.** Then after the end of this month there will be no further use of that water?—Yes, that is so.

**D-1629.** The second main activity of your Board, I take it, has been with regard to housing—laying down certain minimum standards and enforcing them by means of a system of white, blue and red licenses?—Yes.

**D-1630.** I notice that although you set out a policy of bringing the standards up to your minimum, you have been allowing a moratorium year by year for some little time?—Yes. The programme outlined by Dr. Thompson, the predecessor of Dr. Ryles, was to have been completed by 1923, but it was extended by the Board so that the completion would probably take place in 1926; but on account of the steady depression all over the coalfield the members of the Board who are representatives of the industry mostly agreed that it was necessary to suspend the further building programme; but we too insisted on certain conditions; we insisted that new houses must be built to standard requirements and the existing houses which were occupied must be habitable and must satisfy the minimum requirements. Also when the system had worked for a number of years the Board began to see that the system was far too elaborate.

**D-1631.** With regard to the types of houses, it is clear from the papers that have been submitted to us that all you do is to lay down a minimum. From what we have seen in certain collieries that



minimum is considerably exceeded?—At least one big Company has given more facilities than the Board has required.

**D-1632.** Has anything been done in the nature of an attempt by competition of designs, or otherwise, to achieve an ideal house for the mine worker other than these arched *dhowrahs* which we have seen everywhere?—No, there has been no such ambition. Mr. Leach, a colliery Agent, was very keen on having houses of the very best type and he was successful in a limited sense, but I cannot say that there has been any universal desire in that direction.

**D-1633.** Do you think the time is ripe for the expansion of the work of the Board of Health to cover what is generally called welfare as well as health and preventive medicine?—I think it is overdue by a good many years.

**D-1634.** Would it be a practicable scheme to have two sections, if the purpose of the Board was that of a Mines Board of Health and Welfare, to bring in a new body, leaving to the technical officers their own appropriate spheres?—Yes.

**D-1635.** There is an obvious link between health and welfare which would seem to make it undesirable to have two independent authorities or boards trenching on each other's ground to some extent?—I should not be in favour of the creation of two boards; I should be in favour of having one board with unified control but two officers, one a chief medical officer of health as at present and another, it may be a welfare officer also responsible and subordinate to the Board. The activities of those officers would be supervised and they would be expected to show results. We could achieve a lot through a welfare organization which would be an adjunct to the Health Board.

**D-1636.** If the mine managers, who have made experiments in that direction, as we have seen, came in to give the benefit of their experience to the whole industry, as well as outside persons who had special knowledge of the workers, do you think that would be a useful expansion of the work of the Board?—Yes; but I do not know how far the employers would favour such a scheme; at present they are hesitant and their attitude is not too generous in this direction. I think the attitude of the industry may be defined in this way: that they have regarded even the Health Board, which is the minimum, as a kind of charitable work through commiseration and sympathy with the workers; but were the other point of view pressed upon their attention and were they to regard it as a good sound business investment, we could achieve much more. I think the reason why we have not gone further is because there has been a wrong point of view.

**D-1637.** Up to now there has not been any general conception of the industry doing a very big public service in India in supplying coal to the whole of India?—I agree.

**D-1638.** *Colonel Russell* : Dr. Ryles, in the memorandum of the Jharia Board of Health certain figures are given for death rates and infantile mortality. Will you explain the difference between the total mines area and the rural areas which are referred to in the memorandum?—(Dr. Ryles) : The total area administered by the Bihar and Orissa Mining Settlements Act, 1926, is coincident with the local subdivision and constitutes about 800 square miles. Most of that consists of the rural areas but amongst the rural areas are the actual collieries which we call the colliery areas.

**D-1639.** You maintain separate vital statistics for those two areas?—Yes.

**D-1640.** From the papers that we have before us it is apparent that the figures, for instance, of infantile mortality for the rural areas are less than the figures for the mining areas. Can you explain why there is this large difference, the figure for the mining area being so much higher than the figure for the rural areas?—I can only suggest that there is more concentrated population in the mining areas. All over the world it is found that where population is concentrated there is a higher infantile mortality.

**D-1641.** Is it perhaps partly due to the fact that the registration of births, deaths and infantile mortality is done better in the mining areas than in the rural areas?—No, I do not think so; it is done in practically the same way. Information is obtained from the collieries that a birth has occurred; it comes to our office and is sent to the Sanitary Inspector in charge of that colliery area, who in this case does just, as the sanitary inspectors do in the rural areas, and reports whether that is so or not or whether the child cannot be found. I should think the sanitary inspectors are just as good in the one area as in the other.

**D-1642.** Is another reason that a large proportion of the women in the colliery areas go home to their villages when they are about to be confined and then return to the colliery areas with children who are not registered in the mining areas, though when the children die the deaths are registered in the mining areas?—That is possible.

**D-1643.** In what proportion of cases does that occur?—I do not know; I think a certain number of women go to the rural areas to have their babies.

**D-1644.** That would have an effect in raising the figure of infantile mortality in the mining areas while decreasing it in the rural areas?—Yes.

**D-1645.** *The Chairman* : If 50 per cent. of the women go to their villages for their confinement the rate of infantile mortality may be vitiated by 50 per cent.?—I suppose so. The figures are not accurate.

**D-1646.** Would it be possible for any investigation in that respect to be made in future?—Yes; we could do that with comparative ease

because every child that is registered as having been born is so registered really in order to have it vaccinated in the following year; and we can investigate what has happened to the child in the following year.

**D-1647.** *Col. Russell:* In 1928 the figure for one area is 171 while in the other area it is 96 to 111. Would you say those figures are very serious compared with other parts of India?—I do not know.

**D-1648.** In the memorandum with regard to maternity benefits, it is stated: "In the majority of collieries, however, the general experience seems to be for the pregnant women to cease work about a week before the child is expected". Would you say that that would have any influence on the rate of infantile mortality?—Yes. I do not think they should work up to anything like a week before they are confined.

**D-1649.** But do you agree with that statement?—That is my information. I went round and made enquiries in about 6 of the 8 hospitals and interviewed all the doctors who know about these things; and that seems to be the usual custom as far as my information goes.

**D-1650.** Is it the custom, or not, in the collieries in this area, for maternity benefit to be given to the pregnant women?—  
 (Mr. Thadani): Usually it is not, because probably 90 per cent. leave the coalfield a week or two before and are confined in the villages. As far as those who do remain in the colliery areas are concerned, it is uncertain and it is not a fixed charge; it may be Re. 1 or Rs. 2, or it may be just as much as the woman would have earned in these two or three weeks.

**D-1651.** There is no definite practice. It is also said that during this period and for two weeks or more after the event she receives a sum of money roughly equivalent to her earnings had she been at work?—Yes, that is the maximum; most employers do give something.

**D-1652.** Dr. Curjel in a report which was written in 1928 says that on certain collieries schemes of maternity benefit had been instituted but that owing to lack of supervision none of these schemes appear to work satisfactorily?—I do not think Dr. Curjel is quite right. No definite scheme worth calling a scheme has ever been organized. There is lack of supervision; the work is mostly left in the hands of one Doctor who is not interested in maternity cases and women are not very willing to accept aid from a male doctor.

**D-1653.** Dr. Ryles, do you agree with that?—Yes.

**D-1654.** One of the reasons is that the doctors on the collieries have not the confidence of the women workers and the doctors do

not encourage the utilization of their services during night hours when births usually take place; is that your opinion?—Yes.

**D-1655.** That does not apply only in the coal areas?—No.

**D-1656.** The idea of this maternity scheme as far as I can see is that there should be a large central institution with maternity wards where maternity cases could be kept during confinement?—(Mr. Thadani) : The idea is not to have a hospital but to have a base or centre from which we can work outwards. The work lies out in the coalfield and not in the Home. But the Home is a necessarily indispensable background to enable the women on the spot to do her work in a competent manner, so that her knowledge is commensurate with the resources of the Home, and she is not working as an isolated woman with her limited knowledge. A woman who attends maternity cases should be competent to deal with difficult as well as simple cases. Midwives trained at the Home and connected with the Home would send their difficult cases to the Home.

**D-1657.** Do you think there would be any difficulty in getting the women to come to this Home?—I do not think there would be any difficulty in filling the Home. In fact four times that capacity could be occupied by the women of the clerks and employees from 2 or 3 big collieries alone. The Home would be entirely inadequate for that purpose and it would not be meant to serve that need; it is meant for propaganda, education and for organizing various activities.

**D-1658.** I have seen the bungalow which Dr. Thompson used to occupy and which you have suggested should be used for this purpose. Do you really think that a bungalow in Dhanbad would be conveniently situated for this work in the coalfields?—Yes.

**D-1659.** How far do you think this bungalow is from the furthest outlying coalfields?—10 to 12 miles, though there may be some isolated collieries further away; within 12 miles it will embrace most of the working population.

**D-1660.** Would you have at this centre a lady medical officer?—Yes, and highly qualified.

**D-1661.** Do you anticipate any difficulty in getting a properly trained Indian lady medical officer?—No, I do not. I propose a salary of Rs. 450 to Rs. 600 a month.

**D-1662.** Your idea is under the supervision of a lady medical officer trained in this kind of work to train subordinates such as health visitors and *dais* for work in the field?—Yes. I want to train the local *dais*. The whole idea of the scheme is to solve the maternity problem of the coalfield locally and not by importing women from outside who I believe would not stay.

**D-1663.** Then you would have to appoint first of all one or two more trained health visitors of a fairly high standard of education.

Where would you get them?—The health visitors will come from outside just as the lady doctor would come from outside.

**D-1664.** How would you get these lady health visitors in touch with local *dais*?—They would be given certain defined limited areas of work. We have already the existing organization in the Board of Health circles. We have local officers and local staff in each centre who would co-operate, give information and see to the work in that area. The birth register and vital statistics would be supplied to the health visitor so that she would know what homes to visit where children had been born, and through the young mothers she would come into contact with women who were expecting to be confined so that her acquaintance would gradually be enlarged. She would also have 2 or 3 local *dais* to serve under her and give her local information, and to take her to the homes with which those *dais* would be in intimate touch.

**D-1665.** I think the total number of births in the mines area last year was something over 9,000?—Yes.

**D-1666.** How many health visitors would you require for that number?—An enormous number. I do not propose to foist a scheme upon the industry which the industry cannot or would not support. I want the work to be done gradually, progressively and tentatively so that we may be sure of the ground we cover; consolidation can come afterwards.

**D-1667.** *The Chairman*: I take it that your scheme is just your own suggestion for the consideration of practical persons who might be brought together to deal with this kind of work?—Yes.

**D-1668.** *Col. Russell*: It is generally estimated that a health visitor cannot attend to more than about 250 cases a year and a midwife probably cannot attend to more than 150?—Yes.

**D-1669.** Captain Ghose in another memorandum suggests the figure of 400 births a year for each worker, but I think that is a little high, and even with 400 he says 8 such officers are necessary. He also suggests that the lady health visitor should have two trained country *dais* and that the health visitor should be in charge of the local centre?—Yes, I have seen that scheme within the last few days. I regard it as impracticable, as far more expensive than my scheme and as not going far enough.

**D-1670.** Why do you regard it as far more expensive than your scheme?—Because he attempts to cover ground which cannot successfully be covered by 8 centres, with 8 health visitors and a staff of *dais*; he would be multiplying the organization far too fast and we do not know how it would work.

**D-1671.** In future you would have local centres as well?—Yes, but later on I should proceed from the centre outwards while he would have these health visitors isolated.

**D-1672.** Do you suggest that a central Home with 20 beds in it is going to be as useful in doing propaganda work in connection with maternity relief and child welfare, as local centres under the charge of trained health visitors scattered over the coalfield?—It depends; if all the centres are efficiently working, as they may be at the end of 10 years, and the scheme is perfectly worked, it would be more useful, but I think my scheme is more useful in the beginning because we proceed gradually.

**D-1673.** In the present depressed state of the coal industry would it not be better to appoint a lady medical officer, because there is plenty of work for her to do, one health visitor and 2 or 3 trained *dais* in a centre where the colliery manager is willing to supervise and help in the work; will it not be better to see how that scheme works and then gradually to extend it?—That is worth experimenting. It is better than not having any scheme at all. But health visitors are not supposed to handle maternity cases at all.

*Col. Russell:* We all know that 95 per cent. of maternity cases are normal cases.

*The witness:* I feel that the scheme you suggest would be too much in the air. It is necessary that there should be a Home because demonstrations cannot be done in the villages in the mining area; hygienic conditions cannot be secured. (*Dr. Ryles:*) We want to take the *dais* from where they are now working as dirty, filthy unskilled women, bring them into the Home, train them, and send them back to the places from which they came. I submit that as a far better means of spreading the gospel than bringing in women from outside who probably will not be accepted by the women in the *dhowrahs* at all. None of these schemes indicate where these women are to be trained; Mr. Thadani's scheme provides for it and that is why I think it is better.

**D-1674.** It is suggested that the simplest method would be to set apart a room or rooms in a *dhowrah* to be kept clean and properly equipped under the supervision of the lady health visitor and these places might serve as sub-centres for the lady visitor for propaganda work?—(*Mr. Thadani:*) I propose to spend Rs. 50,000 from Government grant on a building which would accommodate the health visitors and the nurses at the central institution.

**D-1675.** Do you think that some of the rooms in the better *dhowrahs* could be put into a suitable condition to be used as centres?—Yes, specially the *baboos'* quarters. (*Dr. Ryles:*) I have known it done in the Federated Malay States with great success; in fact it is the only way you will get women to go into hospital at all. (*Mr. Thadani:*) Collieries could probably lend *Baboos'* quarters for the purpose.

**D-1676.** *The Chairman:* If a practical and reasonable scheme were evolved by the Welfare section of your Board of Health, which would contain among its members a considerable number of colliery

managers, do you not think that many of the powerful groups of collieries would carry out schemes at their own expense and not become a charge on the funds that you have suggested?—A health organization and a welfare scheme, separated from the Health Board, is going to involve large expenditure. I think the industry as a whole, both European and Indian, would be opposed to the institution of such an organization.

**D-1677.** Why should it cost a great deal of money; you might have the financial co-operation of powerful groups of collieries?—Yes, everybody would welcome such an initiative on the part of industry, but both the Mining Associations have opposed this scheme on the ground of the annual cost. That indicates that the industry will not be prepared to incur a charge of about a lakh per annum, which is the minimum, I suppose, for welfare work in the coalfield.

**D-1678.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : If a cess of one anna per ton were levied for this purpose do you think the industry would oppose it?—It would oppose it tooth and nail; that would be an enormous cess. They are paying 9 pies per ton for the Water Board. Our income from that is approximately Rs. 4,50,000. From a cess of 1 anna per ton we could raise more than 4 lakhs; in fact it could be done on a cess of one pice per ton. That cess would be levied on about 10 million tons.

**D-1679.** *The Chairman* : If the scheme in the main was the creation of the industry itself they would look upon it rather differently than if it were imposed by some one who had not the practical knowledge?—I think my statement is too pessimistic. I should like to correct it and say that the industry would probably welcome the opportunity of taking such an initiative on their own part and organizing themselves on the basis of a cess of one pice per ton, which I think would be quite enough to proceed with the organization of a welfare scheme. One pice per ton would enable the industry to do substantial welfare work.

**D-1680.** It would be desirable to get the good-will and indeed the initiative and co-operation of the industry itself even though legislation might be necessary to bring the laggards up to the standard reached?—Willing co-operation is absolutely essential; no legislation could probably succeed without it. (*Dr. Ryles*) : Personally I think collieries or groups of collieries would help by having small schemes of their own. For instance, the Kastur Colliery have recently appointed a health visitor to carry on such work. I think some of the larger collieries undoubtedly would help in that way and that would not constitute a charge on the Board as a whole but would be borne by the colliery itself. (*Mr. Thadani*) : May I submit that I differ totally from *Dr. Ryles*. Individual collieries might work for two or three months; they might appoint a health visitor and then dismiss her next day. There would be no uniformity. I believe that all welfare

work should be organized. We should not depend upon isolated collieries but on the industry as a whole.

**D-1681.** I myself do not see any conflict of opinion between you? —(Dr. Ryles): There is not.

**D-1682.** *Col. Russell:* I understand that this central institution which you have in mind is not meant simply for maternity work but is intended to be a training centre for *dais*?—(Dr. Ryles): Yes, essentially.

**D-1683.** What is the object of having your system of licensing houses in different classes?—In my opinion the system is wrong, and I should like the whole thing to be abolished. In the Federated Malay States, where conditions are almost identical with the conditions we have here, the whole of the legislation is contained in about two paragraphs and there is no licensing. I have been asked by the Board to revise the whole question of housing legislation and licensing.

**D-1684.** *Mr. Cliff:* The memorandum does not indicate that the Board suggest any change of policy. Can we take it that the old scheme has been dropped?—If we can find a better one. (*Mr. Thadani*): I think you may take it that the old scheme has been scrapped; that is why moratoria were granted as a matter of course, because I thought we could not complete the programme as it had originally been laid down by Dr. Thompson. There should only be one license.

**D-1685.** *Col. Russell:* Why has the Board agreed to these repeated moratoria?—The Board consists of representatives of industry with the official Chairman and royalty receivers and there are one or two other officials on the Board who are nominated. The Board naturally were in intimate touch with the position and they thought it was necessary to give moratoria because the conditions were not very satisfactory. We had improved the housing conditions so that more than 60 per cent. were passable.

**D-1686.** Was there any minority report when these moratoria were passed?—No, all resolutions are passed unanimously; we either pass them or we do not.

**D-1687.** I take it you are opposed to these lines, with 20 rooms back to back?—(Dr. Ryles): Yes, I object to back to back dwellings altogether from the health point of view, but the money question comes into it.

**D-1688.** Your policy would be to replace these as soon as possible?—Yes.

**D-1689.** Generally speaking, do you not think the workers would be happier in small blocks of three to four houses grouped in a compound such as you get in the Indian rural village rather than in these barrack lines?—I think so, but the question of expense again arises.



**D-1690.** On Saturday we saw a group of houses arranged on that principle. They do not seem to have cost much more than other types?—Yes, and I think tomorrow you will see some more which cost Rs. 260 per room which is fairly reasonable.

**D-1691.** It is stated that the workers' convenience has been closely studied in drawing up the type plans. Do you think the workers' convenience was studied when these barrack lines were constructed?—(Mr. Thadani): No, I do not; I think they have been constructed for economic reasons. The statement in the memorandum is not correct.

**D-1692.** Have any detailed investigations been made as to the diet of the workers?—(Dr. Ryles): To some extent. Dr. Mitra at my request went round recently and worked out what they spend; you will find it in the memorandum which was sent to the Commission.

**D-1693.** How long did this investigation take?—About two months, but of course he had to do his ordinary work in the meantime.

**D-1694.** Do you attach any weight to the results he has given in note?—I do indeed; I think Dr. Mitra is eminently qualified to ascertain the truth in this matter; I think he has gone into it very carefully and I attach considerable value to his report.

**D-1695.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is it the purpose of this memorandum to show that the diet is adequate?—No, it is really to give the balance between income and expenses.

**D-1696.** *Col. Russell*: Are you generally satisfied with the conditions under which food is exposed for sale in the local markets?—We constantly prosecute people for exposing food to flies and dust and sometimes the food is destroyed as unfit for human consumption.

**D-1697.** You make examinations in the laboratory as to adulteration of foods?—Yes, we do a lot of that.

**D-1698.** You say in your memorandum that the effects of the disturbance of the sex ratio in industrial cities does not apply to the mines areas. I suppose there are a considerable number of men in the mines areas who have left their wives and families in their home villages. Can you give us any information as to the incidence of venereal disease over the mines areas?—(Dr. Ryles) I am afraid my information is rather meagre, but I have got all I can. The figures are as follows :—

Year.				Gonorrhoea.	Syphilis.
1925	...	...	...	256	167
1926	...	...	...	287	118
1927	...	...	...	337	136
1928	...	...	...	216	150
1929	...	...	...	243	110

**D-1699.** Those are the cases which have actually come to dispensaries and hospitals?—Yes.

**D-1700.** I suppose they only represent a fraction of the total?— I think so. I cannot tell you the total number.

**D-1701.** With regard to accommodation in hospitals for indoor patients, you say 8 collieries have fully equipped and up-to-date hospitals and others have hospitals where serious cases are received for treatment. I suppose this is the statement with regard to individual collieries?— Yes.

**D-1702.** Is there any system of provision of a central hospital, fully equipped and staffed for groups of collieries under the same or different managing agents?—I should have said "groups of collieries". (Mr. Thadani): Some of the larger concerns have a dispensary and central hospital for several of their collieries so that the cases can be brought there in whatever colliery the accident may occur.

**D-1703.** Do they have outlying dispensaries and a central hospital?— (Dr. Ryles): No, that is not usual. There are 8 hospitals associated with collieries or groups of collieries.

**D-1704.** I take it you would prefer to have these group hospitals where they could maintain a better staff and better equipment and more efficient treatment could be given to cases that came to the hospital rather than have a scattered number of badly equipped and poorly staffed dispensaries or local hospitals?—(Mr. Thadani): We have at Dhanbad a charitable dispensary to which the board contributes every year Rs. 2,250. There we have a fully qualified Assistant Surgeon and an operating theatre. The Board maintains a motor ambulance which is capable of bringing in from outlying collieries any serious cases of accident or disease.

**D-1705.** *Mr. Mackie*: You say in your statement that all cases are brought in from collieries; is that so?—No; at least 8 collieries have hospitals which can deal with all cases on the premises. But those collieries which have not, cannot reasonably be expected to have, hospital facilities send their cases in.

**D-1706.** *Col. Russell*: You say that underground scavengers are employed and their work is without exception inefficient owing to the lack of arrangements. How is the night-soil dealt with?—(Dr. Ryles) There is no attempt to deal with it; the men ease themselves wherever they like. So far as I know there is no collection or removal of night-soil.

**D-1707.** *Mr. Mackie*: Sweepers go down and clear up the night-soil from the working places anyhow?—The collier who wants to ease himself goes to a secluded spot and the sweeper cannot find the night-soil. I agree that all working places are kept clear.

*Mr. Cliff*: There are places which are fenced off where people go.

*Mr. Mackie* : They are not working places ; if you open those places you have to send sweepers to clean them out.

**D-1708.** *Col. Russell* : Those places would be used constantly day after day and would tend to re-infect with hookworm all people using them, even supposing they are fenced off?—Yes, 99 per cent. of the population is infected with hookworm.

**D-1709.** They are re-infected?—Yes.

**D-1710.** *The Chairman* : Has your Board made any suggestion on this question of underground sanitation?—No, I do not think so. I am in touch with Mr. R. R. Simpson on the subject. He has an idea for a new type of latrine which might be useful underground. It is rather a difficult problem.

**D-1711.** Are you aware how that is dealt with in other countries?—No ; I understand they have privies down below and the night-soil is brought up. I have never heard of any night-soil being brought to the surface in this country, but it may be.

**D-1712.** If privies or latrines were provided underground, do you think the miners would use them?—I doubt it. You cannot apply the slightest form of discipline to these people, or they leave.

**D-1713.** *Mr. Mackie* : We could not keep latrines near the working places ; do you think they would walk any distance?—No ; if the latrines for some technical reason cannot be placed close to where they are working they will not walk far either above or below ground.

**D-1714.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Is not a great deal of discipline applied to the workers in the mines under the Indian Mines Regulations?—I am not familiar with the technical side, but I know if you try to compel labourers to ease themselves in certain specified places they are apt to go away. Dr. Simpson tells me that he has some *aqua* privies at the Kastur Colliery which are used occasionally a little. By constant persuasion he manages to make them use the privies a little. Something can be done towards it by gentle persuasion.

*Colonel Russell* : I suggest to you that by the provision of a number of septic tank latrines, properly kept and flushed out, you might be able to do something in this direction.

*The witness* : The manager of Loyabad Colliery told me that he had spent Rs. 16,000 in putting up a septic tank latrine, but it was never used. I have discussed it with many managers and they tell me it is a very difficult problem but they do not say it is insuperable.

**D-1715.** I quite agree that there is difficulty, but it is not insuperable?—No ; something can be done towards it.

**D-1716.** With regard to water-supply, can the Board compel managers to connect up with your Topchanchi water-supply and also to shut down a bad supply?—Yes, under by-law 25.

**D-1717.** You say that "the remaining one-third will connect up as soon as circumstances permit." What are these circumstances?—There is one portion of the coalfield area towards which the mains do not go at all at present. There are other places where the collieries are so small and so poor that I would rather try persuasion than absolute compulsion.

**D-1718.** You would admit that these small centres are real dangers as far as the coalfields are concerned?—Yes; that was our experience during cholera.

**D-1719.** So that it would perhaps pay you from that point of view to put a certain amount of compulsion on these smaller concerns?—We try perhaps within six months to persuade them to do the thing themselves, but if they fail to do it we take further steps.

**D-1720.** On the question of the spread of propaganda in connection with health matters I notice you say "Public health lectures, both in colliery and rural areas, illustrated by magic lantern slides." Who gives these lectures?—They are given by the Sanitary Inspectors 16 to 20 times a month; they go at nights to all the villages and to the collieries.

**D-1721.** Do they report as to the numbers who attend these lectures?—Yes; that information is given in our monthly reports.

**D-1722.** You are quite satisfied with this method of propaganda?—Yes, certainly.

**D-1723.** Would you be in favour of extending the use of this form of propaganda by the provision of cinema educational films?—That is more difficult. It would involve a lorry. We thought of it. The difficulty of generating electricity comes in. You can do something of this nature in the colliery areas, but it is difficult to do it in rural areas.

**D-1724.** But there are portable cinemas with batteries. Do you not think that they might be used with benefit?—If you take into account the elementary nature of the mental process of the villagers, I think you will agree that magic lantern lectures are sufficient for some time. Education is proceeding as fast as it can.

**D-1725.** You can mix up the educational part of the programme with amusing films?—We do so. We show some dramas at the end of the performance.

**D-1726.** But in any case this form of health propaganda has proved a success?—I think so.

**D-1727.** *Miss Power*: Mr. Thadani, the present period over which the withdrawal of women from underground workings may be spread is 10 years. In your view could and should this period be shortened?—It will probably automatically shorten itself; that is my view. Ten years has been fixed, but the industry itself, realising year by year, would come forward and do it much more quickly. Many of the employers

would have favoured a more rapid elimination of women underground if elimination had to come; they would have sooner consented to get free in 3, 4 or 5 years rather than have a prolonged period of strangulation. They think that it would have been better to have it done earlier.

**D-1728.** I take it there is nothing to prevent them from doing that?—No.

**D-1729.** *Mr. Clow*: Was it not at the instance of the employers that the length of the period was increased from 7 years to 10 years?—The employers through their Indian Mining Association and Federation did demand that period, but I have come in personal contact with employers who regard it as unsatisfactory. They think that 10 years is too much of a prolongation; they would rather do it sooner.

**D-1730.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Including the Indian members also?—Much more the European than the Indian.

**D-1731.** *Mr. Clow*: Are you speaking of the employers or the managers?—Both.

**D-1732.** *The Chairman*: I think it is clear that since the Act was passed the opinion has changed?—That is so.

**D-1733.** But if one employer reduced his women more rapidly than his competitors he might suffer a disadvantage in his labour force?—He would, but if it suits his convenience he would do it.

**D-1734.** *Miss Power*: Dr. Ryles, with regard to the regulation dealing with the withdrawal of women from underground, the Government have omitted quarries and open works from the regulation. In some of the evidence submitted to us objections are raised not on health grounds but on the ground of trade competition between colliery and colliery, and it is suggested that women should be prohibited from any work below 20 ft. from the level of the surface. Would you be in favour of such a regulation strictly from health motives?—(Dr. Ryles): I do not think there is any necessity.

**D-1735.** I take it you would not agree to further restrict the opportunities of the employment of women except on health grounds?—That is so.

**D-1736.** *Mr. Thadani*, on the question of maternity benefits, would you be in favour of the payment of such benefits being made compulsory by means of a Maternity Benefit Act?—(Mr. Thadani): Yes.

**D-1737.** Would you make such benefits contributory or non-contributory on the part of the woman worker?—I think it would be as well to make them contributory. The contribution may be very small.

**D-1738.** In your view what period of employment should entitle a woman to such payment?—At least six months' continuous employment previous to her going away for delivery.

**D-1739.** Dr. Ryles, turning to the question of the weights carried by women and young persons, male or female, would you be in favour of a clause both in the Factories Act and in the Mines Act regulating this matter?—(Dr. Ryles): Yes.

**D-1740.** In view of the variations in racial and individual physique and the consequent impossibility of fixing the maximum weights for varying ages, would you be in favour of a clause such as is incorporated in the new Factories Bill in Great Britain? It says: (1) "A woman or young person employed in a factory shall not lift, carry or move any load so heavy as to be likely to cause injury to such woman or young person. (2) The Secretary of State may make special orders prescribing the maximum weight of the load which may be lifted, carried or moved by women or young persons of any age; and any such orders may relate either to women or young persons generally or to women or young persons employed in any class or description of factories, or when engaged in any process." Would you be in favour of such a clause both in the Factories Act and the Mines Act?—I would definitely say, yes.

**D-1741.** On the question of school children, I understand from some of the evidence submitted to us that the Board of Health organize health work amongst school children attending colliery schools. Is that so?—I am afraid not. We attend only to the general sanitation of the colliery.

**D-1742.** You do not do any special work amongst school children?—There are only two schools that I know of.

**D-1743.** Reverting to the question of the withdrawal of women from underground workings and its effect on the question of the family wage, I understand from the memorandum you have submitted that the average earnings of a man and his wife working underground are Rs. 7-8-0 a week on the basis of three tubs a day at annas 8 a tub. After the complete withdrawal of women from underground workings, can the family of the coal cutter, in your view, maintain physical efficiency on the earnings of the man alone?—(Mr. Thadani): No.

**D-1744.** Do you think that by better organization in the mine he could so increase his earnings without over-working as to make up for the wage of the woman?—I do not think he would, except by improvements in the technique of mining. Unless improvements come from outside his own physical capacity of raising coal will not be so strengthened as to make up for the loss. It may be that the wage may go up on account of the limitation of labour; there being few men, the employers may be compelled to offer higher wages.

**D-1745.** I want to ascertain from you whether, when women have been completely withdrawn from underground workings, the wage of the coal cutter, working as hard as he can under existing conditions, will still not be such as to maintain his family on the basis of physical

efficiency?—It is impossible for the miner working alone to raise sufficient coal under existing conditions and earn wages sufficient to maintain himself and his family. The woman must be absorbed in some other trade; she must work and contribute to the family earnings. That is the problem that we have to consider; it has to be faced; it remains unsolved. By eliminating women from working underground we have not given the miner a home, which ultimately is intended. That means that there is a greater responsibility both upon the employer, the public and the Government to find such occupations for women who have been eliminated as would enable them to earn sufficiently, simultaneously giving the miner a home where he can rest; otherwise he would take to gambling and drink having no home at all. The elimination of women has incidentally raised a very important question which lies ahead of us and has to be met and solved.

**D-1746.** Your view is that the wages of the miner must be improved or that some alternative employment must be found for the woman?—Yes.

**D-1747.** Has Government or any of the mining associations considered this question of alternative employment for women?—Not that I know of; I think they have not.

**D-1748.** *The Chairman:* There is one question dealing with still-births. We noticed in looking at some of the colliery forms which, I think, are the forms ordered by your Board of Health that you deal with still-births in a separate column. That is to say, they are not counted either as births or as deaths?—No.

**D-1749.** We have found a good deal of lack of method in some other places with regard to it which again vitiates many of the statistics that are kept. Has that been a recent introduction on the part of the Board of Health?—No. I think still-births have always been recorded in a separate column.

**D-1750.** You as a medical man, I take it, would regard the number of still-births as being a very important index of the general health of the population in the mines or in any other area?—I would. It is usually about 2.5 to 3.0 per cent. of the total births. In most of the countries it is included both as a birth and a death.

**D-1751.** Are you quite sure?—I can give you authorities. On page 505 of 'Preventive Medicine and Hygiene' by Rosenau, the following passage occurs: "still-births are not included in infant mortality. Registrars, however, require all premature and all still-births to be recorded by a birth and reported upon a death certificate." I shall quote an English authority. In the book 'Hygiene and Public Health' by Kenwood and Kerr, the following passage occurs: "The number of still-births notified under the Notification of Births Act, 1907, which should include all deliveries of children after the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy, is usually about 2.5 to 3.0 per cent. of the total births

notified. The Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1926, requires the registration of still-births just as live births, and the delivery of a certificate signed by a regular medical practitioner or certified midwife."

**D-1752.** You agree. I take it, that, if possible, the Provincial governments should see that the practice is uniform?—Yes.

**D-1753.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy*: With regard to the hospital that you have proposed under your scheme for the industrial population, supposing you allow women from the *badralok* class to be treated in that hospital on payment of a fee, would not that help the hospital and also help the object you have in view of getting sufficient funds?—(Mr. Thadani): Yes, it would. While you are on that point I may inform the Commission that I received several letters asking me why my scheme excluded the clerical staff on the collieries. I replied, it did not. The scheme does comprehend the *badralok* class also, because they are workers essentially.

**D-1754.** But what about payment?—They will not have to pay anything.

**D-1755.** But as regards other classes who are not employed on the collieries, they may be admitted on payment of a small fee to add to the hospital funds. I think that would help you, would it not?—Yes I would prefer their admittance, and I think it would be feasible to do so.

**D-1756.** The scheme, in my opinion, is a very well thought out one, but it is somewhat ambitious considering what you have now. I think it will take a long time to materialize if for nothing else at least for the collection of funds?—The question of money does not affect the merits of the scheme.

**D-1757.** It does not affect but all the same you will have to consider that question also?—Yes.

**D-1758.** As a preliminary step would it not be better to have a smaller plan which could be immediately put to trial. For instance, you can have health visitors and a certain number of *dais*, to start with?—That question was raised by Colonel Russell, and I said as to what were the considerations and counter considerations and why ultimately I had to favour the scheme.

**D-1759.** If you have lantern lectures and if the people went into the different collieries and held demonstrations, would not that help?—That would be very good. I want all to co-operate. Every individual effort would mean a contribution to the common cause.

**D-1760.** *Mr. Clow*: I notice from Dr. Mitra's note that the unskilled labourer is much addicted to drink. Can we take it that that is generally true of the mining population in the coalfields?—I think it has become true in these areas. An increasingly large number of unskilled labour has taken to drink.

**D-1761.** Have you any suggestions to make for restricting the amount of drinking?—It will affect the revenue of the excise department,



**D-1762.** Leave the question of revenue aside for the moment. What suggestions can you offer?—The suggestion I would offer would be fewer of these licensed premises, and simultaneously to concentrate on indirect methods of teaching the miners by better education, better sanitation and raising the standard of living. That would, I think, be the only effective and ultimately successful method of eliminating the evil habit of drinking.

**D-1763.** Suppose within the mining areas the sale and manufacture, I do not say importation, of drink were to be prohibited, would that in any way affect the labour?—The labour would be temporarily unhappy, but I think it would help them and save them a lot of money.

**D-1764.** Would there not be a lot of illicit manufacture?—There would be some. It can be more effectively controlled than, for instance, in America. The methods are so crude and the knowledge is so limited that they cannot be experts in illicit distillation.

**D-1765.** Would liquor made by themselves by brewing be less or more harmful than the Government spirit?—I think the home manufactured product is likely to be more dangerous and noxious to the health than that which is sold under supervision in the licensed premises.

**D-1766.** Would the absence of the present drinking facilities prevent miners from coming to the mines?—I do not think so. The managers do not wish to have licenced drinking houses in their premises. They always tell the excise department to get away to a place which is far off from their premises.

**D-1767.** That is true of all managers, is it?—Yes. I have received several letters, and I think I can safely generalize that the managers are against having drinking houses on the colliery premises. Some ten years ago they may have considered it as an inducement to the labour but now they do not; they are opposed to it; they view it with disfavour.

**D-1768.** *Mr. Birla:* What did you say the total cost of the water scheme was?—We have borrowed Rs. 66 lakhs from Government in various loans.

**D-1769.** That is the total capital expenditure?—A little more because we spent from cess Rs. 20,76,000 which was contributed by the colliery owners.

**D-1770.** So the balance has been provided by the Government?—It is all loans from Government at a very high rate of interest.

**D-1771.** May I enquire, including the interest and other charges, what is the total maintenance charge?—The interest and sinking fund charges are Rs. 4,44,000 per annum. The maintenance charge was about Rs. 1,20,000, but now it has been reduced for the last three years to Rs. 80,000.

**D-1772.** So the total comes to Rs. 5,20,000?—Yes.

**D-1773.** How much, out of it, do you get from the colliery owners in the shape of cess, water-rates and so on?—The whole of it comes from the industry itself because we get from the cess on raisings Rs. 4,22,000; we get cess at the rate of 9 pies per ton; we get about Rs. 40,000 from the collieries as water-rate.

**D-1774.** What I wanted to know was whether there was any burden on the general tax-payer?—No, the industry pays everything. It is a very heavy burden which the industry has cheerfully borne.

**D-1775.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is the capital cost to be liquidated by 30 years?—In about 33 years in half-yearly instalments. One loan is to be liquidated in 43 half-yearly instalments, one in 45 and the other two in 53 half-yearly instalments.

**D-1776.** *The Chairman*: You said it was a heavy burden on the industry which the industry has cheerfully borne. I think that is correct, but would it not also be correct to add that it is recognized that it has paid for itself?—It has more than paid itself. It was a sound business investment.

**D-1777.** *Mr. Birla*: With regard to houses you have set up many standards for them and you said that you have been issuing licenses. You might have noticed many houses which have been erected probably by the workers themselves on the land belonging to colliery owners. Do you include those houses under any of these licenses?—They are not licenced if they are adjoining to the colliery but not situated on the colliery premises itself. But every house on the colliery premises and occupied by a colliery labourer must be licenced. The labourer is allowed to live in adjoining bazaars.

**D-1778.** There may be adjoining land on which a man may have erected a house which may be in a very insanitary condition. What check could you exercise over such houses?—The Board has direct powers to regulate sanitation on the coalfields. They would come within the jurisdiction of the Chief Medical Officer.

**D-1779.** Do you mean to say that even if the hut was erected on the adjoining land you could exercise your powers?—Yes.

**D-1780.** You could compel the workers to demolish those huts and compel them to live in pucca houses built by the colliery proprietors?—You could insist upon a certain minimum standard of sanitation, I take it. You can ask them to demolish houses and build new houses, but the Board will not be prepared to finance for it.

**D-1781.** Are you quite satisfied with the minimum standard set up?—I am not at all satisfied with the minimum because improvement on all sides has taken place and higher standards are demanded by public conscience.

**D-1782.** Is the intention of the Board to improve the minimum standard in course of time?—Yes. I think that is the intention of the industry also.

**D-1783.** On the question of the average daily labour force, you say that in 1924 it was 126,000 while it has now come down to 95,000. May I take it that the labour force has been reduced during the last few years?—It has been reduced.

**D-1784.** Has that caused any unemployment?—It has not caused any serious unemployment. There may be isolated cases of hardship, but as the population is generally agricultural the result has not been serious.

**D-1785.** That means that the extra labour has been absorbed by agriculture and if required again by the collieries it would come back?—Yes.

**D-1786.** There could be no scarcity of labour under the circumstances?—No. The character of the labour not being permanent I do not think there would be. My statement is subject to the seasonal scarcity and excess felt by the collieries.

**D-1787.** It will be seen from the statement that there is serious drink evil prevailing in the colliery area. Do you not think that the best method would be to regulate it in such a manner as to stop it absolutely within a certain period?—Yes. I think that would be better than doing it *en bloc*.

**D-1788.** If it was very detrimental to the health of the workers, steps should be taken to abolish drinking altogether within certain period?—I agree with you completely. It does not contribute to the health, it does not contribute to the efficiency.

**D-1789.** You think it ought to be stopped?—Yes, gradually as you suggested.

**D-1790.** Do you think that five years would be quite sufficient?—It is very difficult to say. Say 5 to 10 years.

**D-1791.** In any case you are in favour of total prohibition of drinking for the coalfields?—Ultimately, yes. It would improve the efficiency of the worker. It would make him temporarily unhappy, but it will not do any harm.

**D-1792.** It appears from the statement circulated by Dr. Mitra that the wages which the miners, loaders and other workers are earning are hardly enough to maintain them. In fact in many cases it has been shown that their earning is less than what they spend in one week. Do you agree with that?—I agree. They do not physically lack food altogether, but the quality is too poor to give them necessary physique and strength. If they get more wages they would have more physical strength. It would raise their standard of living, and I think they are entitled to that.

**D-1793.** Under the circumstances, do you not think that you would like to modify the statement in your memorandum that "Wages are

high enough to allow of a generous dietary for all workers."?—I have already marked out the passage for dissent; I do differ from the statement; I think it should be modified.

*Sir Alexander Murray*: I really do not know, Mr. Chairman, what we have to accept and what we have not to accept in the memorandum that has been submitted by the Mines Board of Health. We find it stated specifically in the memorandum that the physique of the workers is almost invariably good. Mr. Thadani says that he does not agree with that. It has also been specifically stated in the memorandum that wages are high enough to allow of a generous dietary for all workers. Now Mr. Thadani comes forward and says 'I do not agree'.

*The Chairman*: This statement is submitted to us as the statement of the Mines Board of Health. The Chairman apparently dissents.

**D-1794.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you dissenting as an individual or on behalf of the whole Board?—As an individual.

**D-1795.** *Mr. Mackie*: May I ask whether this statement was submitted on behalf of the Board, because as a member of the Board I was not consulted?—You may take it that it is the statement of the medical officer of health.

**D-1796.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: He has not been here for more than a year?—No. I think if Dr. Ryles had been here longer he would have modified that statement.

**D-1797.** But then you passed it and submitted to the Commission?—Because the enquiries were conducted by him.

**D-1798.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do we take it that there is a difference of opinion between the Deputy Commissioner and Dr. Ryles?—No.

**D-1799.** *Mr. Birla*: May we take it that Dr. Ryles does not subscribe to this statement that wages are high enough to allow of a generous dietary for all workers?—(Dr. Ryles): This statement was made out by myself in conjunction with my office. I have only been here for some months, but Dr. Mitra who was in my position before I took over this job made detailed enquiries in the matter, and the statement was the result of our joint effort, and I stick to it.

**D-1800.** Let us take the typical case quoted by Dr. Mitra where a man earns Rs. 4-4-0 and has to spend Rs. 4-9-0 in order to get rice, dal, vegetables, meat, drink and so on. If that could be accepted as a correct statement, surely the worker is not getting a sufficient diet?—I take it that he earns probably less than the others.

**D-1801.** But he does not provide anything for clothes in this item?—The statement in the printed document is a general statement, while Dr. Mitra has given specific instances.

**D-1802.** Rs. 4-9-0 has been stated to be the approximate expenditure of a worker while the income has been stated to be Rs. 4-4-0. This does not take into consideration the amount he has to spend on clothes and other subsidiary items. However, if that statement has to be accepted as a correct statement, then surely the worker is not getting sufficient wage to allow him of a generous diet?—I think it is a generous diet. The only thing is that he cannot save any money; but it is only a specific instance.

**D-1803.** If the statement which you have made that wages are high enough is to be accepted as correct, I would like to know whether you have based your statement after making any elaborate enquiry?—This statement was not based on any special enquiry, but on the experience of Dr. Mitra for 5 years in this part of the country constantly being in touch with the colliery workers.

**D-1804.** May I ask whether Dr. Mitra sticks to both these statements?—Yes he does. (Mr. Thadani): Four annas for vegetables cannot be regarded as high or generous. These are the things that have compelled me to give an answer which I regard to be just and true. Probably he may have enough rice to eat, but I think that if he had higher wages he would have been physically better off than he is at present.

**D-1805.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I take it that it is not suggested for a moment that a higher wage will not allow a higher standard of living?—(Dr. Ryles): No.

**D-1806.** May I take it that your observation has shown you that the physique is generally good?—It is good.

**D-1807.** Based on that observation you have come to the conclusion that on the whole the dietary must have been sufficient, otherwise their physique would not have been generally good?—That is so.

**D-1808.** Here you have got various individual cases. One man earning Rs. 4-4-0 spends Rs. 4-9-0, while another man earning the same amount spends only Rs. 3-14-0. They differ because these are actual facts taken more or less haphazard over a period of just two months; they were not taken over many years and averaged?—Absolutely.

**D-1809.** Your main point therefore is this that your observation is that the physique is generally good and it is on that that you have based your view that the wages are high enough to allow of a generous dietary, but you have said nothing as to whether they are high enough to give them enough clothes or other amenities?—That is so.

**D-1810.** *Miss Power*: Are you able to judge of the effect of the dietary of the mine worker on his physique when you have not

a permanent and stable labour force?—(Mr. Thadani) : It is a very difficult question. I do not think it has been considered.

**D-1811.** *The Chairman* : May I take it that the remark with regard to physique is made taking into account the circumstances that as a rule he returns to his country two or more times during the year and that is one element in the maintenance of his physique?—I think so.

**D-1812.** It is not to be concluded that if he worked all the year round in the colliery that physique would be maintained?—No.

**D-1813.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : On the question of wages, I think you said in reply to one of the questions that when women are no longer employed the men cannot earn Rs. 7 a week, which is the amount that a man and his wife are at present earning. We have got actual facts and statements as a result of Government inquiry. They are all detailed in the official memorandum of the Government of Bihar and Orissa. They say that on an average the miners do not work more than 4 days a week and 33 weeks a year. If that is so, do you not think that there is ample margin for a miner to earn more wages to enable him to make up for the loss of his wife's earnings?—We should take it that his habits are not fundamentally changed.

**D-1814.** But is there not ample margin to enable a man, if he wishes, to earn sufficient, even on the basis of the present rates, to maintain his family? How many tubs do you think a miner can raise in a day?—If he works efficiently he can raise 3 tubs.

**D-1815.** Suppose he works for 6 days in a week he can raise 18 tubs. At present he is not raising more than 10 tubs?—That is so.

**D-1816.** At present he works for 33 weeks in a year. How many weeks can he work?—He can work for 42 weeks.

**D-1817.** *Mr. Birla* : Will his dietary allow him to work more than 5 days a week?—If you improve his physique and give him all opportunities, he can earn 3 or 4 times as much as he is earning now.

**D-1818.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : I take it that your point then is that he could earn three or four times as much as he is earning now if his physique were better?—Yes, if his physique is improved, if further opportunities were created, if his character were altered, and if more efficient methods were adopted.

**D-1819.** I accept that as a very fair statement, but let me put it to you this way. You suggest that the man and his wife are now earning Rs. 7 which is sufficient for them to live on?—As a commissioner for workmen's compensation I have come across lots of cases and I find that the average earning is generally Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 and not Rs. 30.

**D-1820.** Do you not think that the whole trend of modern industrial and social development is to make the man earn higher wages than he is doing?—I agree.

**D-1821.** If you are going to say that the woman ought to be provided with employment elsewhere in order that the man may still go on as he is doing now, then how are you going to make any advance at all?—We have to provide the miner with a home and increase his standard of living.

**D-1822.** Do you not think that the first step is to make the man work more intensively, more hours a day, more days a week and more weeks a year?—I agree *in toto*.

**D-1823.** And yet if your suggestion is accepted that we must find employment for women who will be no longer allowed to work the *status quo* remains?—You should give him more opportunities.

**D-1824.** The average rate per tub is As. 8. His wife is no longer employed and it is suggested that the man should get higher wages. What do you suggest — do you suggest that you should raise the rate or that you should make the man raise more tubs?—Primarily by increasing his output. There are also many factors which go towards the determination of the wage. I think that a higher wage is feasible even under existing conditions. So that we could do both.

**D-1825.** Assume that instead of As. 8 we pay Re. 1 a tub, do you think that the man will increase his output?—No, he will not. You cannot give him Re. 1. You can give him As. 10 per tub. There is a great margin between As. 8 and Re. 1.

**D-1826.** About housing conditions I understand that you still condemn unfit houses?—We do.

**D-1827.** With regard to cholera cases, I understand there are more cases of cholera in recent years in the rural areas, that is outside the mining settlement, than in the mining settlement?—That is so.

**D-1828.** So that the effect of your Board of Health has been that it has reduced the incidence of cholera in the mining area to a level which is lower than the level that is outside the mining area?—Yes, that is due to the good water-supply that we have on the collieries.

**D-1829.** Dr. Curjel was sent down by the Maternity and Child Welfare League?—Yes.

**D-1830.** Do you endorse the statements made in the supplementary memorandum?—From beginning to end the scheme outlined in the supplementary memorandum was drafted by me and I accept complete responsibility for it.

**D-1831.** Dr. Ruth Young is quoted therein as having written to you to this effect :

“ I think it is necessary first of all to lay down the fundamental principle that the work is preventive in its scope, that

health workers are not medical women, and cannot carry out treatment. Though doctors are of course necessary, our view is that much more than half the sickness among women and children in this country is preventable, and can be prevented, by the work of health visitors."

Does your scheme provide for an ample supply of health visitors, as well?—Yes, it does.

**D-1832.** Therefore you adopt the suggestion of Dr. Young?—I agree with the suggestion.

**D-1833.** Was Dr. Curjel associated with some women workers in her investigation?—Yes, she was.

**D-1834.** She says that the majority of women work less than 8 months in the year and some of them less than 6 months. Do you accept that as a fair statement?—Yes it is a fair statement.

**D-1835.** She also states that women said that they had plenty to eat and the surplus money appeared to be spent by men on gambling and drinking?—It was what a woman said; it might have been true in her case.

**D-1836.** I am asking your opinion whether it would be true as a general statement?—As a general statement it will not be true.

**D-1837.** She also says: "The result of individual inquiries in 107 women mine-workers showed that the majority of women workers go home for their confinement....." Do you accept that statement?—Yes. They do.

**D-1838.** And that "the birth rate among women settled on a colliery is high."—Yes, I accept that statement. But the death rate also is high.

**D-1839.** Is it not remarkable that inspite of the high incidence of venereal disease the birth rate should be high?—That is so. I think medical men will support my contention that venereal disease does not prevent many births. But a high birth rate and high death rate among children born on the collieries is a sure indication of low physique.

**D-1840.** How long does the woman absent herself from work before and after delivery? Dr. Curjel says that she made inquiries and found that the length of absence depended on custom and varied from 15 days to one year. She also says it depends on economic conditions?—15 days are only for women who have their confinement in the *dhowrah* itself. But women who go home for confinement do not return so early as 15 days. They take a month to two months. Some women do not stop working till a week before confinement.

**D-1841.** Col. Russell: Do you think that an investigator given an area like this, working for 5 or 6 weeks and examining 211 or 207



cases, can get an accurate picture of a population such as is housed in the colliery area?—(Dr. Ryles) I think it will be very difficult.

**D-1842.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you agree that a trained investigator like Dr. Curjel, who has spent months in Jute mill areas and other industrial areas on similar investigations, in the course of two months of intensive application to a subject like this could easily get at facts bearing on 211 cases to justify the conclusions she has drawn?—I think it would be a little difficult.

**D-1843.** Then you ought not to accept anything Dr. Curjel says?—I would not say that.

**D-1844.** To what extent are we to accept Dr. Curjel's statements?—It is not very easy to answer that. I know that Dr. Curjel was assisted by some women teachers. I dare say she did her best. Personally I should think that her conclusions should not be taken as infallible. (Mr. Thadani): On the other hand the information conveyed in her note is very valuable and I have summarised her conclusions in my maternity report. I have tabulated them.

**D-1845.** It is your tabulation and not hers?—Yes, it is mine. She had nothing to do with the drafting of the report. From beginning to end it was done by me.

**D-1846.** I understand that you have been forced to curtail the water-supply from your reservoir and that last year you had to close down from 9 o'clock till 6 o'clock in the morning?—We had to close down from 10 to 6 in the night, because there was a steadily increasing demand which we were not able to meet. We have now provided Rs. 40,000 for the construction of two more filter-beds. When they are completed we will be able to meet the demand.

**D-1847.** It is stated somewhere that the East Indian Railway have applied to you for water. Do you propose giving them water?—There was some negotiation going on between the Railway and the Water Board Engineer, but that has not materialized. But we have always maintained that it is our primary obligation to supply the needs of the collieries before we supply anybody else. When the two additional filter beds are completed we will have an adequate supply of water for all the collieries. We need not restrict hours at all.

**D-1848.** *Col. Russell*: As a Medical Officer do you approve of an intermittent supply of water?—(Dr. Ryles) No, I do not. The pipes are apt to be emptied and unless the joints are very tight foul material from outside will be sucked in. The water will get infected.

**D-1849.** *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the statistics to which reference has been made I find going round the coalfields that there is very serious doubt cast upon many of them, because I saw registers which are not made to fit facts but made to fit theories. Therefore one is not able to place too much reliance upon the figures which Sir Alexander

Murray has quoted. I want to ask you about a fact which does not appear to be recorded in the statistics. I noticed yesterday at 3 o'clock and 5 o'clock in the afternoon people returning home from the collieries. Can you explain that do they work on Sundays also?—(Mr. Thadani) : It is quite possible.

**D-1850.** They did not appear to have been working yesterday. They were walking home 6 or 8 miles. It was suggested to me that these people having finished their work on Saturday had to wait for their weekly wages and then walk 7 or 8 miles home. Is it within your knowledge?—It is possible. It does happen sometimes.

**D-1851.** People who cannot return home on Sundays till that late hour have their day of rest on Monday and not Sunday. They cannot be called by any means lazy?—The conditions of work underground are so enervating that the miners cannot work continuously for any length of time. They work 2 hours, take rest underground for 2 hours, then work 3 hours and then take rest for 3 hours. A miner may have been underground for 18 hours, but he may have worked only 6 hours. What is regarded as inefficiency of Indian labour is a compelling necessity.

**D-1852.** Then it would appear there is a great deal of inefficiency with regard to organization of the colliery by the employer himself?—Better methods and more machinery could be introduced.

**D-1853.** It is your opinion that there is room for considerable reorganization by the colliery proprietors themselves?—Yes.

**D-1854.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You do not agree with the statement that the miners are a lazy people?—No, I do not agree. There are no doubt people of low physique and inefficient people, but I would not class as a whole as lazy people. The miner is a very courageous man.

**D-1855.** *Mr. Cliff* : How many sanitary officers have you?—13 sanitary officers under the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

**D-1856.** In your memorandum, you say : " For the first time the financial side of the question was appreciated and doubt raised as to the competence of the Board (primarily a public health organization for the improvement of sanitary conditions among the industrial population) to undertake the building of a large central hospital for paying patients." Is there any danger of a scheme such as you have outlined in your supplementary memorandum being challenged as not being within the competency of the Board?—There is no danger. The scheme is totally different from that of a big central hospital costing 4 to 5 lakhs of rupees of capital expenditure and two lakhs of rupees per annum to work it. That was certainly outside the scope of the Board. But this is not a hospital; this is propaganda work, education and hygiene. This would come within the legitimate functions of a Board of Health.

**D-1857.** If your scheme is extended as proposed, may it not come under general medical practice?—I do not contemplate such extensive activities as would make the scheme altogether technical and medical; I want to confine that to maternity hygiene and maternity welfare alone. Of course it can expand into a highly technical and centralized institution which would cost lakhs.

**D-1858.** This scheme was prepared in November 1928. Has anything been done in the meantime?—Nothing at all. The report has been circulated to the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation, the managers, the agents and the medical officers. Certain individual managers and agents have supported the scheme. The medical profession on the whole have said that this is a good scheme and should be worked. But the two major associations, the Mining Association and the Mining Federation controlling the industry, have rejected the scheme chiefly on account of financial considerations. It would cost them Rs. 16,000 to 20,000 a year. They have also added that women will not go to any nursing home to receive maternity benefit and treatment.

**D-1859.** What hope have you of this modified scheme being accepted?—I have very little hope unless Government helps it through.

**D-1860.** *The Chairman:* May it not have been because it was your scheme prepared without much practical experience of mines? Could not the industry itself be encouraged to build up a scheme with which they might find themselves in agreement?—Yes, it is possible.

**D-1861.** Could we have copies of the letters of the Indian Mining Federation and the Indian Mining Association?—Here are letters from the Association and the Federation. This is the medical opinion. I have received letters from the Indian Employees' Association and the Indian Mine-managers' Association. Both of them have supported the scheme. (Letters handed in.)

**D-1862.** *Mr. Cliff:* This communication starts from the Government of Bihar and Orissa; then it is circulated to the members of the Board of Health. Does the Board of Health endorse the scheme?—They have not yet endorsed the scheme. It has been circulated to the members for opinion.

**D-1863.** The Board is in the hands of the Association and the Federation?—In most matters nothing is ever done without their co-operation.

**D-1864.** When you speak of Government help you mean financial help?—Yes.

**D-1865.** With regard to the diet of the colliery workers would it be possible for you to obtain what you regard as a sample diet on which you have based the statement in your memorandum?—(Dr. Ryles) Yes, we can. I think we have done something in that direction in the first page of the memorandum.

**D-1866.** This document I understand is intended to illustrate the statement?—It does so incidentally. This was prepared because Dr. Curjel told us that this was the sort of thing that you would require.

**D-1867.** You say that it incidentally illustrates that it is a generous diet?—Yes, a sufficiently generous diet. I endorse it.

**D-1868.** With the assistance of Dr. Mitra could you give us a statement showing what you regard as a generous diet for the colliery workers and have it related to their wages?—We will try and give you that but it will take some time.

**D-1869.** With regard to the housing programme the Board began giving moratoria since 1926?—(Mr. Thadani) Yes.

**D-1870.** On what basis do you give the moratorium?—Formerly all the old *dhawrahs* under red license had to be demolished and new accommodation provided on the collieries. But now we insist on new buildings complying with the standard specifications; and houses which are in a bad state of repair should be thoroughly repaired before they are granted licenses. Since 1926 the collieries have not carried out a definite programme of further construction.

**D-1871.** What would be the amount spent on repairs and new constructions since 1926 under the direction of the Board?—Figures are not available.

**D-1872.** When you give a moratorium do you get any figures with regard to the finances of the different concerns?—No. We know that most concerns are suffering badly. The output is limited and there is depression in the industry. They could not afford to spend money on building new *dhawrahs*. Therefore we give them a moratorium.

**D-1873.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say as a practical man that the industry has been going through bad times during the past 5 or 6 years and it has not been possible for them to spend as much money on housing as they would like to spend?—I think so. They have actually spent some money though they have not been obliged to do that. During the continuance of the moratorium many new houses have been built.

**D-1874.** We have seen new houses. What I am concerned with is the direction of the Board itself. Is any money spent by the collieries under the direction of the Board?—The collieries do not spend money under the direction of the Board. The Board only insists on certain conditions being fulfilled.

**D-1875.** As far as I can see the present scheme of housing of the Board of Health is scrapped?—Yes.

**D-1876.** Could you give any indication to the Commission of the policy you intend to pursue?—The Board intend to raise the minimum requirement far higher than it is at present. The concession licenses will be abolished. I do not know what the Board will ultimately do;

I will guide the Board in this direction and I hope the Board will agree to my suggestion.

**D-1877.** Have you any specific plans for the future?—We have no specific plans at present. I have only given the general ideas and the details will have to be worked out. Dr. Ryles and myself fully agree that the present scheme is much too elaborate and should go. The minimum should be raised as far as possible with the consent of the industry because it would mean much additional expenditure.

**D-1878.** Can you give the type of houses that you purpose building?—We would abolish back to back houses, provide ridge ventilation, a big courtyard and if space permits much more room at the back. Provision should also be made for bathing platforms and privies. If space permits a small area for a group of houses for growing vegetables may also be provided. There is also scarcity of milk; a cowshed for 10 or 12 houses may also be provided.

**D-1879.** Have you got plans ready?—The Board has not so far got plans ready, but Dr. Ryles and myself could sit down and have the thing planned.

**D-1880.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : There is no representative of labour either on the Mines Board of Health or on the Water Board?—No, there is none.

**D-1881.** Do you agree that labour is vitally interested in the questions dealt with by these two bodies?—I would not oppose representation of labour on both these bodies.

**D-1882.** With regard to the Workmen's Compensation Act would you agree with the Government of Bihar and Orissa that the meaning of the term "dependent" should be made wide enough to include widowed sisters, widowed daughters and widowed daughters-in-law?—I have already recommended the inclusion of these people in a report I submitted to Government.

**D-1883.** Is there any method of assessing the compensation that might be due to an unpaid apprentice who receives severe bodily injuries in the course of his work or who is the victim of a fatal accident?—It is a matter of discretion for the Commissioner.

**D-1884.** *Mr. Clow* : It is not a matter of discretion for the Commissioner in the sense that he can adopt one figure or another?—He must evaluate the benefits received by the employee. For instance if he has had housing accommodation the rent of the house should be taken into consideration.

**D-1885.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Is it not necessary that there should be a definite provision?—I think a much more important thing is to have a sliding scale of compensation according to the different classes of ages which would be more equitable.

**D-1886.** *Mr. Mukherji:* You have suggested not only increased wages from As. 7 to As. 10 but also the adoption of various welfare measures?—I just indicated that it was possible.

**D-1887.** Do you think that at least the second class coal raising part of the industry, the Indian section, can bear any further expenses?—Were the Indian section of the industry more efficiently run it could afford better wages. The output would be greater and the wages of men would consequently be greater. I have never advocated increased wages as such. I would like to see an increase in output.

**D-1888.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* You want that the rate should be increased from As. 7 to As. 10 a tub?—It could be increased with increase in efficiency.

**D-1889.** *Mr. Mukherji:* You mean that a greater output will bring in more money to the industry which could be utilized to increase the wages?—Yes.

**D-1890.** Do you know that during the last 6 years about 400 collieries have closed down?—That always happens when depression follows a boom. During the boom period speculation is too great and everybody takes to this industry and the supply exceeds the demand. Then there is a period of depression.

**D-1891.** You think that the depression has already ended?—There are indications that it has.

**D-1892.** Do you think that an increase in cost to the extent of As. 4 or As. 6 a ton will not affect the industry in any way?—It means reorganization of the industry; economize in other things, put in more machinery, adopt better methods, reorganize the superior staff and eliminate the contractors.

**D-1893.** Already out of 1,350 certified managers only 300 have found employment and the rest are out of employment?—There is always the question of adjustment. Perpetual caution is necessary to adjust the supply to the demand.

**D-1894.** If that be the case you seem to care more for the labour point of view and not care for what becomes of the industrial middle class people who are thrown out of employment?—I neither care exclusively for the labour point of view nor for the employer's point of view. Mine is an independent point of view. I think that the industry should be taken as a whole—employers and labourers together—and unless the two co-operate nothing could be done. The employers must be generous towards labour and labour must try to be efficient.

**D-1895.** Supposing it was proved from facts and figures that most of the second class collieries were even now losing concerns and could not bear additional expenditure?—They should be closed down. I am not in favour of inefficient concerns.

**D-1896.** It would then throw out of employment not only a number of miners but also a number of middle class people?—That would be the best thing, for it would mean a quicker adjustment. People thrown out of employment will seek other and better employment.

**D-1897. Diwan Chaman Lall:** Is it your contention that the people who will be thrown out of employment will get employment elsewhere?—They will be absorbed in agriculture and various other occupations. The skilled labour and the clerical staff might suffer for sometime from unemployment.

**D-1898. Mr. Mukherji:** You do not agree that there is very serious unemployment amongst the *badralok* class?—I do admit there is unemployment amongst the colliery subordinate clerical staff and the managerial staff.

**D-1899.** And only 300 or 400 managers out of 1,350 certified managers have found employment?—Yes, that is because more managers have been turned out than the industry could absorb. It is a question of adjustment. Some European managers also have been sent home.

**D-1900.** You have advocated an increase of wages to the miner. At the same time you say that the miner contributes handsomely to the excise revenue. How could the miner afford to contribute handsomely to the excise revenue if his wages were not enough?—The miner cannot afford to spend on drink, still he does it. Even though the miner contributes handsomely to the excise revenue no case came to my notice in which the employer contended that the miner was drunk at the time of his employment. It was a wonderful compliment to the miner that although he drank he did not go down the mine drunk.

**D-1901.** Sometimes the miners starve themselves in order to drink?—There will be cases like that. It is true that the miner contributes a very large excise revenue. The Dhanbad division is the most paying subdivision in the Province from the excise point of view.

**D-1902.** How do you reconcile the two points of view, namely, that the wages are low and that the miner contributes handsomely to the excise revenue?—The standard of life of labour is so low. He actually does it.

**D-1903.** He starves himself?—There are cases in which miners deprive themselves of food.

*The Chairman:* That is common in all countries: a man who drinks deprives himself of other necessities.—(The witness): Not only that, he deprives his wife and family also of other things.

**D-1904.** You mean that his physique is invariably bad?—I have not said so. I only object to the word 'invariably'.

**D-1905. Mr. Bose:** Is there a medical man as member of the Jharia Mines Board of Health?—No.

**D-1906.** Do you think it is necessary to have one since the Board deals with questions of sanitation and health?—I do not think it is necessary to have a medical man on the Board. We have the Chief Medical Officer whom we could always consult.

**D-1907.** Who are the members of the Board?—There are 2 representatives of the Indian Mining Association, 2 of the Indian Mining Federation, one representative of the royalty receivers, the District Officer who is ex-officio chairman of the Board, the Chief Inspector of Mines, the Inspector of Mines, Sitarampur, and one of the mine managers.

**D-1908.** All these members represent either the employers or Government and there is no representative of labour. Do you not think it necessary that there should be a labour representative on the Board?—I think there should be one member representing labour on the Board. I am not opposed to having one. I myself recommend the inclusion of one.

**D-1909.** What is the use of establishing a maternity hospital at Dhanbad which is so far away from the coalfields that patients cannot easily come here for outdoor or indoor treatment?—I have said that it is necessary to locate the hospital far away from the congested area so that the patients may live in peaceful, quiet and sanitary surroundings.

**D-1910.** In other places where maternity centres are established do they establish maternity hospitals along with them, or do they accommodate difficult labour cases in the neighbouring hospitals?—I do not know of other places.

**D-1911.** How many labour cases were treated as indoor patients in Dhanbad hospital last year? I believe none was treated in Jharia Hospital?—3 or 4 cases were treated in Dhanbad hospital and none in Jharia hospital.

**D-1912.** Is it possible to make some arrangements in this line in these hospitals as well as in the colliery hospitals?—It is possible, but the district board has no funds.

**D-1913.** What was the building that is now used for nurses' quarters originally meant for? Have plans and estimates been made ready for the maternity ward in the Dhanbad Hospital?—There are only two rooms which were originally intended to be used as midwives' quarters. One of them is made over to the nurses. I have discussed the matter fully in the memorandum.

**D-1914.** Is there any vacant land at the back of the Dhanbad hospital? Is it possible to procure it?—It is possible to procure it if we have the money. I do not think it is possible at present.

**D-1915.** Is it not a fact that the Topchanchi water is supplied to the colliery workers for drinking purposes only?—Yes. I think bathing is prohibited in that water.



**D-1916.** Is there also a restriction of hours during which the water is turned on?—Yes, some collieries have that.

**D-1917.** Do I take it that the Board does not restrict the hours of supply but it is the collieries that do that?—Yes.

**D-1918.** If the ordinary dirty water is used for bathing, cleaning utensils and such domestic purposes, will it not tell upon the health of the colliery workers?—(Dr. Ryles) We have said that Topchanchi water is available for domestic purposes such as cleaning utensils, drinking and so on. As for bathing one would prefer this clean water, but the tank water does not do much harm.

**D-1919.** You mean to say that it is not unhealthy?—No; after much practical experience, I do not think so.

**D-1920.** Do you know that the Topchanchi water is freely used without any restriction in the bungalows on the collieries, even for gardening purposes?—(Mr. Thadani) I know it is used but the managements do not approve of that. In one case the Board fined Rs. 60. We have a vigilant Water Board engineer to detect such waste. I dare say that water is more freely used in the bungalows than in the *dhowrahs*.

**D-1921.** Do you know that in certain collieries the miners use the mine water for drinking purposes also?—They used the mine water in the Barari colliery at Jealgora.

**D-1922.** In that very colliery are there not one or two big tanks with arched roofs which are filled with Topchanchi water for the *sahibs* to bathe in hot weather?—In that colliery at Jealgora there is a nice big tank, but it is not supplied with Topchanchi water; it is supplied with the pit water.

**D-1923.** With regard to the housing conditions do you think that the houses licensed by the Board are satisfactory?—They are fairly satisfactory, but there is immense scope for improvement. I think the standard should be raised.

**D-1924.** Have you seen the condition of the Bagdigi colliery houses?—I have not seen that. (Dr. Ryles) I have seen it; they are habitable. They might be improved.

**D-1925.** They ought to be improved?—I do not say that.

**D-1926.** Are they well ventilated?—I do not regard it as adequate, but the miner has got the bad habit of shutting the windows and closing the ventilators with cotton rags.

**D-1927.** Are there not deaths due to coal gas?—(Mr. Thadani) I have issued a circular to the mine managers to impress upon their employees the danger of the practice of shutting the doors and sleeping with burning coal inside.

**D-1928.** With regard to prevention of the adulteration of food-stuffs how far has the Board succeeded?—The Board has not succeeded to any extent. The Act might be amended with the help of experts and made more complete.

**D-1929.** Do women give opium to their children when they leave them behind and go down the mine?—It is possible they do it, but it will be rare. I do not think it is a common practice on the coalfields.

**D-1930.** Dealing with workmen's compensation you say that the employers try to evade responsibility by pleading misadventure and wilful disobedience of safety regulations in mines. Is it so?—I have not said that. I said that some cases of serious disability and fatal accidents came to my notice where the employers tried to evade responsibility by pleading misadventure and wilful disobedience of safety regulations in mines.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Messrs. P. S. KEELAN and F. L. CORK** (of the Raniganj coalfield) and **Messrs. R. HERON and R. PURDY** (of the Jharia coalfield), representatives of the Indian Mining Association.

**D-1931.** *The Chairman:* Mr. Keelan, you speak to-day in particular for the mines in the Raniganj coalfield?—(Mr. Keelan): Yes.

**D-1932.** How do you stand in the supply of labour in that field? Have you adequate labour?—We will have adequate labour from now till about the 1st week of June.

**D-1933.** Then the seasonal departure begins?—Yes.

**D-1934.** May I take it that 80 per cent. of your workers follow this seasonal movement?—I would not put it as high as 80 per cent. I would put it at 50 to 60 per cent. (Mr. Heron): The same is the case with my labour also. I quite agree that it is 50 to 60 per cent.

**D-1935.** *Mr. Mackie:* Do you compel the labour of your *zamindari* properties to work for you?—(Mr. Keelan): No, not at all; when I took charge of the *zamindari* I made a special provision that we should in no way be associated with the mines; that the *zamindari* and the mines were to be run on totally different lines.

**D-1936.** But they do come and work on your collieries?—The colliery manager should speak to that, not me.

**D-1937.** Do you know of a great deal of unemployment among miners recently?—No. Labour comes in at this rush period. They left early in November or the middle of November and they are just coming back after the festival, and there is a certain amount of moving about. They come to a colliery and find there is not enough work and they move on to the next place. It will settle down in about three weeks' time and there will be very little fluctuation after that.

**D-1938.** Do you know if any had to go to Assam or Madras as a result of unemployment in the Jharia and Raniganj coalfields?—Not to my knowledge.

**D-1939.** Do you consider the Indian miner a lazy fellow?—He is no lazier than I am; I would not work if I were not compelled to. (Mr. Heron): He is prone to idleness.

**D-1940.** Is the cost per ton of coal delivered from the colliery about Rs. 3-8-0?—Yes.

**D-1941.** How much of that money goes to the actual workman?—(Mr. Keelan): Between 73 and 75 per cent. I have not and never had a contractor. Of the total money paid out at the colliery the managerial staff receives a little over 3 per cent., the Indian supervising staff about 6 per cent., upkeep of plant costs about 17 per cent. and about 73 or 74 per cent. goes to the actual labourer. That is in the Jharia coalfield, and it is very much the same in the Raniganj field. (Mr. Purdy): These figures are taken from a contract colliery, the European staff received Rs. 4,225 per month, the Indian staff Rs. 8,694 per month, the raising contractor's monthly bills average Rs. 53,742. About 4½ lakhs of tons are raised per year. That is the average for a month averaged over the whole year.

**D-1942.** *The Chairman:* Perhaps you can give us those figures in percentages?—Yes. The average cost per ton for last year was a little over Rs. 3. An average of 2,000 workers is employed on this particular colliery.

**D-1943.** *Mr. Mackie:* You have stated that you do not work with contractors; so you think you raise your coal cheaper without contractors than with the aid of contractors?—(Mr. Keelan): I presume I do. I have never worked with contractors in the 36 years I have worked in collieries.

**D-1944.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* What is your cost per ton?—I could not tell you; it varies in different collieries and it varies each month. It depends upon the royalty payable to the landlords.

**D-1945.** *Mr. Joshi:* I suppose your cost of production is a great secret?—No, there is no secret about it; we have nothing to hide. It varies between Rs. 2-8-0 and Rs. 3. The contractor must make something to live on.

**D-1946.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* But if you have no contractor do you have to employ extra staff?—I like to work without a contractor because then one has more command of the colliery. If you work with a contractor and you happen to have a little quarrel with the contractor and he goes away you may be in great difficulties for two or three months. I have never really considered it from the point of view of costs because it is only a matter of about an anna a ton.

*The Chairman:* Colliery managers evidently differ very much on this matter.

**D-1947.** *Mr. Mackie* : When you have no contractor I suppose you must have a larger staff?—Certainly, that is obvious. (*Mr. Heron*) : If you have a recruiting contractor it leaves the manager free to look after the actual working of the mine. I have a recruiting contractor but not a raising contractor.

*The Chairman* : There are apparently three types of management : the contractor recruiter, the raising contractor and direct employment.

**D-1948.** *Mr. Mackie* : When we visited Pokhuria we found you had a large number of Santhal miners working with you. They said they earned from Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 6 per week. Can you say whether that is about their average wage?—A man and his wife will cut about three tubs on an average per day. They are paid As. 7½ per tub and 6 pies commission; that comes to As. 8 a tub. They produce about three tubs so that they get about 24 annas a day between them. Sometimes they produce two tubs of coal and one tub of slack, and they get As. 4½ for the slack.

**D-1949.** Depending on the number of days they work they can earn up to about Rs. 6 per week?—If they work the full week.

**D-1950.** How many days a week do they work?—I should say they work on an average about 4 days a week.

**D-1951.** What do a man and his wife actually earn in a week?—I have here a statement which was taken from a miner working at Bhuggutdih Colliery for the last two years. He says " I am a married man and have two children. I work 6 days a week. I cut on an average 2½ tubs a day, or in other words 15 tubs per week. My wife works as loader with me and we earn Rs. 1-1-6 per day. As we work 6 days our weekly earnings amount to Rs. 6-9-0."

**D-1952.** Is that a Santhal?—No, a Ghatwar.

**D-1953.** Are the Santhals able to do so much?—The Santhals coming from Pokhuria have to walk a distance of about 16½ miles.

**D-1954.** But they do not walk in every day, do they?—No; they stay for 4 days at the colliery. Some come in on Tuesday and some on Wednesday and go back for the week-end.

**D-1955.** Do not some stay for several weeks together?—Very rarely. Most of them go back for the week-end.

**D-1956.** Do they bring their children with them to the mines?—No; I understand the arrangement is that some of the women are left in the *dhowrahs* at Pokhuria to look after the children. They bring their wives as loaders.

**D-1957.** There is quite a lot of education at Pokhuria; some of the sons of miners go to the day schools. Are any of those boys who have been educated in the schools now cutting coal?—Not to my knowledge.

**D-1958.** Do you think that the food that the people eat at the collieries is in any way inferior to what they eat in their villages?— I think the food in the villages is simpler; they eat more at the collieries and they have greater variation of diet when they are near a bazaar. In the villages they eat *dal*, rice and perhaps a little fish they catch in a pond, but near the bazaar they have a greater variety.

**D-1959.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can they afford to buy it?—They do buy it in small quantities.

**D-1960.** *Mr. Mackie*: If you fine the miners heavily for under-loading tubs or for any other unjust reason what usually happens?— They would complain at once to the staff if that was done and they would cease work and bring a petition to me; I should enquire into it and try to ease matters for a time.

**D-1961.** In a mine raising about 500 tons a day how many tubs do you think it would be necessary to instal?—It depends upon the lay-out underground; with a fairly good lay-out I should fancy 250 tubs.

**D-1962.** That means that you would only be getting 2 tons per tub?—(*Mr. Heron*): In a well-laid-out mine you can get the tub returned 3 or 4 times in a shift.

**D-1963.** Do you find that the miners like to see the tubs before they begin working?—Yes, in some cases. (*Mr. Keelan*): The miner usually likes to see tubs for the whole day's work.

**D-1964.** If you are late in supplying tubs, what do they do in the meantime?—They wait till they get them.

**D-1965.** They do not begin work?—No.

**D-1966.** When you came to India did you think the method adopted by the Indian miner of cutting coal at the coal face was a good method?—(*Mr. Heron*): It is a bad method.

**D-1967.** Have you ever tried to show them a better way?—Yes, but I have had no results as the miner thinks he knows far better than I do. At home the miner undercuts the coal first, then shears in the side, and then having regard to the least line of resistance he will bore his five holes and blast it down. The Indian miner simply stands on his feet, swings the pick round and knocks a bit off here and there.

**D-1968.** You have really tried to show them a better method?— Yes, I have tried to show them the undercutting method. But they will not do it. (*Mr. Purdy*): I tried it years ago but I gave it up.

**D-1969.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: *Mr. Heron*, will you give me your total wages bill for workers engaged in getting and loading coal for the last month?—(*Mr. Heron*): Yes, here is a sheet made out for the month of December in a colliery in Jharia. The total wage bill including royalties came to Rs. 32,208-13-6.

**D-1970.** I want the number of tons raised in the month of December, the number of workers employed as cutters and loaders and the wage bill for that period?—I cannot give you the number of loaders but I can give you the raising. The total number of tons is 12,170. The total amount paid to labour is Rs. 24,240. Labour there includes miners, winding engine *khalasis*, and all staff with the exception of the supervising and office staff.

**D-1971.** Can you give me an approximate idea of the number of workers?—Approximately 500 miners, and an equal number of loaders, making 1,000 together.

**D-1972.** *Mr. Cliff*: Does that include trammers?—No.

**D-1973.** I take it this cost of Rs. 24,240 is from the coal face to the railway wagon?—Yes.

**D-1974.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I want to find out exactly what a loader and miner get in the course of a month?—That would depend upon the number of days they worked.

**D-1975.** If I can get that figure I will be in a position to compare the amount paid to labour with the cost of raising one ton of coal. You have told us that the miner gets As. 7½. What is the average raising of coal, taking the loader and the miner together?—Three tubs a day, each tub being 13 cwt.

**D-1976.** That will work out at As. 12 per ton?—Yes.

**D-1977.** What is the raising cost of one ton in your colliery?—In this particular colliery it is Rs. 3.

**D-1978.** Therefore the cost for labour is As. 12 as against Rs. 3?—No, it is not; that is the cost of that particular item of labour.

**D-1979.** There is a statement in the memorandum of the Indian Mining Association that wages were increased by 30 per cent. in the year 1921. There is a statement in the memorandum of the Mining Federation that wages were increased between 1920 and 1921 by 100 per cent. Which of those statements is correct? Do you agree with the statement that during 1920 and 1921 the wages in the coalfields rose by practically 100 per cent.?—(Mr. Heron): No, I do not.

**D-1980.** They further say "But in 1927 the wages have fallen by 25 per cent."?—There was no difference in our rate.

**D-1981.** Has there been a reduction in wages since 1921?—To my knowledge there has been no reduction in wages in our groups of collieries.

**D-1982.** Do you mean to tell me that the 30 per cent. increase that was given in 1920-21 remains?—Yes.

**D-1983.** It is generally admitted that wages have fallen. Apparently that has not affected you. Taking the rate to be As. 7

at present all round, may I take it that your wages in 1920-21 were lower by 25 or 30 per cent. than the prevailing rate round about?—It was As. 5 or As. 6 a tub and it is now between As. 7 and As. 8 a tub.

**D-1984.** You were then paying the prevailing rate and you are now paying the prevailing increased rate?—Yes.

**D-1985.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is there any difference between the rates paid by the Mining Association and those paid by the Mining Federation?—(Mr. Keelan) : I do not think so; they could not get any labour if they paid lower rates than we do. The collieries working outcrop coal did increase wages to get labour but that was not general.

**D-1986.** Do you agree with the statement that there has been a drop of 25 per cent. generally in wages paid to the miners since 1921?—I am not speaking for the Mining Federation at all, but I do say that as far as collieries in Jharia are concerned, and particularly those with which I am associated, there has been no drop in wages.

**D-1987.** Therefore you do not agree with the statement of the Mining Federation?—I do not.

**D-1988.** *Mr. Birla* : In the memorandum of the Mining Association you say : "These have since been reduced. Likewise the cost of living has gone down since 1920." How do you reconcile those two statements?—(Mr. Heron) : The rate paid to the contractor has been reduced, but not the one paid to the miner.

*Sir Victor Sassoon* : Mr. Chairman, I suggest we get a detailed list of reductions as we have got a detailed list of increases.

**D-1989.** *The Chairman* : Will you take the schedule in the memorandum where you say there was an increase beginning at 30 per cent. running down the scale to 5 per cent. and send us information as to how far there has been any reduction in those different classes?—(Mr. Keelan) : This increase of wages was granted to people on a monthly salary.

**D-1990.** *The Chairman* : I take it that this particular statement was prepared in Calcutta?—Yes. (Mr. Cork) : In some cases wages have been increased.

**D-1991.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is there any case in which you have decreased wages?—Not in the case of miners.

**D-1992.** Have you decreased the wages of any class of workers?—Probably a few rupees; there are certain cases.

**D-1993.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : When was the last increase given before 1921?—(Mr. Keelan) : I could not tell you but the wages have gradually increased. In 1894 we were paying As. 2½ to As. 3 per tub; and before this increase we were paying As. 6 a tub. During every famine that occurred there was an appeal and another anna was put on the tub. In 1920 we were paying As. 6 to As. 6½.

**D-1994.** What were you paying in 1914?—As. 6.

**D-1995.** It says in this memorandum that the cost of living per adult appears to be about Rs. 2 per week. If in 1914 the rate was As. 6 per tub and in 1930 it is something over As. 7 per tub, do you think the increase in cost of living has been such as to equalize the position?—(Mr. Heron) : The price is now As. 8 a tub, and they are better off to-day than they were then. (Mr. Keelan) : Since 1920 there has been a slight fall in the cost of living.

**D-1996.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : I take it you accept responsibility for that statement?—(Mr. Heron) : No, I do not because I was at home when that statement was made out.

**D-1997.** Will you tell me what the cost of living per adult per week is?—Here is the case of a man named Sona, a *mistri*, who says : “ I am a Behari by caste and have worked at Baradighi colliery for the past 12 years at a salary of Rs. 28 per month. I am a married man and have one daughter. For food expenses I spend Rs. 2-8-0 per week, and for clothing Rs. 4-6-0 per month.” It comes to a total of Rs. 14-6-0, and his savings come to Rs. 13-10-0.

**D-1998.** As employers of labour, have you ever considered the desirability of finding out whether Rs. 2-8-0 a week, the figure you have just given me, is adequate for a miner and his wife to live on?—(Mr. Keelan) : Here are some figures which were given to me. Rice is about Rs. 5 to Rs. 5-8-0 a maund, *dal* about Rs. 3-6-0 a maund. I have made enquiries with regard to food-stuffs ; I have even enquired from an Indian constable who always looks prosperous and well fed, and he says Rs. 10 feeds him very well.

**D-1999.** *Mr. Cliff* : Does that mean himself and his family?—No, he is a single man. I am satisfied that if they earn Rs. 18 to Rs. 20 a month, the man and his wife and two children can have two square meals a day and a bit of tea in the morning.

**D-2000.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : I am referring to Rs. 2-8-0 for food. Are you satisfied that that is adequate?—No, I think it is a little more than that. I should say Rs. 12 a month.

**D-2001.** The Mining Association in their memorandum say that the Association considers that the introduction of intermediaries between employers and employees might possibly create grievances or wants that at present simply do not exist. Is there any method to-day whereby you can get to know the wants and grievances of the employees or whether they want a rise in wages ; is there any method by which they can approach you?—Yes, they have access to the manager.

**D-2002.** If you have no objection to direct access have you any objection to combined access?—(Mr. Heron) : None.

**D-2003.** Am I to take that reply to mean that you would not be averse to granting adequate facilities for the Collieries Employees



Association to set up trade unions on the coalfield?—What would be the nature of the facilities required? No, I should be pleased to discuss the matter with the Association.

**D-2004.** Are you speaking now in your individual capacity?—Yes.

**D-2005.** May we know what the Association feels about it?—  
(Mr. Keelan): That we cannot tell you; we are giving you our personal views to-day.

**D-2006.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose*: I think you are appearing on behalf of the Association?—No.

*The Chairman*: They are members, but they are not speaking for the Association.

**D-2007.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You say in the memorandum "Before the merits of any such claim against the industry itself could arise for consideration, the proof of the existence of a class of regular workers in the mines, settled labour, in other words, with mining as their definite occupation, would be a necessary preliminary." Do you adhere to that opinion?—It is not our opinion.

**D-2008.** I would like your personal opinion in regard to welfare work including education?—I am quite in favour of welfare work—primary education is part of welfare work.

**D-2009.** Would you individually be averse to money being raised by means of a cess?—Money is now raised by means of a cess.

**D-2010.** Would you be averse to more money being raised?—We all pay a road and public works cess which is supposed to provide for rural schools and education, and there is a Bill under consideration to increase that cess from two pice in the rupee to anna 1.

**D-2011.** Would you be averse to the constitution of a miners welfare fund out of which all these facilities could be provided by means of a cess levied at so much per ton?—If the trade could afford it and the trade was not against it there would certainly be no opposition from us. (Mr. Heron): If the economic position of the trade permitted it, yes.

**D-2012.** In view of the statement on this matter made in the memorandum of one of the Federations it appears that even when your industry was prosperous nothing was done for welfare work owing to lack of co-ordination. Whether your industry is in the position at present to pay for it or not is a different matter, but the cess would be a cess on tonnage produced?—(Mr. Keelan): If the trade could afford it and the trade granted it there would be no opposition from us.

**D-2013.** What do you mean by "trade"? Do you mean the Mining Federation and the Mining Association?—The people who run the collieries; if they could see their way to afford it and the trade really

could afford it, there would be no opposition from us; it would make our work easier. We do not deal with the commercial side of it at all. Naturally the better paid our people are the easier our work. (Mr. Heron): If the labour were educated they would be able to take an intelligent interest in their work.

**D-2014.** With regard to housing, is there overcrowding?—The month of February is the shortest month of the year and the month in which we have the maximum raising. During that month there is overcrowding.

**D-2015.** Has any action been taken by the Mines Board of Health under Regulation 22A to prevent overcrowding?—Yes.

**D-2016.** What action was taken?—(Mr. Purdy): No action was taken in court that I know of.

**D-2017.** *Mr. Mukherji*: Do you incur any expenses on recruiting miners?—(Mr. Keelan): At certain times of the year we spend a small amount on recruiting.

**D-2018.** What is the average cost of your recruiting?—Anything from 1 anna to 3 annas or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  annas a ton.

**D-2019.** It has been definitely asserted that the Bengal Coal Company forced their tenants to work in their own mines?—We are not concerned with what is past. I can only speak of what is happening. When I took charge in 1914 I did so on the distinct understanding that there was no connection between the colliery and the *zamindari*. The collieries might arrange their own labour and the *zamindari* would not arrange it.

**D-2020.** Have you ever had occasion to dismiss surplus labour coming to your collieries seeking employment?—At certain times of the year. Up to about two weeks ago I could have engaged 100 per cent. more men, but they were not there. Now labour is coming in. Within a week I shall know exactly what I can employ and we shall not take any more. They will move on when they find there is no work at my colliery. They may stay for two or three days resting with their friends before they go on to the next colliery, but within a fortnight or three weeks it will have all settled down, and every mine will have just the amount of labour it requires; the extra labour having left the district. At certain times of the year we get too much labour and have to send it on.

**D-2021.** *The Chairman*: Do you ever have to discharge labour when you once begin to employ it?—No. Once he is employed we would rather keep that man than go in for a new fellow.

**D-2022.** *Mr. Mukherji*: Is it not a fact that you pay overtime wages for workers who work overtime or who work on holidays?—The only people who work overtime are fitters, and we pay them overtime wages.

**D-2023.** Have you any knowledge of smaller mines working besides your collieries who put up their wages to the extent of 9 annas and 10 annas per tub during the boom period of 1920-21?—Those companies have all failed. They put up to 12 annas per tub. After 1920 we were paying 8 annas and they were paying 12 annas.

**D-2024.** You have no knowledge of mines working before 1920 who put up their wages to 9 annas and 10 annas per tub?—No.

**D-2025.** In reply to Diwan Chaman Lall you said that you would have no objection to organize representation by miners about the increase of wages or their grievances. But have you any objection to outside interference, that is, interference from those who do not belong to the actual manual labourers?—I have no objection to anyone making a representation on behalf of the workmen provided always that he can talk practically on the subject.

**D-2026.** So you have objection to outsiders coming and interfering?—Yes.

*Mr. Cliff:* What do you mean by outsiders?

*Mr. Mukherji:* I mean those who are not residents on the colliery and working on the colliery with manual labourers.

*Mr. Cliff:* Would you call the Secretary of the Employees' Association an outsider?

*Mr. Mukherji:* I would because he is not a manual labourer.

*The Witness:* (Mr. Heron): I would not call him an outsider at all because he has worked on the colliery.

*Mr. Mukherji:* But he no longer works on the colliery.

*The Chairman:* The answer is quite clear that the witness has no objection to the Secretary of the Association if he is a practical man having experience of colliery work.

**D-2027.** *Mr. Joshi:* We have been told that the coal industry is not doing well now. Is it true?—(Mr. Keelan): As far as I know, it was true up to a month ago.

**D-2028.** If the trade is not at present in a prosperous condition, should we not expect that you either cannot give sufficient work to your labour or you have reduced the number?—(Mr. Cork): The position is that a less number of collieries are raising the same number of tons. The output of the collieries is much the same, but there are some collieries which were closed down for bad trade and the others have taken their labour.

**D-2029.** There is some surplus labour available?—No. (Mr. Heron): Some second class collieries were closed down and the labour has been absorbed by collieries working first-class coal.

**D-2030.** You do not say that the rate of wages has gone down but I find that the average earnings have gone down. The Chief Inspector of Mines says that the daily wages in 1926 were 15 annas, in 1927 14 annas 3 pies and in 1928 13 annas 6 pies. There is an indication that there must be surplus labour and the wages are going down. There is either short work or reduction of rates?—Not necessarily. The miner may be giving a tub less a day; the work is there but he is not doing it.

**D-2031.** If the trade is bad I feel that there should be no necessity for costly recruiting?—(Mr. Purdy): The wages bill can go down for more reasons than one. For instance, you may improve the output per person by installing machinery. (Mr. Keelan): The coal is cut by machine and not by hand. They only do the filling.

**D-2032.** My point is that the average earnings have gone down. So they must be short of work which tallies with the statement that your trade is not good. It does not show that you are spending money on recruitment?—(Mr. Heron): But you are not taking into account the fact that the miner instead of producing three tubs might only produce two. (Mr. Keelan): For the last two years there is a restricted output.

**D-2033.** This is what the Indian Mining Association say in regard to the hours of work. "The majority of the miners consider the getting of three tubs to be a day's work—and take their own time over it—working 4 or 5 hours per day and 4 or 5 days per week." I want to know if this statement is correct?—I think what the Mining Association are referring to is the actual work put in by a miner, not the time he goes down the pit and the time he comes up.

**D-2034.** I agree that the actual work he puts in is only 4 or 5 hours and that he works only for 4 or 5 days in a week. If this is so, from your point of view, what is the difficulty in reducing the statutory daily limit of 12 hours underground to, say, 10 hours?—I would like to point out that in a safety-lamp pit before a miner gets to the face it will sometimes take  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours; that time is included in the working time. After he reaches the face he takes some time before he sets to work.

**D-2035.** So this statement that the miner works only 4 or 5 hours a day requires qualification?—It requires qualification and explanation.

**D-2036.** I take it for granted that he spends an hour to go and an hour to come back. Still he works, say, 7 hours a day. I want to know what will be the real difficulty from your point of view—leave aside the miners' convenience because I have heard that the miners like to work longer hours—if the statutory hours are reduced?—If you reduce the hours below 54 per week, I do not think he will be able to earn as much money as he is earning now. (Messrs. Cork and Purdy): We do not agree with that. (Mr. Keelan): In my

opinion, I do not think that if you reduce his working hours, that is including the time he gets to the face and coming out of the pit, below 54 per week he will earn as much money in a day as he is earning now.

**D-2037.** Really he works for 9 hours a day, and it is not, therefore, right to say that he works only 4 or 5 hours?—I think what the Association mean is the actual physical work at the coal face.

**D-2038.** *The Chairman* : You say that the hours for coming and going make it much longer?—Yes.

**D-2039.** *Mr. Joshi* : You were all against limitation of hours and you felt that the miner does not like 12 hours limit and that he may like to remain in the mine for 17 hours—(Mr. Heron) : I do not think we were all against limitation of hours. We said that the shift system would be better.

**D-2040.** When the Government of India proposed to limit the hours of work there was general opposition from the employers?—Law has always followed the procedure adopted by leading collieries.

**D-2041.** My point is this : There will be pressure upon the workman to do his work intensively but the employer will not suffer. It is not impossible for a workman to give you 4 or 5 hours' intensive work in, say, 8 hours' time ; is it very difficult for a man to give you four hours' work in 8 hours' time?—(Mr. Keelan) : For 5 hours you will have to allow about 9 hours.

**D-2042.** So it is not 4 hours but 5 hours?—4 to 5 hours.

**D-2043.** Let us take it that the man works for 4 hours, and if you give him 8 hours within the mine he will do his work. What I am anxious to find out is why the daily hours should not be reduced to 8 when the miner actually gives you 4 or 5 hours of work. Can you point out any difficulties except that the miner does not like?—(Mr. Heron) : The question of transport of the coal from the face to the pit top arises.

**D-2044.** You mean to say that the miner has really to work more than 4 or 5 hours?—He has got to remain longer in the mine. That is a difficulty.

**D-2045.** It is not the fault of the miner if he remains longer?—It is partly his fault.

**D-2046.** It is partly his fault and it is partly the fault of the management. I now find that there is one difficulty about carrying the coal. Is there any other difficulty in reducing the hours from 12 to 8? I may tell you that when the legislature considered this question, the Select Committee recommended that after three years this question should be reconsidered. This Commission is now sitting, and when its report comes it will be nearly 3 years and naturally

Government will depend upon the report of this Commission. We want to find out therefore whether the hours could not be reduced from 12 to any lower limit, and what are the difficulties in doing it?—(Mr. Purdy): If you reduce his hours and have shifts of 8 hours, he will have to go down at a certain time and will have to come up at a certain time.

**D-2047.** You are speaking of the convenience of the miner. I want to know what will be your difficulties?—We have no objection to it. (Mr. Keelan): When the shift system comes into force from 1st of April it is going to take us a certain time to take all the labour out of the pit, because every man must be out of the pit before the new shift goes down. For taking one shift out of the pit it will take about 2 hours. So that if you reduce the hours to 8 it will give him only 6 hours from the time he enters the cage to the time he comes out of the pit again. If the shift has to commence at, say, 8 o'clock we shall have to begin at 6 o'clock. These cages are small.

**D-2048.** You are raising the question whether the 8 hours should be from face to face or bank to bank?—It comes to that.

**D-2049.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You would not mind 8 hours from face to face?—No.

**D-2050.** *Mr. Clow*: What is the system of fining that is in force in the collieries directly managed?—Practically there is no fining.

**D-2051.** In the collieries run by contractors, is any control exercised over the extent to which a contractor can fine a workman?—(Mr. Cork): No.

**D-2052.** Are you able to state to what extent men are fined?—If people are unjustly fined they will come to me.

**D-2053.** Have you many such instances?—No.

**D-2054.** Are you in favour of imposing any restrictions on the sale or manufacture of drinks in the colliery areas?—(Mr. Keelan): Yes. As I have stated in my memorandum, I am not in favour of the people getting *charas*, *ganja* or spirits, but the rice beer does them no harm. In my opinion, the rice beer that was made 20 years ago is not the same beer that they are taking now. I would go further and say that very few of the excise staff can tell you what is contained in rice beer; they have never analysed it.

**D-2055.** *The Chairman*: With regard to maternity benefit to women on your collieries before and after child-birth, have you any uniform system?—It is left to the discretion of the manager. Usually he gives a small amount; the labour superintendent recommends and the manager sanctions it. (Mr. Purdy): In my case I keep a *dai* in the case of women who are employed direct by the company. About

the grant of maternity allowances, in the case of women who are employed by the contractor, the contractor says that most of the women go to their homes for delivery, and that he pays them their train fares and other expenses.

**D-2056.** You cannot tell us what payment the contractor makes?—Rs. 2, I think.

**D-2057.** Is that a maternity allowance in cash?—Yes.

**D-2058.** For how long is the woman off-work?—I cannot say. (Mr. Cork): We have not got anything like that.

**D-2059.** We found places where they give very liberal allowances, others who give some allowance and others who give none at all. Would you have any objection to there being a provision which would put you all on the same level, at any rate as far as the minimum allowance is concerned?—(Mr. Purdy): We will be pleased to have it. (Mr. Heron): I do not think there can be any objection. (Mr. Keelan): If the trade agrees and could afford it, we would certainly welcome it.

**D-2060.** It is not a heavy item. Do you not think it is one of the things that would lead to contentment on your collieries?—Certainly.

**D-2061.** That is one part of a larger matter of the general welfare of the people that you employ. Would you object to some co-ordinated scheme largely under the control of practical persons like yourselves that would bring about a minimum standard of general welfare for the workers?—(Mr. Purdy): We will be pleased to have it. (Mr. Heron): I have no objection.

**D-2062.** *Mr. Cliff:* With regard to the cost of recruitment, the Government of Bihar and Orissa have given us certain figures, and I wanted to know whether you could tell us from your experience whether they are representative. They say that the cost of recruitment for two large collieries one situated in Jharia and the other in Mohuda for the year 1927 was 7.82 pies per ton; for the first half of 1928 it was 10 pies per ton, for the second half of 1928 it was 10.5 and for the first half of 1929 it was 9 pies per ton?—I pay  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas per ton. (Mr. Purdy): It costs me approximately 2 annas per ton for recruiting.

**D-2063.** That is the average for the year?—Yes. (Mr. Cork): In our case it is between 4 and 5, and sometimes up to 6 annas. (Mr. Purdy): It is more in the Raniganj field than in the Jharia field.

**D-2064.** With regard to the payment of wages, have any of you as managers tried to alter the day on which wages are paid?—I have done it some years ago. I brought in the system of payment on Saturday afternoon in order to give them a clear Sunday, but I do not know whether that system is still carried on in that colliery after I left it.

I did more or less make it a success for about two years at that particular place, and everybody was paid on Saturday afternoon.

**D-2065.** That means that they were free on Sunday provided the colliery was not working?—Yes.

**D-2066.** *The Chairman:* Did you then experience a better attendance on Monday?—No; it was the same.

**D-2067.** *Mr. Cliff:* With regard to the payment, up to what day you were making?—Up to Thursday.

**D-2068.** Was there objection raised to that?—No.

**D-2069.** With regard to the other collieries, have you tried it again?—No. We are on contract system, and the contractor pays on Sunday.

**D-2070.** Do you exercise no control with regard to the payment?—I only insist that the payment should not be delayed longer than Sunday; he generally pays on Sunday.

**D-2071.** How long does the Sunday payment take?—It depends on the system. When I organize a *pucca* system with European assistants in charge of it, they could pay all the men in about 4 hours; but when it is left to the contractor and his staff, they take a much longer time over it; they spend most of the Sunday morning in payments.

**D-2072.** If he takes 4 hours with a *pucca* staff, does he start earlier, say, at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning?—In the hot weather he does, but not in the cold weather.

**D-2073.** Do all the people live on the colliery, or do some of them come from outside to receive payment?—There are very few who come from outside, but they do not live far away from the colliery.

**D-2074.** Has any other manager tried payment on Saturday?—(Mr. Heron): I pay on Sunday. It commences at 8 o'clock and finishes by 12. Those who come from outside make it a point of working on Saturday night so that they can get their pay on Sunday morning and then get off.

**D-2075.** What time do they come up on Sunday morning?—Between 6 and 7.

**D-2076.** What time do they get their payment?—By 8 or 8-30.

**D-2077.** What will be the longest distance from which people come to work?—Some people come from 16½ miles. These people after receiving payment go back to their homes and return to work only on Wednesday morning.

**D-2078.** Do you expect these people to come on Monday?—They are the best judges.

**D-2079.** If a person has got to spend his Sunday in that way it is hardly reasonable to call that a day of rest?—There is no colliery



which works on Sunday. There is practically no work on Monday; on Tuesday you will probably get about  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{2}{3}$ ; on Wednesday you start a full day.

**D-2080.** I was interested to find out why so many miners did not work on Monday, and I got some light on it yesterday and I got more light on it to-day. Is it not feasible to organize a system of payment on a day other than Sunday? Are there practical difficulties in the way?—That could be done, but it would affect the miners coming from that distance. Because it suits them to go home on Sunday morning. If they are paid on Saturday they will go home on Saturday morning, which means that they will have an extra holiday.

**D-2081.** Is there any practical difficulty from the point of view of the management?—None whatever.

**D-2082.** With regard to the Santhals who come from long distances, is there a possibility of organizing transport for them?—I do not think so.

**D-2083.** Do the mine managers want a permanent stable labour force?—Yes.

**D-2084.** Will you tell us what steps you have taken to try and obtain a permanent stable labour force?—The step necessary to be taken is to give them such inducements as will persuade them to stay on the colliery. But there is another thing to be taken into consideration. For the most part some of them remain in their villages. When it is ploughing time, they want to go home, and when it is harvesting time they again want to go home. It is a question whether we would be able to offer such inducements as would convince them that it would be better for them to remain on the colliery instead of going to their villages.

**D-2085.** I notice that a very large number of collieries deal with their labour through contractors, but there is a proportion who deal with them direct. I was wondering what steps the managers themselves have really taken to try and obtain a stable permanent labour force?—You must remember that he is an agriculturist first, and a miner second.

**D-2086.** *The Chairman:* But if he came regularly to you, except for those seasons of ploughing and reaping, for the rest of his time you would consider him practically a permanent worker, would you not?—Yes.

**D-2087.** *Mr. Cliff:* I am just trying to see whether from the point of view of the manager himself who wants efficiency and who wants a permanent labour force any steps have been taken to create that force?—*(Mr. Purdy):* The only inducements that we give at the present day are free houses, free lighting, free coal, free drinking water, free medical attendance and medicine, sick and slight injury allowance and a certain amount of land in some collieries. *(Mr. Keelan):* For instance, the Bengal Coal Company which holds *zamindaris* give land to miners at reduced rates of rent.

**D-2088.** The contractors tell me that they control the supply and distribution of tubs, while the mine managers evidently control the attendance of labour. I want to know what co-ordination and co-operation there is between the mine manager and the contractor?—(Mr. Cork): The contractor is paid on a sliding scale; the more he raises the greater will be the amount he receives.

**D-2089.** The mine manager keeps a register which purports to record the attendance of labour. There are times when due to no fault of the miner there is no work available for him; for instance, there are no tubs?—There are odd occasions, but I do not think that is general.

**D-2090.** What co-ordination is there between the two?—(Mr. Heron): The responsibility of the mine manager ceases when these miners are made over to the *sardars* who are responsible for the supply of tubs underground to the miners.

**D-2091.** Is the *sardar* responsible to the contractor?—(Mr. Heron): The *sardar* is responsible to the overman, the overman to the Assistant Manager and the Assistant Manager to the Manager.

**D-2092.** In one particular mine I went to, the *sardars* are responsible to the contractor?—He is a raising contractor. I am talking now of recruiting contractors whose responsibility ceases as soon as the miner reaches the colliery.

**D-2093.** That is in a departmental system of raising coal. But where you have raising contractors what co-ordination is there between you and him in dealing with the question of the distribution of tubs and supply of labour?—There are the manager and the overmen. (Mr. Cork): It is a question of tub distribution. The more the contractor gets with a certain number of tubs the better for him.

**D-2094.** But where do you co-ordinate between the supply of labour and the supply of tubs?—Generally there is an excess of tubs available over the labour employed.

**D-2095.** I am told on good authority that there are times in the year when you are short of tubs and there are other times when you have plenty of them. What co-ordination is there between the contractor and the manager to adjust the labour supply to the number of tubs available when you are short of tubs?—There is nothing except the question of speeding up the tubs from the coal face to the surface.

**D-2096.** Do you let men go down the mines when there are no tubs for them?—No.

**D-2097.** How do you arrange it between yourself and the contractor?—He will expedite the raising of tubs.

**D-2098.** It appears there are instances where there are no tubs?—When there is a breakdown it cannot be helped. You will have to make allowances for that.

**D-2099.** Apart from breakdown you have sometimes a great excess of labour over the tubs available for their use?—I have never had such an excess of coal-cutting labour. (Mr. Purdy): On an average I have 2,000 workers underground. Let us take half of them as miners. For these 1,000 miners 500 per shift. I have 1,000 tubs. I have 59 overmen who see to distribution of these tubs in addition to the contractor's staff of *sardars*.

**D-2100.** They are under your control?—The 59 overmen are under my control. Besides I have head overmen over these 59 overmen.

**D-2101.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: How do you pay the tramway men? Do you pay them piece rates?—Yes.

**D-2102.** Paying the tramway men piece rates is an incentive to them to turn round as many tubs as possible?—Yes. The contractor *sardars* who are directly in charge of these men and in charge of the distribution of these tubs, the *munshis* who see to the filling up of the tubs are all paid a commission per tub.

**D-2103.** So that, it does not pay anybody handling the tubs not to run them as fast as they possibly can?—Everybody is interested in the quick handling of the tubs. (Mr. Heron): In a well-laid-out colliery a tub can return 3 to 3½ times on an average every day. If you are not getting them as rapidly as that you can examine the various sections and spot out at once where the defect lies in the lay-out of the colliery. (Mr. Purdy): Everybody handling the tubs—the miner, the loader, the trammer, the *sardar* and the *munshi*—is paid on contract.

**D-2104.** If a miner through no fault of his own is prevented from doing his work can there be any objection to his being given a minimum earning for such period? For instance, take the question of tubs, the question of loading machine-cut coal and the coal not being cut and kept ready for loading?—(Mr. Heron): We do not often fail to supply tubs. (Mr. Cork): We generally give *khoraki*, a certain proportion of his earnings, in the case of breakdown.

**D-2105.** *The Chairman*: Or a failure of the tubs?—Suppose a rope breaks down, the tubs cannot be moved up and down. It cannot be said that the tubs are insufficient, but the delay is due to the breakage of the rope.

**D-2106.** At what rate do you pay *khoraki* when you allow a man to go down the mine and he is not able to work through no fault of his own?—We pay A\$. 2.

**D-2107.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is there any objection to this being adopted uniformly in all pits?—Every case has to be enquired into to see that it is not due to the fault of the miner.

**D-2108.** Take cases where it is through no fault of the miner. Would you object to that system being adopted uniformly in all the pits?—I would not object to its being uniform. But there are cases

where it is imposed upon you that you should pay a minimum wage for a fault which could be easily rectified. The man could have gone into another portion of the mine and earned something. In such cases we should not be made to pay.

**D-2109.** What protection has the miner in pits where due to insufficiency of tramways leading to the coal face he has long leads to carry the coal?—If that was the case the labour would go away the next day. We will lose our labour. (Mr. Heron) The miner gets the necessary protection from the managers who have to see that the tramways are as near to the coal face as possible.

**D-2110.** There are complaints in certain pits that it is not so?—If that were so the manager must be a man who is not alive to his responsibility.

**D-2111.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: I suppose pits are run to get coal out of them?—Yes.

**D-2112.** *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the coal raised by raising contractors is there any check between the amount despatched and paid for by the Company and the amount for which the contractor pays his labour?—(Mr. Cork) There is no check because the miner is paid by tubs and the contractor by tons.

**D-2113.** The total amount that you pay for the tonnage raised can be compared with the total amount that the contractor pays for the tubs raised by his men. There is a very widespread impression amongst the mining community that there is an amount of surplus coal which goes by the board which ought not to go by the board. What assurance have they that it is not so?—(Mr. Heron) There is this protection in the case of surplus coal. We pay As. 4 a ton to the miner and his men.

**D-2114.** That is where the miner has direct contact with the manager?—Yes.

**D-2115.** What check is there where you have a coal-raising contractor?—(Mr. Purdy) The only check is this. The contractor keeps his own account through his *munshis* and *sardars* and the miners are paid according to that account. The only check that I have over the number of tubs is my overmen who give me the number of tubs raised in each pit daily, i.e., "Daily Report".

**D-2116.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You say you know the number of tubs coming out of each pit and the number of tons that you pay for. Therefore you have got a check?—Yes, I have.

**D-2117.** Do you ever compare the figures?—We compare them every week.

**D-2118.** Do you find that you pay for more coal than could be accounted for by the number of tubs raised; or in other words do you

find the tubs have been overloaded?—I am actually getting less every week—300 to 400 tons less.

**D-2119.** *Mr. Cliff*: Can there be any objection to a system of check being instituted which would protect the miner?—(Mr. Cork) The best protection is this: once a tub of coal is not paid for the miner goes next door; As. 4 is waiting for him.

**D-2120.** With regard to the number of hours worked by miners I understand that the daily limitation will be 12 hours from 1st April. Are you making any arrangement to check the times of entry and exit of the miners?—(Mr. Heron) We have the tally system. The miner is given a token and his name and the time he goes down are entered in a register. When he comes out of the mine he produces the token and his name is taken off the register. That would give us the time he has been underground. (Mr. Purdy) I have the same system. But the miners are not careful in the use of the tokens. They very often throw it away in the mine itself or when they come up in the cage. They very rarely produce it again before the time clerk at the top of the pit. I had to make hundreds of them last year especially six months ago. I warned the miners and threatened them that I would charge As. 2 per ticket if they lost it. I did not intend to enforce it, but in one or two cases I had to make them pay As. 2. I have since been able to run this system without serious trouble. I work two shifts already—day shift and night shift.

**D-2121.** I have seen that system which is supposed to have been in operation 3 or 4 years. It does not record the actual facts. In point of fact it is no record at all. That system is going by the board. Have you any other sufficient check to be instituted on the 1st of April?—(Mr. Keelan) The best check that we can have is this: the mine must be cleared of all labour before any new labour is allowed to go down.

**D-2122.** Is that proposed to be done generally?—I think so. (Mr. Heron): Each record clerk is given an assistant who is in charge of the tallies. He hands out the tallies to the miners and notes their names and the number of the token in a register. He has a clock in front of him and he notes down the time also. I think this is the system that works at home also.

*Mr. Cliff*: I have seen a time clerk with a clock in front of him recording the time to the exact minute both when the miners go down and come out.

**D-2123.** We saw a time register the other day in a colliery which recorded that certain men went down 5 minutes past the hour and came out 5 minutes past the hour: again certain others went down 20 minutes past the hour and came up 20 minutes past the hour with absolute precision and uniformity. We asked how the men were able to do that and whether they were called out. He said they were not called out. How do you suggest that this is done?—(Mr. Heron): That goes to show that the men are prone to resist authority.

**D-2124.** It shows that the time clerk is registering according to theory, not according to fact. Will you call the people out in April?—(Mr. Keelan). We have to. (Mr. Heron). The matter will have to be explained to the miner and he should be left to keep the time. If he does not obey he will have to be compelled to obey.

**D-2125.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: How will you compel?—(Mr. Heron and Mr. Purdy) Turn him out.

**D-2126.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is there any difference in the rate of wages for loading machine-cut coal and hewing and loading a tub of coal?—(Mr. Heron) The rate is As. 5½ a tub for loading machine-cut coal and As. 8 a tub for hewing and loading coal. The miner who loads the machine-cut coal will have also to dress up the sides of the gallery. It may be that the shots may have been defective. He might have to dress up the sides and fill 3 or 4 tubs.

**D-2127.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you use different tubs?—No, we use the same tubs for both kinds of coal. Different tubs are used in different mines. Some use 27 c.ft tubs and that is the standard in that mine. Some use 30 c.ft tubs and that is the standard in those mines.

**D-2128.** You pay the same amount irrespective of the size?—No, there is a difference of half an anna.

**D-2129.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Supposing an accident occurs in your mine what do you do as regards reporting it to the Chief Inspector of Mines?—(Mr. Keelan) We telephone to the Chief Inspector of Mines at once.

**D-2130.** What do you do as regards payment of workmen's compensation?—In our collieries the manager is supposed to immediately send for the nearest kin and tell them that they are entitled to compensation. If there are 3 or 4 applications for compensation we put them together and send them to the insurance people. (Mr. Heron) In our mines the manager makes an enquiry into the accident to satisfy himself whether it is due to contributory negligence on the part of the employee or not and then fills up a form and sends it to the insurance company along with the medical certificate.

**D-2131.** In other words you act as a sort of intermediary judge and decide whether in your opinion it comes within the scope of the Act or not?—You will have to fill a form prescribed by the insurance company and for that you will have to make enquiries and find out the details. An accident might have been brought about due to no fault on the part of the insured.

**D-2132.** Assuming that it was brought about by contributory negligence on the part of the miner, would you still advise payment of workmen's compensation?—Yes.

**D-2133.** Never mind whether the case is good or bad you pass on the papers to the insurance company?—Yes. (Mr. Keelan) We do the

same. (Mr. Cork) We are not insured. (Mr. Purdy) I am insured. We also report direct to the insurance company. It is a serious accident we have a report sent to the Board of Health, the Deputy Commissioner and the Inspector of Mines.

**D-2134.** Mr. Cork, what do you do since you are not insured?—(Mr. Cork) As soon as the report comes from the colliery the labour superintendent takes out the wages paid to him and if the accident has not been through the man's own fault he is paid a compensation.

**D-2135.** You do not intimate it to any authority at all; you do that at your own discretion?—We report the accident to the Inspector of Mines.

**D-2136.** You do not advise the workmen's compensation people?—No.

*Mr. Mackie:* May I make it clear? In the Jharia coalfield the Deputy Commissioner is also Commissioner for workmen's compensation. The report of an accident is sent to the Deputy Commissioner, so that the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation is always in touch with the occurrence of accidents. He makes enquiries after the report is made to him.

**D-2137.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Supposing a man does not get properly paid or supposing you say that it is his fault and you are not liable, is that reported to anybody?—He goes to the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.

**D-2138.** Supposing the man does not know his rights and does not bring it forward. I am here talking of a colliery which is not insured. The miner is ignorant and does not know his rights. He is not a member of any union which will take up his case. He has no friends to tell him that he should take the case before the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner. He has been the victim of an accident and you tell him that it is through his own fault and you are not liable to pay compensation. What protection has he in such a case?—They all know about it.

**D-2139.** If they do not know you do not tell them?—As soon as an accident occurs they generally come round and ask why they have not been paid compensation. If a man is not satisfied he will go to the Commissioner.

**D-2140.** We have it stated that insurance companies do not pay readily but try to contest claims and that there are people who do not get the compensation to which they are entitled?—(Mr. Keelan) I do not think it is usual for them to contest claims. I had a talk the other day with the agent of an Insurance Company. He said he was going to contest a certain claim on the ground of wilful disobedience of mines regulations. I told him that he would not succeed unless he could prove that the miner wanted to commit suicide and wilfully disobeyed the regulations. I supported the miner's claim. The pleader who argued the company's case fought on wrong lines and lost the case.

**D-2141.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : There is no definition of the word "wilful" in the Act?—I take the ordinary dictionary meaning.

**D-2142.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : You were talking of labour going away during the sowing and harvesting seasons. Do you know of any inducement that would prevent them from doing that if they have lands in their homes?—(Mr. Heron) I do not know.

**D-2143.** Do contractors have to pay for labour in competition with other people. Have they any pull on labour which enables them to keep labour?—It usually takes the form of a loan by the contractor to the labourer. He usually helps him to do something in his village and has some influence over him in some way so that he can persuade him to go to the colliery.

**D-2144.** Do the *zamindars* have any influence over these people to force them to go and work in the collieries?—I do not think the *zamindars* have any influence at all.

**D-2145.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : The contractor has, but not the *zamindar*?—Yes.

**D-2146.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is it the experience of all of you that the contractor has a control?—As far as my knowledge goes I presume he has. I could not say definitely that he has.

**D-2147.** At present the miner works with a loader. Do you think that the time will come when the miner will dispense with the loader and load the coal himself?—Mechanical arrangements can be made to assist the miner.

**D-2148.** Assuming that the wife is not working with the miner what would be the practice? Will the miner cut and load the coal himself?—He will have no other alternative. He will have to do it.

**D-2149.** Are some of them likely to have men loaders?—The difficulty that would arise on account of the prohibition of the employment of women underground can be got over by the introduction of machinery to do the work of women and rearrangement of the haulage in such a way that coal can be brought to the incline in the minimum time.

**D-2150.** Will men act as loaders?—(Mr. Keelan) We have men loaders. (Mr. Heron) We have also men loaders. (Mr. Purdy) Many of our men have refused to load coal.

**D-2151.** What type of men have you got?—We have generally the miners from the Central Provinces and the United Provinces and some from the North-West provinces. They do their own blasting and they do not like doing their own loading. The majority of them, 70 to 80 per cent. of them absolutely refused to do their own loading.

**D-2152.** What is the type of labour that you are employing?—(Mr. Heron) We have the local Bauris, the Santals, the Koras and the Kols.



**D-2153.** What about the physique of the workers?—They look fairly fit. Occasionally some of them are down with malaria, but on the whole they are physically fit.

**D-2154.** How do they compare with the agriculturists from which class they are drawn?—(Mr. Keelan) : I think the miner has a better physique than the ordinary Bengal villager who ploughs his land in his village.

**D-2155.** Why should that be?—I do not know. I suppose it is due to the exercise which they have here in the mines which gives them an appetite; they eat more here than in their villages where they do less work; they have a better physique.

**D-2156.** When you exclude women from mines, how is the miner going to get increased wages to make up for the loss of his wife's income?—Probably we will have to give him a little more. (Mr. Heron) We may or may not. If the haulage underground is improved I do not see why the miner should not be able to earn the same amount that he and his wife are now earning. (Mr. Cork) I think the miner will earn the same money if he puts his back to it.

**D-2157.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : We have been told by representatives of the miners and by some of the men themselves who have been spoken to that they do find a deficiency of tubs, that they have to wait sometimes two or three hours before they get their tubs and on some days they do not get any tubs at all. I notice that you have raised about 960,000 tons in January, about 1,100,000 tons in February but only about 601,000 tons in July and about 667,000 tons in November. It appears to me that if you have got just enough tubs for the lowest production you will have a shortage for the peak. When the production is at its peak I mean you have got more men down the mine than you have tubs for?—(Mr. Purdy) : Sometimes in February it does happen like that. There is difficulty in supplying the miners with tubs.

**D-2158.** In other words you have got too many miners down?—We are not willing to admit that, because if the miners would go and cut coal and keep it ready for the tub the tub would be there long before they are ready to load it. But they refuse to do that.

**D-2159.** The reason, he says, why he refuses to do that is because there is no certainty that he is going to get the tubs?—That is his belief, a suspicion. If a miner wants to fill two tubs he will not begin cutting coal unless he sees two tubs in front of him.

**D-2160.** If you organize it in such a way that you refuse to let down more miners than you have tubs for, every miner knows that you guarantee him a tub. He will begin to work quicker, the tubs will turn round quicker and consequently he will earn more wages?—That is only if the miner will do that.

**D-2161.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : We have had evidence on one of the collieries that one worker had done on an average about 7

tubs per day. How can that man get 7 tubs without somebody else going without tubs?—The same tub might have been moved 6 times.

**D-2162.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : With regard to your raisings you have the minimum raisings in some months and peak raisings in some other months. If you arranged the number of tubs to deal with the lowest raisings could you deal with the raisings at their peak by merely speeding up the haulage? Or in other words could you arrange the same number of tubs to deal with 600,000 tons and 1,300,000 tons? The one is the minimum and the other is the peak.—

(*Mr. Heron*) : It is only a question of speeding up the haulage.

(*Mr. Cork*) : There are cases where a miner after having got a tub sits down for a couple of hours smoking. He is quite certain that the tub is there for him to fill and he will not start working until he feels inclined to do so.

**D-2163.** Someone suggested that a miner who gets two tubs would not begin cutting until the end of the day in the hope of getting a third. Is that true?—Yes.

**D-2164.** Will not that hold up the tubs?—Yes, it will. It is a common practice with the miner that he will not start work as soon as he has got the tub. (*Mr. Keelan*) : Sometimes we have more tubs than are necessary.

**D-2165.** I anticipate that it is more likely in July and November?—February, March and September are the three months when I have large orders for coal tubs. I anticipate this demand and keep ready about 500 tubs beforehand. We make about 20 tubs a day.

**D-2166.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose* : Mr. Purdy, in your opinion which is the best way to work a mine, departmentally or through contractors?—(*Mr. Purdy*) : It varies in different districts. We work both the systems. The reason why we employ a contractor is he is an expert labour recruiter and labour handler.

**D-2167.** Which is the better method on the whole?—Some collieries must be worked through contractors. Because we have the greatest difficulty in those places in recruiting labour and we employ the contractor as an expert labour recruiter. Where there is no contractor the trouble is thrown on the staff. Whereas if we have a contractor the staff is relieved of that trouble and they can attend to more important work connected with the mine.

**D-2168.** In your colliery how many openings do you work under the *sarkari* system and how many under contract system?—All my openings are worked under contract system.

**D-2169.** What is your cost per ton under the contract system?—A little over Rs. 3.

**D-2170.** What will be the cost under the *sarkari* system?—I could not say.

**D-2171.** What was your cost per ton in the boom period (1921-23)?  
—I do not remember. I could get that for you.

**D-2172.** What margin of profit do you allow to your contractors now?—We do not allow any margin ourselves. They make as much as they can. I have no figures because I have not seen the contractor's accounts.

**D-2173.** What rate do you pay to your miners and other labourers who work on *hazira* now?—(Mr. Purdy): We do not have any miners who work on *hazira*. The only men who work on *hazira* are tram-line repairers, propping men and those who work in the engine room.

**D-2174.** What *hazira* are they getting?—I am afraid I cannot tell you at the moment; I can get it from the colliery accounts.

**D-2175.** You can give an average figure?—I think it is about As. 8 to As. 9.

**D-2176.** What did you use to pay them in the boom period of 1921-23?—(Mr. Heron): I think they were getting As. 10, if I remember aright.

**D-2177.** Can you say what was your cost under the head of European establishment in the boom period and what is it now?—No.

**D-2178.** I want to know whether during the period that elapsed between the boom period and now any increments were given to the European establishment? I refer to the men who were engaged before the boom period and who still continue in employment?—They are generally on a rising scale.

**D-2179.** Is it a fact then that reduction in cost has been made by reducing the wages of only miners and other labourers?—(Mr. Heron): Not necessarily. The reduction may have been effected by an increase in output by the introduction of machinery. (Mr. Purdy): I have not put any machinery actually into my pits. My pits are working in the way as they were working six years ago. The only difference is that I am raising now twice as much coal from the same openings as I was six years ago.

**D-2180.** Do you mean to say that you have more number of labourers now than you had six years ago?—No. I am raising twice the quantity of coal with the same staff, and as such the cost is less.

**D-2181.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are you using more C. P. miners?—Yes.

**D-2182.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose*: Can you say what was your average selling rate of coal in the boom period of 1921-23?—(Mr. Heron): We have given that already.

**D-2183.** Can you not increase the wages of the labourers at present?—If economic conditions permit, yes; if economic conditions do not permit, no.

**D-2184.** Did you pay a proportionate increase in wages to the labourers when you made an enormous amount of profit during the boom period?—(Mr. Purdy): They got an increase of 30 per cent.

**D-2185.** Do you think that it is in proportion to the profit you made?—(Mr. Keelan): There is no question of profit. The whole trade gave an increase of 30 per cent. irrespective of whether a colliery was making a profit or not.

**D-2186.** Do you get any surplus coal?—Yes. (Mr. Heron); No. (Mr. Purdy): Occasionally.

**D-2187.** Do the supervising staff get any commission on surplus coal or on raisings at the collieries?—(Mr. Purdy): As. 4 for each ton is allowed which is divided between the miners and the staff. (Mr. Cork): In my case it is all contract working. (Mr. Keelan): It appears to me that there is some misconception with regard to the term 'surplus coal.' We pay a certain rate for a loaded tub. For the purpose of calculation we take it to be 14 cwt. We know that it will weigh  $14\frac{1}{2}$  or  $14\frac{3}{4}$  cwts. We allow that because we are responsible to our managing agents for deficits, and there is a certain amount of picking which has to be allowed. I think the term 'surplus' has been used wrongly.

**D-2188.** But the fact still remains that there is surplus coal?—No, we pay so much for a well-loaded and well-cleaned tub. Our employers hold us responsible for the amount of coal we raise. Therefore we register it at 14 cwts. though we know that it contains  $14\frac{1}{2}$  or  $14\frac{3}{4}$  cwts.

**D-2189.** *The Chairman:* It is really a margin for wastage?—That is so.

**D-2190.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose:* Do the company or the contractors pay any *bakhshish* to the miners?—(Mr. Heron): They get As. 8 present during the Puja festival.

**D-2191.** How many contractors have you got?—(Mr. Purdy): I have two raising contractors; as a matter of fact I have three contractors but as one is a son of another contractor I have taken these two to be one. One contractor has two openings and the other has five.

*The Chairman:* I do not think we should enter into such details.

*Mr. Sibakli Bose:* I want to establish that the contract system is not good and that it should be abolished.

**D-2192.** Who carries on the work for the contractor? Has he a staff?—Yes.

**D-2193.** Is the staff appointed by the contractors qualified enough and capable of running the contract on behalf of the contractors?—Yes.

**D-2194.** Have they got any mining certificate?—No. My staff has got certificates. I run the mine.

**D-2195.** How often can a contractor, who has several mines to manage, look after the work personally?—It is not necessary for him to see the mine.

**D-2196.** Is it his only duty to recruit labour?—To recruit labour, to attend to their wants and grievances and to keep them peaceful.

**D-2197.** Do you not think that the work will be carried on more efficiently if only one or two openings are given to a single individual?—It is much better to have one good contractor rather than to have five bad ones.

**D-2198.** Do you mean to say that the work will not be carried on efficiently by multiplying the contractors?—Might or might not.

**D-2199.** Supposing you are to run the mines departmentally, could you not give as good a result as the contractor?—To run the mines departmentally, I have already told you that we have to employ recruiters. In this particular case we engage a contractor because he is an expert. He is more an expert recruiter than I am.

**D-2200.** Do you not consider that if the amount of profit enjoyed by the contractors was paid to the miners in the shape of increased and attractive wages, the labour would be better organized and production would be more?—(Mr. Keelan): I think you are presuming that the contractor always makes a profit.

**D-2201.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta:* Mr. Keelan, you belong to the Bengal Coal Co., is it not?—I belong to No. 1 circle only.

**D-2202.** The Bengal Coal Co. owns a pretty large *zamindari*?—Yes.

**D-2203.** You know that this *zamindari* instead of bringing any profit is run at a loss?—It just depends upon what litigation we have here.

**D-2204.** Generally what happens year after year?—We get a very small profit.

**D-2205.** Not commensurate with the expenditure?—I think the average would be Rs. 10,000 a year.

**D-2206.** The Bird and Co. are running at a loss of Rs. 20,000. Can you contradict that?—I cannot contradict that.

**D-2207.** The object of retaining this *zamindari* is to keep control over labour?—No, not at all. That bubble burst long ago. It is to prevent rack rent by landlords.

**D-2208.** It is out of philanthropic motives that your company has acquired this *zamindari*?—Where we hold no *zamindari* the landlord takes Rs. 30 rent from us for every acre of land we occupy; where the land is ours we do not charge our miner tenants any rent.

**D-2209.** What was the object in acquiring the *zamindari*?—The company is now about 150 years old. When it acquired the land it acquired it in the sense of surface and underground.

**D-2210.** How many collieries have you in your group?—Five.

**D-2211.** Do you maintain any school for the education of the children of workmen?—We maintain a school to which children of workmen and children of the clerical staff go.

**D-2212.** Do you receive any grant-in-aid from the District Board?—Yes, Rs. 15 a month. The two collieries Bhuggutdih and Enna pay Rs. 10 each; we get Rs. 10 from the Government and the staff of the collieries contribute Rs. 10.

**D-2213.** *Mr. Birla*: How many workers do they employ?—On an average the Bhuggutdih colliery employs between 400 and 500 men and Enna about 220.

**D-2214.** How many school going children you have in that area?—26.

**D-2215.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta*: Have you any hospital?—We have a hospital. We have a chief medical officer for the group and a medical officer for each colliery; in addition we have midwives.

**D-2216.** About workmen's compensation I want to know your opinion whether the system of insurance against workmen's compensation is conducive to the good of the miner or is detrimental to his interests?—I do not think it is detrimental to him; it is beneficial to him. In cases where he may have a grievance he can place it before the court and get justice.

**D-2217.** Is it not a fact that insurance departments are fighting these compensation cases?—I do not know what others have done. I had to fight one case. (*Mr. Purdy*): I have never disputed a case. I have paid Rs. 8,000 in compensation last year. In one particular case I paid a man Rs. 400 as compensation for partial disablement about two years ago. He took the Rs. 400 and spent it away, and I had to find him a job.

**D-2218.** Is it not a fact that the managing agents of collieries are also the managing agents of insurance companies?—(*Mr. Heron*): In some cases, yes. But one department has got nothing to do with the other.

**D-2219.** *Mr. Mukherji*: Is it not a fact that the Bengal Coal Co. primarily acquired the *zamindari* to secure the sub-soil right?—(*Mr. Keelan*): They bought the land in a comprehensive sense. The idea of the company was to acquire coal lands as such; they acquired the surface and the minerals.

**D-2220.** Because they would have to pay heavy compensation for the surface?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BIHAR AND ORISSA**  
**SIXTY-FOURTH MEETING.**

**DHANBAD**

**Tuesday, 28th January 1930.**

PRESENT :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.	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. LEPOER POWER.
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. ( <i>Medical Assessor</i> ).
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.	

*Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. JAMES MACKIE, Agent, Eastern Coal Company, Ltd.	Mr. SIBAKLI BOSE ( <i>Indian Colliery Employees' Association, Jharia</i> ).
Mr. M. N. MUKHERJI, Chairman, Indian Mining Federation, Calcutta.	Mr. K. N. SENGUPTA ( <i>Indian Colliery Employees' Association, Dhanbad</i> ).

*Lady Assessor.*

Mrs. KAMINI ROY.

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.	Mr. A. DIBDIN.
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**At Kujama Colliery, owned by Messrs. K. D. NANJI and Company.**

(UNDERGROUND.)

Jamuna, Jat Ghatwal, wife of Patia, woman worker, was examined and made the following statement :—

My husband works here. I came down at 8 o'clock this morning. I and my husband fill 3 or 4 or 5 tubs. 20 baskets go to a tub. We get As. 7½ per tub. We get Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 a week. I do not know how many years I have been working here. I come from Giridih. We are living here permanently. I never go back to my village. I have no relatives in Giridih. I have no children. I have cultivation here.

(The witness withdrew.)

Patia (Ghatwal), miner, was examined and made the following statement :—

I am the husband of Jamuna. It is very rarely that we get 5 tubs in a day; as a rule we get 4 tubs, which includes one tub of slack. For the slack we get As. 3 a tub. We get As. 7½ a tub for the other coal and As. 6 if the coal is taken off the floor. I work 3, 4 or 5 days a week. I get too tired to work 5 days. I drink once a week, on Mondays; I spend As. 5 on it. I belong to Giridih; I came from there when I was a very small boy. My father worked in this mine. I have been married about 10 years; I was married when I was a small boy.

(The witness withdrew.)

Kale Lohar, male miner, was examined and made the following statement :—

I live at Jaipur, about 24 miles from here. I have no fixed idea as to when I shall go home; if I get news from there I shall go. I have got about an acre of cultivation; my brother is looking after it. I cut the coal and load it myself; my wife stays in the *dhowrah* on the surface; she has a small child with her. I cut one to two tubs a day. When I drive a gallery I get As. 7½ per tub, but taking coal from the floor, as we are doing at present, we get As. 6. I can get the same amount of coal in the galleries as on the floor, but with more difficulty. We came down at 8 o'clock this morning. We get tubs at 10 o'clock. Most probably I shall go up at 6 o'clock in the evening. Sometimes I can get up at 3 o'clock when I get a tub in time. I sometimes work 3 days a week, sometimes 4 days and sometimes 5. I cannot work continuously for 5 days every week because I feel tired. I am paid at 2 o'clock on Sunday afternoon; I go about noon to get paid. I have a loan of Rs. 20 and I pay As. 2 per rupee interest. I took the loan from one of the *Kabulis*. When my brother died I took it for funeral expenses. I have got two or three children and my wife cannot come. My wife used to work here, but has not done so for the last two or three years. She sometimes works as a day-labourer on the surface. She gets As. 6 a day. My wife used to work as my loader and we used to fill about 3 tubs of coal and one of slack in those days. We do not get as much now as we used to get in those days.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. P. C. Mukherji, Manager of Kujama Colliery, was examined and made the following statement :—

I produce the register of the tubs raised. Last week Patia produced 3 tubs on each of the 5 days on which the mine was open, making 15 tubs in all; he got Rs. 7-0-6. He also produced one tub of slack on each day, making 5 tubs, for which he got 15 annas. Kale produced 2 tubs every day, making 10 tubs. He had no slack. He got Rs. 4-11-0. In Pit No. 2 last week there were 14 miners who



produced 139 tubs in the 5 days working. Of these 14 miners 7 men worked on all the 5 days, 4 worked on the last 4 days, 2 worked 1 day and 1 worked 3 days. The numbers of tubs per day was as follows :— Tuesday 20, Wednesday 28, Thursday 31, Friday 30 and Saturday 30. In addition, there were 54 tubs of slack produced. We have about 120 tubs. They do not generally have to wait in the morning for tubs, though there may be rare cases in which they do. In No. 2 Pit there are 60 or 70 tubs. When the Regulations with regard to reducing the number of women underground came into force, we excluded 30 women. First of all I excluded the slack *Kamins*, i.e., women who go down without men and pick up the slack alone. I have 4 gangs, so, if I wanted to eliminate 20 women, 5 from each gang would be excluded. I told the *sardar* of every gang to exclude 5 women. We do not generally allow women who have little children with them to go into the mine. It is for the *sardar* of each gang to decide which women in the gang should be excluded. Some of the men whose women have been excluded are here and some have gone to their cultivation. We cannot tell what will be the ultimate result of this exclusion of women, as cultivation is good this year. The women so excluded do not want to work on the surface; they are accustomed to work underground and they do not like working in the sun. Some of the women who have been excluded from underground have been provided by us with surface work; some of them are staying here without work and others have stayed in their villages. When I excluded the women I explained the law to them; they understand that there is a Government law that they have to be excluded from the mine underground altogether within a certain period.

(The witness withdrew.)

**At the open coal quarry of the Indian Jharia Colliery (Tisra), owned by Messrs. Khemji Walji and Company.**

BHUCHI, Kori, woman coal carrier, was examined and made the following statement :—

Two of us women load 6 tubs a day. My son cuts the coal and we two women load it. My son is cutting the coal in the open air in the quarry. We get 7 annas per tub. I have never counted how many baskets go to a tub. I came about 7 or 8 o'clock this morning and I shall leave work after sunset. I take my meal in the middle of the day. In open quarries we can take our meal in the middle of the day. I have worked underground. I used to work in another colliery in the incline; I stopped last September, I left it of my own accord.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. M. BHATTACHARJI, Manager of the Central Junagora Colliery.**

**D-2221. The Chairman :** How many people do you employ here? —There are 70 miners and their loaders, making 140, 18 trammers.

35 loading coolies, men and women, soft coke-makers and other *hazira* coolies, and 10 to 12 firemen and enginemen, making a total of about 200.

**D-2222.** I understand you have not a very good seam and you find great difficulty in marketing your coal; in fact it has been a question whether or not you could keep running at all?—Yes.

**D-2223.** It is only because of the soft coke plant that you are able to market much of your coal?—Yes.

**D-2224.** You have been losing money for several years?—Yes.

**D-2225.** That, I take it, accounts for the fact that you have been given a moratorium with regard to some of your houses?—Yes, otherwise some of the houses which have blue licenses would have been given red licenses.

**D-2226.** Are you under orders to replace some of them during this present year?—Yes; we are building 10 rooms in one block this year.

**D-2227.** So that you are going on gradually to remove the ones that are below standard year by year?—Yes.

**D-2228.** I understand your colliery is too small to maintain a hospital by itself?—Yes. There is a dispensary in the neighbouring colliery and here we keep first-aid things which may be urgently required.

**D-2229.** What qualifications has your dispensary doctor?—He is an L.M.S. This dispensary, which is close by, serves three collieries. The doctor visits the *dhowrahs* twice every day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

**D-2230.** Have you any system of payment of *khōraki* at times of sickness?—Very rarely are they so sick as to take *khōraki*; when they are sick for a long time I give them *khōraki*.

**D-2231.** Are children born on the colliery?—Yes, sometimes.

**D-2232.** Do you then give any maternity benefit or *khōraki* to the women?—No.

**D-2233.** Are the wages you pay to your men governed by the general standard in the neighbourhood?—Yes.

**D-2234.** What does a miner get?—A miner gets Rs. 0-6-6. As. 6 per tub and 6 pies as miner's commission.

**D-2235.** Do the same miners come to your colliery year after year?—I have miners here who have been working here for the last 7 or 8 years, but there are also new miners. More than half are settled miners; they are Bilaspuris.

**D-2236.** *Mr. Cliff*: Are there any women employed underground?—Yes.

**D-2237.** How do you arrange for the reduction in the number of women?—We have some gangs in which only men are employed. I am above the standard imposed by the Regulations.

**D-2238.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Have you any miners who do their own loading?—No; they work in twos, each man alternately cutting and loading; I have two men in one such pair. I have no men who load the coal they have cut. Women are gradually being eliminated; if a woman goes away I do not replace her.

**D-2239.** *Mr. Cliff* : Do you pay wages direct or does the contractor pay the wages?—For one mine I have no contractor and in that mine we pay the wages through our cashier; we generally pay wages on Sunday afternoon. In the other mine I have a contractor who pays the wages on Sunday morning.

**D-2240.** Are all the people employed in these two mines resident here?—Most of them; the *hazira* workers are not resident; they come from their villages. They come on Sunday for their money and then go back to their villages, returning on Tuesday or Wednesday. Their villages are 3 to 6 miles away. We finish paying them on Sundays at 4, 5 or 6 o'clock; generally I pay the *hazira* coolies first so that they can go away.

**D-2241.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Do you sometimes have surplus coal?—Yes. In the mine where I have a contractor I have been obliged to count the surplus into the contract, because the margin is so very small between the cost of production and the price obtained for the coal. The size of the tub is 30 c.ft. and it generally holds 13 to 14 cwts. 10 seam coal, but some coal is heavier. For 9A seam coal I calculate on the basis of the tubs containing 15 cwts., but if the tubs are loaded well it will come to 16 cwt. In the 10 seam mine where the coal is not so heavy I pay the miner 6 annas and 6 pies per tub, while for one section in this seam I pay 6 annas and 9 pies.

**D-2242.** You pay the miner nothing for the surplus coal?—No. On the head-carrying incline I pay 8 annas 6 pies to 9 annas. but that incline is practically not being worked now for want of labour I pay the contractor in the 9A seam mine where there is a contractor Rs. 1-8-0 per ton, for cutting, loading into wagons and everything. That include his costs of recruiting labour. That does not include my overhead charges. The contractor makes a profit of Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 when the mine is working fully. It is a small mine; it has only 8 to 9 working places. The contractor makes that profit when about 1,000 tubs, i.e., 750 to 800 tons, are being raised per month.

*Mr. Birla* : That is rather less than one anna per ton raised.

**D-2243.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What supervising staff have you to pay?—I have two overmen for 9A seam and I pay them Rs. 30 per month, and free housing, coal and oil.

**D-2244.** What other expenses have you?—It is a head-carrying incline; there is no machinery. I pay the prop coolie. The contractor pays for the pumping, stores required for the pump. I have not a clerical staff for that mine alone; the clerical staff does the work for both mines. Besides the stores for which the contractor pays I pay for fitting boilers, spare parts for the pump and pipes. I repair the houses.

**D-2245.** *The Chairman :* You have one seam under the *sarkari* system and another under a contractor; I suppose you feel that the one system is most economical in one seam, while the other system is more economical in the other seam?—It is not exactly that, I feel that I cannot concentrate my attention on both mines, so I have given one of them in charge of somebody who will see to the labour. If I were to work both mines on the *sarkari* system I should require another assistant manager to whom I should have to pay about Rs. 40.

**D-2246.** *Diwan Chaman Lall :* What is the highest rate you have paid per tub?—When the market was very high, in 1922-23, I gave the Bilaspuris about 11 annas per tub; they are now getting 6 annas 6 pies. It varies according to the market conditions and the rate paid by neighbouring collieries.

**D-2247.** *The Chairman :* You had to pay them increased rates in the boom time because there was so much competition for labour?—Yes.

**D-2248.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose :* Do you deduct any coal from the miners for under-loading?—Unless it is very marked I do not.

**D-2249.** Have you any school here?—No.

**D-2250.** Have you any Sanitary Inspector here?—I have my doctor and compounder; the doctor visits the colliery both in the morning and evening. I do not see the necessity of having any Sanitary Inspector.

(The witness withdrew.)

#### PAHGU, loading Sardar.

**D-2251.** *Diwan Chaman Lall :* How many people have you working under you?—From 30 to 40.

**D-2252.** *Mr. Cliff :* Do you pay the wages of the men working under you?—The accounts are made out every week, the money is handed over to me and then I give the money to the workers.

**D-2253.** Do you make any advances to the people whom you here and ask for Rs. 4 or 3 as the case may be; I get the money from recruit?—If there are a man, his wife and possibly children, I come the office and I give them an advance as *khoraki*.

**D-2254.** How is the advance recovered?—I get it deducted from the wages bill every week; if a man has taken an advance of Rs. 10, then it is usually Re. 1 or Rs. 2, or As. 8, as the case may be. The money is deducted in the office.

**D-2255.** Do you make any advances to the people working under you while they are working here?—Yes, sometimes they take money from me; I take the money from the office, Rs. 2 or 3 as the case may be.

**D-2256.** Will the book show the advances and recoveries, and new advances?—It is entered in the book.

**D-2257.** How long have you been working as a *sardar*?—For many years.

**D-2258.** What wages do you get as a *sardar*?—Rs. 7 a week.

**D-2259.** Do you get any commission on the coal loaded?—No, I get no commission.

**D-2260.** When do you pay the wages to the people working under you?—Sometimes I get the money to pay them on Sunday, sometimes I get it on Monday, and I pay them on Sunday or Monday as I get the money.

**D-2261.** Do you pay them as soon as you get the money?—As soon as I get the money from the office I go and pay them.

**D-2262.** *Mr. Clow*: Were you a miner before you were a *sardar*?—I started as a day labourer, and then as I became clever some people came from my particular part of the country, 5 or 10 of them, and then I became their *sardar*.

(The witness withdrew.)

#### Bengali, Thekadar.

**D-2263.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What are you?—I am a contractor for soft coke; 40 people used to work under me.

**D-2264.** *The Chairman*: Why are you not working now?—My complaint is that the money I get to pay the workers I get on Mondays and very late on Mondays. Whenever my accounts are made up money for one or two wagons is kept back by the compounder who is the contractor under whom I was sub-contractor. The contractor took money from the proprietors but he did not pay me. The result was that I had to pay the workers out of my own pocket.

**D-2265.** Who is the contractor for the coke plant now?—My father-in-law who has taken my job.

**D-2266.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Why is he taking the job on if he is out of pocket every week?—Now an agreement has been entered into that money will be paid every week; but even now, in spite of the agreement, money is not being paid regularly.

**D-2267.** Is your father-in-law sorry he took on the job?—We live and learn.

*Mr. Bhattacharjee (Manager)*: I asked this man to bring his accounts and said I would settle with the contractor, and if the contractor did not pay, I would pay it *sarkari*, but because he has drawn more than his money he does not dare to bring his accounts.

(The witness withdrew.)

(The Manager produced the loading book.)

*Diwan Chaman Lall*: Fagu's account for the week for loading came to Rs. 10-10-0. In that gang there are 4 males and 2 females, making a total of 6. For screening and loading Fagu's gang got Rs. 13-7-0. Dooki worked 5 days and for loading his bill came to Rs. 13-7-0, and for screening Rs. 7-7-0; that is Rs. 20-14-0. There are 4 males and 3 females, 7 workers, in that gang. Dookan's gang worked 5 days and earned Rs. 15-1-6 for loading and Rs. 5-7-6 for screening, a total of Rs. 20-9-0.

*Mr. Cliff*: The *sardar* said he got Rs. 7 a week; does his Rs. 7 come out of that payment?

*Mr. Bhattacharjee*: No, the *sardar* gets Rs. 7 from the Company. There are two Fagus; one is a gangman and the other a *sardar*.

**Mr. A. L. OJHA, M.L.C., and Rai Bahadur D. D. THACKER,**  
Representatives of the Indian Mining Federation.

**D-2268.** *The Chairman*: What is the membership and organization of the Indian Mining Federation?—How far does it cover the field of the Indian-owned mines?—It represents practically all the Indian collieries in this field. Its membership varies according to the prosperity of the time. In good years the membership comprises about 300 firms. In bad times many collieries have to close down and their owners cannot afford to continue to pay the subscription and cease to be members. At the present time we have about 100 members.

**D-2269.** The memorandum of the Indian Mining Federation makes some remarks with regard to education and welfare, and suggests that welfare must wait upon education and that much cannot be done until there is a general system of primary education?—Not much can be done, but something can be done. The problem of education is too wide to be undertaken as a welfare measure.

**D-2270.** You do not wish to say that welfare must wait?—Of course not. But measures intended to promote better working and living conditions cannot really be effective unless the labour is educated.

**D-2271.** I take it that you regard education as a part of welfare and that progress might be made with welfare as a means of promoting a desire for education and a higher standard of living amongst the people?—Yes.

**D-2272.** Would you have any objection to extending the scope of the present Mines Board of Health to cover a wider range of subjects and to take in considerations of general welfare of the workers in the mines, including education?—I do not think we should have any objection, provided we do not have to pay more than our fair share of the cost.

**D-2273.** Supposing that the matter was to a considerable extent under your own advice and control, so that its cost was proportionate to the situation of the industry, would you have any objection to an advance being made in that direction?—No.

**D-2274.** With regard to recruiting, you make the suggestion that two areas, Santal Parganas and the whole of the Chota Nagpur, should be reserved as an exclusive area of recruitment for the coal industry; do you mean that the people of those areas should not have a choice of going to wherever they thought they could get the best conditions of employment and the best remuneration?—We do not mean that.

**D-2275.** You do not suggest, do you, that any area of India should be reserved for recruitment solely to the coal industry?—Yes, so far as organized recruiting operation is concerned.

**D-2276.** The memorandum states: "It is estimated that withdrawal" (by which you mean the retirement to their country of your workers at certain periods of the year) "is responsible for the loss of 33 per cent. of what might have been their aggregate annual wages." Do you mean to say that if your workers worked for 6 days a week all the year round they could earn one-third more than they do at the present time?—Yes, even if they had worked from 4 to 5 days a week.

**D-2277.** Reference is made in the memorandum to some difficulty in connection with the acquisition of surface land. It is said that even the amendment of the Act passed by the Provincial Council last session has not put the position right. Will you explain what in your view is the need?—Whenever we are in need of surface land for mining operations we find difficulty in getting it. Either a prohibitive price is asked or a blank refusal is given. The matter can only be solved by amending the Land Acquisition Act of the Central Legislature. We understand that the Government of India are not prepared to enact legislation in the matter. We therefore had to approach the local Government, who were kind enough to take up this measure—which, however, does not go far enough to help us. The Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act is a piece of legislation as between tenant and landlord only. It does not provide for the special needs of mine-owners at all. As mine-owners we are lease holders. Therefore even when this amendment has been passed the position is that we have to request the landlord to get us this land. If the landlord likes to do so he can have it acquired, but if he does not like to do so there is no provision under which he may be forced. The only assistance we get is in a round-about

way : in the lease which we get from the landlord there is a term to the effect that whenever any surface land is required for mining operations the landlord will assist to acquire it, or, if he owns surplus land himself, he will give it to us; but where the landlord has not got it, or where he is unwilling to get it for us, we are helpless.

**D-2278.** *Mr. Joshi* : For what purpose is this land to be acquired?—For mining operations as also for building site for labour housing.

**D-2279.** *The Chairman* : What in Great Britain is called easement for facilitating the working of underground minerals?—Yes.

**D-2280.** Is there any power in the Provincial Legislature?—They can undertake legislation with the sanction of Central Government.

**D-2282.** Has your Federation ever drafted a Bill to meet the point?—No.

*Mr. Joshi* : The point is whether it is for a public purpose. Government can acquire land for a public purpose.

*The Chairman* : I understand that. It is merely a question whether the Government can extend the definition of "a public purpose", to land required by industry whether for housing or, as in this case, for easements.

**D-2283.** Under the heading of "sickness insurance," your memorandum suggests that the form which requires a contribution from the worker as well as from the employer and the State is impossible in India unless the employer shoulders the responsibility of two of the payments, namely, his own and his workers. You tell us that there is a practice in the coal industry of giving *khoraki* to labourers incapacitated by temporary illness. Is that a universal system?—It is a practice which is generally observed in the collieries.

**D-2284.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : When it is given?—After the first three days of sickness.

**D-2285.** *The Chairman* : Is it half his wages?—It varies. Sometimes it is one-third, sometimes half, but never more than half.

**D-2286.** Your Federation has made no efforts to standardize it among its members?—No, and it would be very difficult to do so as the Federation at present only deals with general grievances of trade in relation to Railways, Government and so on. It cannot force a constructive internal policy on the members.

**D-2287.** Dealing with the question of hours, the memorandum states that the recent amendment of the Act introducing the shift system from the 1st of April does not meet with the approval of your Federation. As it has been passed, I take it you will carry it out as dutiful citizens?—Yes.



**D-2288.** You tell us that the actual time worked by your people in the mines is a great deal less than 12 hours a day. Loaders work from 6 to 7 hours a day and the miners' work does not extend beyond 4 to 5 days a week. Seeing that that is the case, do you think that the permitted number of hours might be reduced from 12 to some lower figure?—As it is the habit of the miners to idle away a certain amount of time under the present circumstances, we think any reduction of hours would mean a serious drop in output.

**D-2289.** Do you not think that if the permitted hours were reduced from 12 to, say, 10, that would induce the miners to be more concentrated in their work, and that they would bring forth the same output as they do now?—I do not think so; it is a question of discipline, and these people would not submit to any such thing as discipline.

**D-2290.** Dealing with the wages, you state that during 1920-21 wages rose by practically 100 per cent., but that in 1927 and since wages have fallen by 25 per cent. You, Mr. Ojha, in your separate memorandum suggest that they have fallen from 40 to 50 per cent. Can you throw any further light on that?—It varies according to the conditions of the mines, but generally on going into the figures we found that before any rise occurred the wage per tub was about As. 5. In 1920-21 it rose to about As. 10—100 per cent. After 1923 the wage was As. 7 to As. 8.

**D-2291.** That figure being dependent on the height to which competition forced wages during the boom period?—Yes.

**D-2292.** I take it that the raising of coal was so remunerative for that short time that you were all endeavouring to get the maximum number of workers in order to turn out every possible ton that you could?—Yes.

**D-2293.** So that from the figures you have given wages would appear to-day to be about 50 per cent. more than they were before these fluctuations began, that is to say, As.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  as compared with As. 5 at the starting point before the boom?—At some places it is still about As. 8.

**D-2294.** That would make it 60 per cent. instead of 50 per cent.?—Yes.

**D-2295.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* You state that before 1921 the rate was about As. 5. We were told by the members of the Mining Association that their rate at that time was As.  $6\frac{1}{2}$ . It would appear that their rate to-day is the same as yours is to-day, but they did not start as low as you maintain, or go up as high as you maintain?—I do not know how they arrive at their figure.

**D-2296.** Are you not taking the rates in one or two special cases, and not the average rate?—We have taken the rates generally.

**D-2297.** You think the average all over the whole industry was As. 5?—Yes.

**D-2298.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How did you get at that figure?—There were meetings held at which the members gave that information, and we had to take it as correct. We did not examine each member's records.

**D-2299.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You think the prevailing rate was As. 5, going up to As. 10. That was for ordinary mines, I take it, and not those mines which had to pay a higher rate owing to inclines and so on?—Quite so.

**D-2300.** You give the rate to-day from As.  $6\frac{1}{2}$  to As.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  for ordinary mines?—Yes.

**D-2301.** I notice that you say in your memorandum: "Welfare work among the mining labour is almost absent, whatever scanty efforts have been made being, however, entirely undertaken by the employers themselves." When you say that whatever scanty efforts have been made have been undertaken by the employers themselves, I take it that efforts in this direction have been made by certain employers and that nothing generally has been done?—That is what we mean.

**D-2302.** When you say that the average output is three tubs per day jointly by one miner and one loader, do you adhere to that figure?—Yes; generally that is the figure.

**D-2303.** We have heard that the average output is nearer 2 tubs than 3?—We have taken the general figure as being 3. In some cases it may be 2 or  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , or even 4.

**D-2304.** Taking the number of loaders and the number of miners and the number of tons every week, do you think you can justify that high average of 3 tubs?—I think so.

**D-2305.** Would you be prepared to let us have the figures on which you base that?—Yes, I will let you have them.

**D-2306.** You say that even monthly wage earners are paid on account weekly. Why do you not make their wage a weekly wage instead of calling it a monthly wage but paying them weekly?—We pay them weekly what they ask, up to a certain percentage.

**D-2307.** Would you have any objection to paying weekly?—If that was the common desire we should have no objection.

**D-2308.** *The Chairman*: It is the prevailing condition for the whole of this field to pay weekly, is it not?—Not in the case of certain classes of labour.

**D-2309.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: You refer to legislation as being a kind of window dressing. Do you think the legislation regarding prohibition of children from the mines and of women from underground work, and the introducing of the shift system, is window dressing legislation?—We find that some legislation which is passed here is not fitted to the conditions of this country.

**D-2310.** You mean that the legislation which the Government in this country is introducing is "window dressing" for the purpose of their Western friends?—Western conditions are altogether different from conditions here.

**D-2311.** Leaving out Western conditions, the fact is that Government has introduced legislation here which prevents you from employing children in the mines, which prevents you from employing women underground, and which insists on a shift system. There is nothing much of window dressing about that, is there? Then you refer to the want of efficient organization on the part of the employers; what do you mean by that?—We mean that we are not in a position to adopt any concerted action and force it on our members. If we ask our members to take concerted action some of them might not care to do so.

**D-2312.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* How can you alter that state of affairs?—Only by legislation.

**D-2313.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Would you like Government to interfere in your internal affairs?—No. We want some sort of legislation which may make our members take concerted action and not Government: that if the majority of our members pass a resolution, that shall be binding on all the members.

**D-2314.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Are you suggesting that there should be legislation to force every employer into an employers' union?—I think it would be better. We have taken that quotation from the Balfour Committee Report and we agree with it.

**D-2315.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Later on you will probably be asked if you will agree to that principle being applied to the workers also, namely, that Government should force every worker to become a member of a trade union. Would you be agreeable to that?—Yes, certainly. It would be better, because then we should know with whom we have to deal.

**D-2316.** Does Mr. Thacker agree with that?—(Mr. Thacker): Yes.

**D-2317.** Why did the Mining Federation find it necessary to come into existence when there was already a Mining Association?—(Mr. Ojha): The small mines thought that their interests were not adequately represented by the Association. Owing to a clash of interests the small mines decided to start their own organization.

**D-2318.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Could they join the Mining Association if they wanted?—Yes. Some collieries are members of both bodies.

**D-2319.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* You find them both very useful?—Yes.

**D-2320.** In actual practice do the two bodies work quite friendly together?—Yes.

**D-2321.** If Government stepped in you would be forced into one Union?—We would not mind.

**D-2322.** Why do you not join forces without Government intervention?—At present it is difficult. Anything that the majority decide cannot be binding on all.

**D-2323.** You refer to the idling habits of the miners. You also say that the direct effect of the prohibition of the employment of women would be a rise in the wages. Why should that be the case? If the workers are idling away 50 per cent. of their time; if they are only working 4 or 5 days a week and if they go home for 3 or 4 months in the year, do you not think that, instead of increasing their wages, it would be better to get them to work for more hours per day and more days per week and more months per year?—That cannot be done by legislation. We may try to do it, but the miners will have their way and if they do not like to do it they will not. As facts are to-day you speak in a hypothetical presumption.

**D-2324.** Suppose you give the miner sufficient wages to make up for the loss of his wife's earnings. What would be the inducement to him to work any longer?—I am not sure if they will try to earn more even with the rate increased.

**D-2325.** You say: "The spur to earn more and to produce more is entirely absent in Indian labour". Here is Government giving you a spur to earn more and to produce more in the shape of eliminating women from underground working. What more do you want? The Government are doing what you want. They are telling the worker "we will not allow your wife to work underground any longer; you will have to work longer hours"—How do we know if they will do it. He may not like to put in longer hours and may simply go back to his village and follow his usual pursuit of agriculture.

**D-2326.** You speak of the wages that were obtaining before the war and the wages now obtaining. I notice that Government in their memorandum also say that the rate per tub of coal raised before the war was generally As. 4½. It rose during and after the war to As. 8 or As. 9, and now it has dropped to about As. 7. Is it not the case that in 1919 there was an output in this area of about 15 million tons; in 1920 the tonnage dropped below 12 million tons; and in 1921 it was only 12 million tons? Were you not, Indian gentlemen, at your wit's end to get more coal, and did you not open up more mines? For instance, in 1919 there were 741 mines working, but by 1922 there were 953 working. Did you not pay more wages in many of the mines which you had opened in order to attract labour from the other mines?—Some might have done that.

**D-2327.** Was it not that more than anything else which caused the increased wages to be paid in the Indian-owned mines?—This might be one of the reasons but not the whole.

**D-2328.** The price of coal per ton in 1919 was Rs. 4-8-0, and it rose to over Rs. 7. Therefore in those days the wages could be increased very materially?—Yes.

**D-2329.** Now that the price of coal per ton has dropped back to Rs. 4, you cannot go on paying the same high wages as you were paying when the price of coal was Rs. 7 a ton?—Quite so.

**D-2330.** *Mr. Cliff:* The memorandum says "it is useless to attempt to approximate labour conditions in India to the standard of western countries." What do you mean by that sentence?—The people's habits and customs here are entirely different from what they are in Western countries.

**D-2331.** Do you object to the regulation of working hours?—We think it would create difficulty.

**D-2332.** Have any ill effects arisen on the industry or on labour through the regulation of hours?—I have not heard of any.

**D-2333.** Have any ill effects been felt to the industry or to labour through the adoption of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No.

**D-2334.** Would any ill effects arise if provision was made for some payment during sickness?—Difficulty would arise because there are no professional or permanent miners, and under any system of payment during sickness we should be put in the position of having to pay a man who is only working in the colliery for about a fortnight or a month at a time. That we think would be a hardship. If there were a guarantee that our workers would be permanent workers, I think the Industry might consider a scheme.

**D-2335.** Would there be any difficulty in making provision for old age?—It would add to the cost. Under present conditions I do not think it would be possible. As I have stressed, our labour is not entirely our own. They are largely agricultural farmers.

**D-2336.** The memorandum says: "The sense of mutual obligation which knits the different elements of all Indian industry will inform the relations between Indian employers and Indian workmen." There are several cases which we have noted where the spirit of mutual obligation is absent?—There may be cases in such a vast country as this, but generally the position is as stated.

**D-2337.** With regard to those cases where it does not exist, might it not be well to transform that obligation into regulation?—Yes. But the urgency of a regulative measure is very limited.

**D-2338.** You say: "It seems to the Committee that the stiffening of obligation on the employers with regard to labour welfare, attempted in recent years, has been largely directed at the wrong end of the problem"?—We think that the workers themselves do not realise their responsibilities in the matter. A sense of their own rights as well as responsibilities must be awakened first.

**D-2339.** How do you propose to alter that?—They should be made to realise their responsibility. In Western countries the workers cannot absent themselves as the miners do in this country.

**D-2340.** You want the Indian workman to approximate to Western standards?—They ought to.

**D-2341.** You say that you want education of a character, both general and trade unionistic. We have been told that the Indian Collieries Employees' Association applied to your Federation for recognition as a trade union and to be accepted as a body which could speak on behalf of the work-people; and that you have not answered their letters and have not granted them recognition?—I am not aware of any such application.

**D-2342.** Will you be prepared to make enquiries into the matter? This Employees' Association made representations to you in 1926 and in 1927?—I shall be glad to make enquiries.

**D-2343.** If the Indian Collieries Employees' Association make application to your Federation now will your Federation be in a position to deal with them?—Yes. If it is a representative Association; and we know about the constitution and their representative character; we shall be only too glad to recognize them. But I must say that the recognition which we might grant would be of a purely academic value.

**D-2344.** You say: "It is only natural that where the old spirit exists ineffective legislation has been resented both by the employers and the employees." Will you give us an example of the ineffective legislation?—Yes, take for instance, the present legislation about the prohibition of female labour. Of course, we are not against the principle underlying the prohibition. We thought it was not necessary.

**D-2345.** Is it ineffective?—We say it has been resented.

**D-2346.** Again you say: "It is impossible to maintain an AI labour condition with C3 state of profit." May I put it round and ask you whether it is impossible to get AI profit with C3 labour condition?—No; I do not think so.

**D-2347.** *Mr. Birla:* You can?—We can make bigger but not AI profit.

**D-2348.** *Mr. Cliff:* Did you try it when you had an opportunity?—We had no opportunity up till now.

**D-2349.** *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Where did you get the figures from in regard to the number of tubs per person per day?—As I said, we got it from our members.

**D-2350.** In the same way as you got the information about wages?—Yes.

**D-2351.** With regard to the total tonnage produced in India, the Government have given us a figure of 131 taking the labour force as a whole. If you work out that figure, taking 5 days work per week which you have mentioned, it comes to not the figures that you give but to 1.33 tubs a day?—I do not know on what basis they have calculated this.

**D-2352.** There are two methods by which they have calculated. One is the figure of 188 by taking the underground workers only and

one is the figure of 131 taking both underground and above ground. Suppose I take the figure of underground workers only, i.e., 188 even then the figure comes to 1.44 tubs and no more. How did you work out your figure then? Is this figure correct or your estimate correct?—I do not know what the position actually is. The figure we have given is an average.

**D-2353.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it not a fact that only about 50 or 60 per cent. of the workers are miners and loaders?—Yes.

**D-2354.** *Dewan Chaman Lall*: Is that the statement that you want to make?—That is the general position.

**D-2355.** If I go on the figures supplied by Government, I take it the average comes to 1.44 per head. Even if you add 60 per cent. it will come to little over 2; it will not come to 3 tubs per day, which is the figure I do not personally accept?—We calculated and found that 3 is the average. In some cases it may be a little less or a little more.

**D-2356.** I want you to supply me other figures and not merely make a general statement. Here are figures which we have got. Have you got any other figures that you can give us?—I have not got them here, but I can give you later on.

**D-2357.** Take your attendance registers. It has been my general experience that attendance registers do not reveal the actual fact as to the number of hours spent underground?—I think we maintain these registers as prescribed. Whatever information we have got to give there we do give.

**D-2358.** That is to say the registers as prescribed do not reveal the actual state of affairs in this way that as a matter of actual practice there is no check on the number of hours that a worker remains underground. There are casual entries filled in in the attendance register merely in order to conform to the law as it is. Is that not your experience?—No.

**D-2359.** Where did you get your figures from that the workers work 7 to 8 hours a day and the rest of their time they idle away. Your Federation has mentioned that one-third of their time they idle away in the mines?—That is what we got from our supervisors.

**D-2360.** Have you ever considered the question whether what you call idling away is a process of waiting for work to be given to them or tubs to be supplied to them?—Not necessarily; I do not think so.

**D-2361.** Is it your contention that the worker who goes underground is delighted with the idea of spending one-third of his time wandering about the mine because it is such a beautiful place to wander about in?—I think they do not feel unhappy there. But that is a different thing. My experience is that for some time they work; then they smoke and make themselves merry in many ways, and commence

again to work; they take their food there; even when they go to drink water they idle away about half an hour. That is what they have been doing.

**D-2362.** With regard to wages, you say in your memorandum that cutters are paid Re. 0-11-0 to Re. 1 per ton. Do I take it that you are referring to a cutter and a loader or only to a cutter?—To both.

**D-2363.** For what work would a cutter be paid Re. 1?—In cases where they have got to carry coal.

**D-2364.** Do you include in that category two men or one person?—Carriers are shown separately.

**D-2365.** But what is the custom? Is it not a fact that a man cuts coal and his wife carries and between them, when they have filled in one ton, they get at the rate of as. 7 or as. 8 as the case may be?—Yes.

**D-2366.** So this figure includes two persons?—Yes.

**D-2367.** It is not correct that a cutter would earn that amount?—No.

**D-2368.** In regard to welfare you have said that nothing has been done. Could you tell me when you had the opportunity of doing something, when the industry was good, what did you do in those days?—As I said, I do not think we have ever had an opportunity to do it.

**D-2369.** You had a boom period in your industry, I take it, many years ago?—Really speaking, in that boom period I do not think we made as much profit as other industries did or as people thought we did because there was the difficulty of the supply of wagons; wagons were not plentiful. Where the collieries made a profit they had to liquidate their debts.

**D-2370.** Not even in the period when the coal was selling at Rs. 17 per ton?—I do not think the coal was ever sold at Rs. 17 a ton; if it were so it must be a rare case.

**D-2371.** Your proposition is that you have not done anything towards welfare not, as you say, because of the lack of co-ordination amongst the employers but because of the lack of funds?—Both.

**D-2372.** Let me take the question of the lack of funds. How much do you think it would cost you to run a school for the children of, let us say, 1,000 working miners?—I think it would cost somewhere between Rs. 50 and Rs. 60.

**D-2373.** You consider that a prohibitive cost?—Yes, because some of these collieries cannot pay even the subscription of the Association which is Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 per month.

**D-2374.** Was that the position in 1920, 1921 and 1922?—At that time we had more members. If they wanted they could have started it.



**D-2375.** How much would it cost your Federation to have two travelling cinemas for the benefit of the miners employed on your collieries?—As I said, the Federation has no money.

**D-2376.** May I put it this way that the will has been lacking?—No. We were contributing a certain amount for the mining education advisory board, and we had to discontinue it for lack of funds.

**D-2377.** What I am driving at is this: considering that efforts in the past for one reason or another have failed, would you agree with me in insisting upon welfare work being conducted under sanction of the law?—Yes, certainly; we would do also voluntarily if money is available.

**D-2378.** Would you be agreeable to having a cess levied to the extent of half anna or one anna, as the case may be, per ton of coal, for this purpose?—The cess will add to the cost and eventually the consumers will have to pay it. The question we have to consider is whether under present conditions we are in a position to get that increased price from the consumer. We have to consider the question from an economic point of view. If it is possible we would be glad to do it.

**D-2379.** There is one item that adds to the cost of the coal, and that is your royalties, which range between as. 3 to as. 5 per ton?—Yes; sometimes more than that.

**D-2380.** Suppose it came out of the royalties apart from other sources, would you have any objection to that?—No.

**D-2381.** *The Chairman:* At present your cess for the Board of Health comes partly out of the royalties?—Yes; we pay more.

**D-2382.** Would you object to share a further contribution with them for the purpose of welfare?—As I said, we would be glad to do anything provided we are in a position to do it.

**D-2383.** *Mr. Mackie:* In your memorandum you specify the increase of rates made in 1921. Was the increase made as a result of a strike or strikes? Did the labour demand these rates?—The labour demanded it of course, but not by a strike.

**D-2384.** You gave the increased rates without compulsion?—There was no question of compulsion. They represented it to their collieries and the collieries had to agree considering their conditions.

**D-2385.** You were in a position to make money and you could afford to give an increase?—We were getting better prices, and we did not grudge giving them more.

**D-2386.** You say that the supply of labour does not depend on rate of wages but on the character of the crops. I suppose you mean that if there is a good harvest any inducement of higher rates would not bring more labour to the coalfields?—That is so.

**D-2387.** The collieries under your Federation that have continued to work during the past few years have not experienced a surplus of miners?—No.

**D-2388.** Hence there cannot be any unemployment amongst miners?—No.

**D-2389.** Have you heard of miners having to leave the Jharia coal-field as a result of unemployment and having to go to Madras and Assam?—No.

**D-2390.** You know of no such instance?—No.

**D-2391.** Mr. Thacker, you run a school for your miners' sons, is it not?—(Mr. Thacker) : Yes.

**D-2392.** Are any of those who were educated in your school now working as miners?—The school was started only in 1924.

**D-2393.** Do you think that the boys that you are educating will ever go to work on the coal face and load coal?—Some of them will, I think.

**D-2394.** Do you not think that they will be more prepared to work as fitters and *khalasis* than as miners?—Most of them will be prepared to work as skilled labourers.

**D-2395.** Do you think they will take off their coats and work?—No, they will not.

**D-2396.** Mr. Sibakli Bose : You say in your memorandum that overmen are recruited both from the rank of miners and from educated persons having some knowledge of technical mining. Can you tell me whether overmen have been recruited from the rank of miners?—(Mr. Ojha) : At times we do.

**D-2397.** Can you substantiate your statement by giving concrete instances?—From miners they become *sardars* and from *sardars* they become overmen, if they are intelligent.

**D-2398.** But actually has any miner been promoted to the post of overman?—I do not say that there are many instances, but I know that it has been so in one or two cases.

**D-2399.** Mr. Thacker, I think you at least know that there is an Employees' Association which was established in 1920?—(Mr. Thacker) : Yes, but I do not know when it was established.

**D-2400.** Is it not a fact that the Employees' Association has more than once sent an application to your Federation for recognition?—I am not aware of any application; it may have been sent to Calcutta.

**D-2401.** Your Federation did not receive the constitution of our Association or its annual reports?—I do not know whether the Calcutta office has received them. But this much I know that the meetings

of the Employees' Association are held in the hall of the Federation, and, as you know, we have very good relations with you.

**D-2402.** I think your Federation will have no objection to recognize this Employees' Association?—No.

**D-2403.** Mr. Ojha, can you tell me what is the cost per ton of raising coal?—(Mr. Ojha): It is somewhere about Rs. 3, but it varies according to the conditions under which the mine is worked.

**D-2404.** Can you tell me what the miners including the carriers get for one ton of coal?—As. 12 or thereabouts.

**D-2405.** What is the cost of your other establishment?—It depends upon the conditions. The over-head charges are less if the output is big and more if the output is less.

**D-2406.** Can you not give us an approximate figure for all establishment including *khalasis*?—We generally do not put everything together.

*Sir Victor Sassoon:* It is very easy to calculate. It costs you Rs. 3 a ton. Deducting As. 12 for miners it leaves you Rs. 2-4-0; out of that you pay As. 4 as royalty. Therefore the over-head charges are Rs. 2 a ton. It is only mathematics.—Miner is not the only labour employed in a coal mine.

**D-2407.** *Mr. Sibakli Bose:* Can you tell me what is your selling price now?—It is also about Rs. 3 per ton; in some cases it is more while in some cases it is less.

**D-2408.** Do you mean to say that the collieries which are owned by Indians are not making any profit at all?—Practically not. In some cases they may be making a few annas, but in most cases they do not make any profit at all.

**D-2409.** *The Chairman:* You say it is a very bare margin?—Yes.

**D-2410.** *Khetra Nata Sengupta:* In your memorandum you attribute the low standard of living of the labouring classes to their incorrigible habits and superstitions. You say: "So long as the demand for a better living has not made itself felt from within the labour themselves, all legislative or statutory proposals for uplifting labour conditions are bound to fail in their object." You say that it is their habits that is responsible for their low standard of living and not their poverty and low wages?—No. I may tell you that when they were getting higher wages they were not prepared to work more; on the other hand they were giving us less work. If they had earned sufficient money they would not go to work.

**D-2411.** You state that both *sardars* and overmen are recruited from the rank of miners. Do you not notice that when a miner rises to be a *sardar* or when a *sardar* rises to be an overman his standard of living changes?—A bit, but not much.

**D-2412.** We saw this morning a man who told us that he started as a day labourer and then became a *sardar*. We saw him well clothed unlike one of the miners?—Yes, it is possible.

**D-2413.** You know that Indian graduates of universities can be had for Rs. 30 or 35 a month. Do you expect any high standard of living among them?—It is very difficult to say.

**D-2414.** There is no want of knowledge of high standard of living among them, but is not their standard of living low? Is it due to habit or to poverty?—In one case there is no money but there is education and culture, while in another case there is money but there is no education and culture. Our whole point is that the labour despite all legislative measures, are not keen to live better or to earn more.

**D-2415.** I will give you another instance. You know that in the coalfields there are certain people who originally began as *sardars* or *khalasis* but have become afterwards contractors and are now driving costly motor cars. So it is not a fact that the standard of living is dependent upon habits, but it is more dependent upon means?—The comparison cannot hold good because you are dealing entirely with two separate classes. In any case the instance that you cited should be taken more as an exception rather than as a rule.

**D-2416.** You say in your memorandum that the recent statutory prohibition of underground employment of women in mines is calculated to seriously upset the family life of miners. What do you mean by that?—As you know, miners generally like to work in pairs. When the husband and the wife work together they are happy, and they resent the idea of the females being prohibited from working with them.

**D-2417.** Do you seriously hold that if a miner after his day's hard work comes to the surface and gets the meal ready, made by his wife, he would not prefer that to the pair going down and coming up at the same time and after coming up having to wait for the meal for at least two hours before it can be got ready?—It is a matter of opinion.

**D-2418.** I want to know your opinion?—Looking at it from my point of view, I would say that they would prefer it.

**D-2419.** Have you any idea as to from what point of view they look at it?—As I told you, we had a talk with some of these people and we found that they did not like the idea of working without their wives.

**D-2420.** You know that we ourselves saw the other day that the wives of some of the miners stay at home for looking after their children?—That is so in some cases, but you should know that in such cases they have some other relation to work as loaders. Then again you are presuming that prevented from working underground the women will stay at home in the mines. We dispute this position.

**D-2421.** You say: "The subsidiary character of mining as an occupation is borne out by the fact that in years of bumper crop the miners return to coalfields later in the cold weather and also in reduced number." You know that there is a fair percentage of permanent labour on the collieries?—Not fair. We have not got sufficient land on the collieries.

**D-2422.** Do they stay away from the collieries for a long time?—Yes, for about 3 or 4 months in a year.

**D-2423.** What do you think would be the percentage of permanent labour force on the collieries?—As I have stated in my personal memorandum, I think in the Jharia coalfield about 20 per cent. is permanently settled, 75 per cent. is recruited and 5 per cent. is local.

**D-2424.** Do you think that with increased wages and increased amenities of life more miners would settle on the collieries?—It may attract a few more people. But nothing appreciable will result.

**D-2425.** You say that "the Santals have a superstitious horror for brick ceiling." Is that correct? Have you any personal knowledge about it?—I know of one colliery where double-storied all-brick buildings are lying vacant.

**D-2426.** What is the reason? Is it that the brick houses are not comfortable?—I cannot say. They are not used to this sort of *pucca* houses. They prefer to live in thatched houses.

**D-2427.** With regard to education you say: "In the Raniganj field there are a number of high, middle and primary schools scattered throughout the coalfield. In the Jharia field similar facilities exist but in a more limited extent." Are not those institutions costly for miners to send their children to?—I think at present they are.

**D-2428.** If free primary and middle schools could be established you think that the miners will send their children there?—I am not certain.

**D-2429.** *Mr. Mukherji:* You say in your memorandum that the problem of labour welfare in India is closely inter-related with the general educational problem of the Indian masses. Do you not think that what the Federation means is that if welfare work is followed by education that will have a better effect than the welfare work preceding education, because unless there be education of the masses the miners themselves would not be able to appreciate this sort of welfare work and, if need be, would not contribute towards it later on?—The view taken was that if the problem of education was first solved then the desire will be there. In this case we shall have to thrust it on them.

**D-2430.** In reply to Sir Victor Sassoon you said that if the miners work 6 days in the week and 52 weeks in the year they would earn one-third more. You do not mean thereby that they should work continuously without any holidays or stoppage?—No and not without their usual idling.

**D-2431.** You mean that if they put in more heart in their work, even now with 5 days work in the week, they can earn more?—Exactly.

**D-2432.** To bring that will into them education is absolutely necessary?—Yes.

**D-2433.** With regard to legislation to make the employers themselves combine, is it not the idea that co-ordination in selling and

other things will improve the trade in such a way that the trade will never think of opposing legislation about welfare? What is impossible for individual collieries now to do is possible if there is co-ordination?—We can improve our position and when our position is improved and we have got money we would not object to anything. This I have already made clear.

**D-2434.** It is but natural that ideas which do not occur to individual collieries may occur to the Federation as a whole. If the Federation can arrange for some sort of welfare or educational work and force their constituents to adopt that, would not that be very much better than to get it done by legislation and force it down the throat of an unwilling employer?—That is right. Not only that; it would not be possible for an individual to do it, whereas it would be possible for the Federation to do it.

**D-2435.** Supposing an individual is forced by legislation to do some sort of welfare work, without bringing the employers together and creating in them the desire to do it, do you not think that it may, at least in some cases, defeat itself?—Yes.

**D-2436.** That is, there will be a desire on the part of the people to shirk that sort of obligation?—That is so.

**D-2437.** If you reduce the working hours of the miners working underground, do you not think that it will have the effect of further reducing their actual working time?—Yes.

**D-2438.** With regard to the prohibition of employment of women you say that it will disturb the family life. You mean thereby that as there will be a reduction in the family income the women will seek employment elsewhere, leaving their husbands in the coalfields, in order to make up the loss. Thus there will be a disturbance of the family life?—I do not know any job will be available to them.

**D-2439.** Do you not know that a distinguished Indian lady who had the opportunity of studying herself the conditions in the coalfields expressed the opinion that it would have a deleterious effect on their family life? It was based on the fact that for earning wages the women would have to go to work elsewhere?—Yes.

**D-2440.** On the question of wages, do you think that increased wages will necessarily improve the standard of living of the miners?—I do not think, under present conditions, it would.

*Mrs. Roy:* I understand that a reference was made to what I said at one time. I still think that if a woman has to work it is better that she should work with her husband. But I do not mean that she must go into the pit and work side by side with him. If work could be found on the surface so much the better. If that is not possible the wages of the men will have to be raised.

**D-2441.** I think that work on the surface can be found for them. It is for the mine owners to decide how they can employ women on the surface?—So long as there is any surface work that can be done by a woman, the mine owners will only be too glad to employ women, but if there is not sufficient work they cannot help it.

**D-2442.** Could not more work be offered to women aboveground?—No.

**D-2443.** You say in your memorandum that in the coalfields the sex ratio among the labourers has hitherto been in complete parity. Do you mean to say that the number of men and women are the same in your collieries?—Practically same.

**D-2444.** Have you not many miners who do not bring their wives with them?—Generally they bring their wives, and cases are few where they do not bring their wives.

**D-2445.** You have a number of women working in the collieries. Would you be in favour of making some arrangement for the payment of maternity benefits to them before and after child-birth?—As these people do not stick to their work it is very hard on the part of the employers to make any such arrangement; they sometimes work for a month and then go away.

**D-2446.** You say that you have always a floating population, but do you not have a permanent force?—We have only 20 per cent. of permanent labour force.

**D-2447.** Even for that 20 per cent., do you not think that you should make some arrangement?—There are some arrangements made at some places; there are trained *dais*.

**D-2447a.** *Miss Power*: Does your Federation not advocate the payment of maternity benefits to the women?—If they were to remain permanently, we would certainly advocate.

**D-2448.** Has your Federation as an association advocated to its constituents?—No.

**D-2449.** *Mrs. Roy*: Do you not think that special arrangements for medical relief ought to be made for women workers?—I think it would be better, but the trouble is it is not availed of.

**D-2450.** You say that "Even some miners send remittance home." What do you mean by that? Do you mean to say that a miner must spend what he earns and that he has no right to earn more or to save money?—We do not mean that at all. What we mean is that generally the miners save less than the other labourers. What they earn they spend.

**D-2451.** Is it your opinion that they earn enough?—Our experience is that when they get more they give less work. Therefore we think that what they get is enough.

**D-2452.** You say that a higher wage leads to a fall in working hours. Is that true?—That is what actually happened.

**D-2453.** Is that the general experience of all colliery owners?—I think so.

**D-2454.** But I think when you eliminate female labour altogether the position will be different because to support their children they will have to work longer hours?—They may or may not—it is difficult to answer. But it is likely that they may demand higher wages.

**D-2455.** Do you not think that when the need will be greater they will work harder?—They might; it is to be seen.

**D-2456.** *Miss Power:* You say in your memorandum: "It is remarkable that the movement towards permanent settlement in the mines, or, to be precise, the mining area has stopped for the last 15 to 20 years." That is contrary to much of the evidence we have had submitted to us. Would you tell us on what you base that statement?—The labour is settled from a long period. Even if we try to have a settled labour on the collieries now, we do not get it.

**D-2457.** But I take it that the settled labour that you have is not entirely the labour which settled only as long ago as 15 or 20 years?—They settled, I think, then. There may be a comparatively small number who settled since then. But taking the whole position into consideration, I think we do not now get more labour to settle.

**D-2458.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Would you say that the settled labourers are the sons who settled 15 or 20 years ago?—Yes.

**D-2459.** *Miss Power:* Can you account for this sudden stoppage in the flow of labourers desiring to settle?—I think it is due to this that in those days they were getting land, whereas it is very difficult to provide land now. The inducement for settlement cannot be offered.

**D-2460.** *The Chairman:* Your land is not increasing?—No.

**D-2461.** *Miss Power:* Turning again to the question of maternity benefits, you said that your Federation has not as yet advocated payment of maternity benefits by its members. Would you be in favour of a law making the maternity benefit compulsorily payable throughout the coalfields?—Under the present circumstances we cannot issue any mandate because it would not be binding on the members. If there is to be any such legislation, I think, it would add to the cost. As I said, we are quite prepared to do anything; our sympathy goes with the labour, but then the difficulty is that our position would not allow us to do anything now.

**D-2462.** *The Chairman:* If you only have 20 per cent. of settled labour force and the proportion of women in that 20 per cent. is less than half and it is also suggested that maternity benefit would only apply to women who have worked for at least 6 months before confinement, you would agree with that limitation, is it not?—If it were to be 12 months, I think we ought to agree.



**D-2463.** *Miss Power*: The number covered by a Maternity Act would be a comparatively small figure because such legislation would ultimately apply only to the women employed aboveground. On this ground, I take it that your Federation will support legislation?—I think so. Personally I think there should be no difference whether it is underground or aboveground.

**D-2464.** You say that women absolutely decline to have their maternity cases looked after by any medical agency. Do you not feel that one of the reasons for this has been the absence of women doctors on the coalfields?—It might be so, but it is very difficult to say. Generally they do not go in for any treatment by doctors.

**D-2465.** Your Federation has not approved of the scheme proposed by the Jharia Mines Board of Health, is that not so?—We have not approved of the scheme.

**D-2466.** You are not in favour of it on the ground, as you say in your letter, of "the traditional delicacy of women in accepting treatment outside their own homes." Is it not one of the chief points of the scheme to train health visitors, who would in their turn train *dais* who will look after the women in their own homes? In view of that do you still feel that the scheme is one which your Federation should not support?—I think it will be very impracticable.

**D-2467.** Your view is that an expensive machinery would be set up which the women would not use because they would not be prepared to go outside their own homes for treatment?—Yes.

**D-2468.** But, as I said before, the chief point of the scheme is the training of people who would treat the women in their own homes. What objection can there be on your part to a scheme like that?—I do not think it will be practicable.

**D-2469.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: If it were possible you would not mind?—No, I would not mind.

**D-2470.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would your Federation be prepared to pay its share of the cost of running such a scheme?—I have already explained the position of my Federation in regard to such matters. If our conditions improve we would be glad to undertake any welfare work which is in the interests of labour.

**D-2471.** *Miss Power*: Has your Federation given any advice to its members as to the method of selecting women year by year for exclusion from the mines?—We have not given any definite advice on the point.

**D-2472.** Do you not think it would be a sensible thing to carry out the elimination year by year in such a way as to cause the least economic disturbance to the families concerned?—Any advice given by the Federation is not binding on its members; in most cases it would be a sort of advice gratis unheeded.

**D-2473.** Are you still taking on new women?—No.

**D-2474.** With regard to the payment of wages do you think that the fact that the miner does not get his wages sometimes until as late as 4 o'clock on Sunday in part accounts for the fact that he does not work on Monday?—No, the miners generally get their wages in time.

**D-2475.** When Sunday is the recognized day of rest why should you not pay wages on Saturday?—If we paid wages on Saturday the miners will not work properly that day. The output that day will be reduced. Now they generally get their wages on Sunday morning. It may be that certain classes of labour are paid in the afternoon.

**D-2476.** Those who come to the mines from distances of 10 or 15 miles have to wait for their payment till Sunday and are not able to go home till Sunday night. How can they come back to the mines on Monday?—Such people will get their wages on Saturday if they have finished their work. In some cases we pay daily even. We do not insist that labour should not be paid oftener than once a week, though it is the general practice. If the miners want to be paid on Saturday, or if they want to be paid daily we have no objection to pay like that. But the general practice is to pay on Sunday.

**D-2477.** In regard to education you say that the "children of the labouring classes do not join these schools. And those who join do not pursue mining as an occupation in afterlife." Do you think that if there was universal primary education, the tendency of the worker to forsake his own calling would disappear?—I think so.

**D-2478.** Do you think that the education of the miners' children is the primary concern of the community at large or of the employers?—I take it that it is the primary function of Government. At any rate the problem is one of such magnitude that employers cannot embrace it within the so-called welfare work.

**D-2479.** *Mr. Joshi:* With regard to the number of hours worked by the miner, in reply to a question by the Chairman you said that the miner would not do sufficient work if the hours were reduced. In your memorandum you say that the aggregate working hours per week underground are roughly 100 for two shifts. That works out to 50 hours per shift per week. You have also stated that "on an average the miners idle away one-third of their time while underground." So that the actual number of hours worked by the miner will be  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 50 hours or  $33\frac{1}{3}$  hours per week. He works 5 days in the week and this gives you about  $6\frac{3}{4}$  hours a day. But the Indian Mining Association estimated the number of hours actually worked by the miner at 4 to 5 a day. What is this difference due to? Is the miner patriotic enough to give the Indian employer more work than to the European employer?—No, it is only an estimate; it will vary.

**D-2480.** Now that the miner actually works only  $6\frac{3}{4}$  hours, would you have any objection to reducing the statutory number of hours from 12 to a lower figure?—Our difficulty will be this. Whatever may be the hours fixed for working, you cannot cure idling.

**D-2481.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If they gave you the same output in less than 12 hours which they give you now in 12 hours would you object to the hours being shortened?—We would not object, but we do not think it would be practicable. The position indicated seems to be purely hypothetical.

**D-2482.** *Mr. Joshi*: From your side there will be no difficulty; you would not be requiring more capital and that sort of thing?—Theoretically we could have no objection.

**D-2483.** Let us theoretically discuss the question. Supposing you got the same number of tubs in less number of hours would you have any objection to reducing the number of hours?—There could not be any objection.

**D-2484.** Let us take it like this. At present they work 50 hours underground. Taking it over 5 days a week it comes to 10 hours a day. It makes absolutely no change in what is going on to-day. Would you have any objection to reducing the hours to ten a day?—As I said before, theoretically I cannot have any objection.

**D-2485.** I am not speaking here theoretically. You say that at present they work 50 hours a week. I keep the present number of hours intact. What objection could you have?—What would be the benefit?

*Mr. Joshi*: I am coming to the question of benefit presently.

*Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you expect any difficulty in keeping up to the average; I mean you now have more than 10 hours some days and less than 10 on other days, but the average is 10. Under the proposed restriction you cannot exceed 10 on any day.

*Mr. Joshi*: I come to the point of benefit. We are all anxious that the workers should have some leisure and should be more disciplined. In order that they may be disciplined the hours must be reduced. I should put the number of hours at 8. Let them work 6 hours a day out of those 8 hours and spend the remaining 2 hours in eating, drinking and smoking. It may do them good; it may do you also good, it may do the country also good if we have 8 hours a day and our workers well disciplined.

**D-2486.** Supposing they do not like to work 8 hours a day or 10 hours a day, where will they go?—They will go to their villages.

**D-2487.** Have they not come here because they have not enough to live on in their villages?—Yes.

**D-2488.** Will they not stay with you if your wages and conditions of work are as good or better than the wages and conditions of work elsewhere?—Yes, if they are disciplined.

**D-2489.** Dealing with wages you say that the miner receives a number of indirect benefits which may be calculated in terms of money at Rs. 6-8-0 a month. Suppose a suggestion was made to you that a welfare board be started which would provide the miner with all the indirect benefits that you now confer on him and that you should pay

the board Rs. 6-8-0 a month, the amount which you say you actually spend. Would you have any objection to a proposal like that?—I do not think it would be feasible.

**D-2490.** But you should have no objection if you are actually spending this amount now. Are you giving the figures of actual expenditure under these heads? Could you supply us with a statement of the actual expenditure under this head of the members of your Federation?—Yes, I will supply the Commission with the figures.

**D-2491.** You estimate the cost of fuel you give at Rs. 1-8-0 a month. Do you give them coal from the surface or do you ask them to dig it out for themselves?—We give them the coal on the surface. They have been already paid for raising it.

**D-2492.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Are you sure of that?—I have been told that the miners are allowed to dig the coal for themselves and take the coal from the pillars?—So far as I know they take the coal from the surface.

**D-2493.** Dealing with sickness insurance and old age pensions you say in your memorandum that the workers "will offer the greatest resistance to any such scheme." Leaving aside the question of workers' resistance you will have no objection to the scheme, I take it? Supposing the workers did not go on strike if the Government passed legislation providing for sickness insurance and old age pensions, would you have any objection to a scheme like that?—We have not the money to pay.

**D-2494.** But you have not stated that objection anywhere?—We have stated it throughout. That is one of the important considerations ever present. Moreover it is very difficult to put into operation any definite scheme on account of the migratory character of labour. Labour is not yet settled on the coalfields permanently.

**D-2495.** If that be the case the primary objection is not the resistance of the workers but something else?—Both.

**D-2496.** You have also said that such schemes are unworkable "unless the employers are prepared to shoulder the double responsibility of making their own and the employees' contribution. For the Indian miner is as yet too ignorant to understand insurance to appreciate its value." Supposing a bill was passed providing for a contribution from the workers also, do you think there would be real difficulty in making them contribute and that they would not appreciate the necessity for small deductions at all?—At present there are no deductions in his wages at all. When this question was under consideration in our Chamber I casually asked one of the labourers whether he would contribute something in return for the benefit that he would receive. I told him that Government would contribute something and the employers would contribute something. He said: have not the Government and the employers got enough money that they should come and ask us to contribute?

**D-2497.** *Mr. Birla*: Your membership is composed entirely of Indians and most of them represent second class collieries?—Yes.

**D-2498.** In fact you have very few first class colliery owners as members?—Yes, very few.

**D-2499.** Almost all the first class colliery owners are Europeans and they come under the jurisdiction of the Indian Mining Association?—Yes.

**D-2500.** Is it a fact that during the time of depression the first class collieries never came to the losing point?—No, they did not.

**D-2501.** In the history of the coal industry it was only on very rare occasions they came to the losing point?—I have not hard them lose.

**D-2502.** Is it a fact that except on very rare occasions second class collieries have passed through a period of depression?—They have always to pass through periods of depression and they are the hardest hit.

**D-2503.** Is your difficulty increased on account of the competition of the railway collieries?—Yes.

**D-2504.** It has been stated that, although the raising cost of the railway collieries is almost the same as the price of which coal is available on the market, the railway still prefer to raise their own coal. Is that so?—Yes.

**D-2505.** Do you think that your difficulties would be reduced if the Railways bought their coal from the private collieries?—Yes, then there would be a greater demand in the market for our coal.

**D-2506.** Do the Railways prefer to buy their requirement from the European first class colliery owners?—They say that they want first class coal and first class collieries are mostly owned by Europeans.

**D-2507.** Out of the total requirements of the Railways how much were they taking from the Indian Colliery owners?—About 40 to 50 per cent. Now it is less.

**D-2508.** Although in the past they used to purchase second class coal from Indian colliery owners in recent years they have diverted their purchase to first class colliery owners?—They say that when first class coal is available in large quantities they do not want to go in for second class coal.

**D-2509.** What is the reason for the reduction from 50 per cent. to 30 per cent. in the purchase of coal from the Indian collieries?—At that time the output under our control was more than it is now.

**D-2510.** If the competition of the railway collieries was eliminated would you be in a position to stand on your own legs?—It would go a long way to help us.

**D-2511.** If labour should have A. I. conditions you yourself should have to be in A. I. conditions?—Yes.

**D-2512.** You are not unsympathetic towards labour. If funds were available you would provide sickness insurance, old age pensions, higher wages and so on?—We would gladly do all that for the welfare of labour.

**D-2513.** Do you mean to say that even to-day when you are not in funds you are more sympathetic towards labour than European employers?—It is very difficult to say. I may say that we do all that is possible to do.

**D-2514.** Even now individual colliery owners are providing schools and similar welfare facilities for colliery children?—Yes. Our position is this. If our labour is happy we are happy. If labour works for us we are happy; otherwise we are nowhere.

**D-2515.** It is stated that the miners have the habit of idling away their time. Why is this peculiar to the miners alone?—I cannot say definitely why. It may be due to the kind of work they do.

**D-2516.** Have you any special experience of the Bauri workers?—There are some of them who do more work than others.

**D-2517.** Is their physique better than that of the Santhals?—No. The Santhals are better. They take more nourishment and have better physique.

**D-2518.** Is not lack of adequate nourishment resulting in poor physique, one of the causes of the idling habit?—It may be one of the factors, but personally I should not think so.

**D-2519.** Is it not very unkind to call the miner a habitual idler when lack of nourishment gives him a poor physique?—So far as your workers are concerned they are mostly composed of aboriginals?—Yes, mostly so. More than 70 per cent.

**D-2520.** Whereas the workers in the textile industry in other places are drawn from other classes. You agree that the physique of the Santhals as compared with the physique of the people of other provinces is poor?—We cannot say that as a general rule. If we compare the Santhals with the Punjabis, certainly the Santhals have a poor physique.

**D-2521.** Compared with the people coming from the United Provinces and Bihar?—Yes, they are poor. But when we compare the miners with the mill workers we have to take into consideration the kind of job they do and how much of exertion each kind of labour requires.

**D-2522.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Would you say that the physique of your miner is worse than that of the mill worker in Bombay?—No, I do not think so.

**D-2523.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Would you say that it is better or worse than the physique of the agricultural classes from which they are drawn ?—There is no difference at all between the two. I may say this : The Manjis who generally come from the Sonthal Parganas have a poor physique compared with the men from the United Provinces or the Punjab. But when compared to Bauris they have a better physique.

**D-2524.** *Mr. Birla* : Do you think that a miner has to put in a greater exertion than workers in other industries ?—I think so if we have in view the few big industries.

**D-2525.** Would you require a better physique for the coal mines than for the textile industry ?—Yes, subject to the qualification made.

**D-2526.** *Mr. Clow* : In your memorandum you say that “so long as the demand for a better living has not made itself felt from within the labour themselves, all legislative or statutory proposals for uplifting labour conditions are bound to fail in their object.” Do you consider for example that the Workmen’s Compensation Act has failed in its object ?—I do not think it has failed.

**D-2527.** Do you wish to qualify your statement at all ?—What we mean is that there should be a desire on the part of labour for a better living.

**D-2528.** How do you propose to stimulate the desire ?—By educating them.

**D-2529.** Dealing with education you say that the miners’ children do not go to school. Do you want to introduce primary education ?—Yes, primary education should be compulsory.

**D-2530.** Would that not be introducing a legislative measure before the demand came from the labour themselves ?—If we were to wait for a demand from them even with respect to education they would never be educated.

**D-2531.** But you say that there should be a demand from the workers ?—That is for a different kind of legislation, not for education. An elementary education is the condition of success of all legislation intended to promote higher standard of living.

**D-2532.** You say that all statutory proposals for uplifting labour should wait until labour makes a demand for it ?—Not with regard to education.

**D-2533.** With regard to measures affecting employers ?—Those questions are on a different footing from labour legislation.

**D-2534.** Have you any proposal to make in regard to the question of drink ?—We feel that the drinking habit is responsible for the present position of labour. The workers would be improved if that could be abolished.

**D-2535.** But there is no demand from labour for that kind of legislation?—I am making an hypothetical statement.

**D-2536.** You do not think that a measure of that kind will be unpopular with labour?—It may be unpopular, but it is worth while trying to educate them in prohibition. (Mr. Thacker) I submit that at least on payment days—Sundays and Mondays—the grog shops should be closed.

**D-2537.** Mr. Joshi suggested that you should have a disciplined labour so as to secure a shorter day. If you introduced discipline, is it not possible that labour would prefer to go elsewhere where slacker conditions of work prevail?—They might.

**D-2538.** Do you anticipate, or do you think, that by compulsion labour could be made to concentrate its work?—I do not think we could compel labour to concentrate its work. But at present it is difficult to know what will happen as a result of any action taken.

**D-2539.** *The Chairman:* I notice that the Government of Bengal have given us an interesting piece of information under the heading of "Welfare" in their memorandum. They say: "There are Government liquor shops conveniently situated for most collieries." Do you regard liquor shops conveniently situated as a piece of welfare work?—It is surely detrimental to the interests of labour.

**D-2540.** There has been some suggestion of differentiation of interests between the collieries which you represent in the Federation and those represented in the Association. You told us quite early to-day that both of you are members of both the bodies, the Federation and the Association?—Yes.

**D-2541.** So that in some matters you have a community of interests shown by common membership of both the bodies?—Yes. But the only difference is this. In many matters particularly in regard to trade interests we cannot see eye to eye with them.

**D-2542.** I quite appreciate that position. Can you tell me whether it is true or not that the majority of the shares in value in the Association collieries are held by Indians?—It may be, but the shareholders are generally apathetic. Even though there are Indian shareholders we cannot take it that they approve of what is done by the Association.

**D-2543.** I only wanted to elicit the fact that the collieries of the Association are owned in so far as shareholders are concerned mainly by Indians?—It is difficult to commit oneself either way from data available.

(The witnesses withdrew.)



## JAMADOBA COLLIERY.

**Mr. J. Kirk, Superintendent, Jamadoba Colliery of Messrs. Tata Iron and Steel Co., Ltd.**

**D-2544.** *The Chairman* : Do you pay a sick allowance when men and women are sick or in hospital?—Yes. We generally pay half wages.

**D-2545.** You have supplied us with a note stating that welfare work is receiving attention. It would be well if there were concerted attempts for the whole area to do more in the way of welfare?—I am in favour and would be ready to co-operate. We shall do it ourselves in any case.

**D-2546.** *Mr. Cliff* : What is the object of welfare work?—I do not know. My object is to give square deal.

**D-2547.** You consider provision for sickness to be a business proposition?—Yes.

**D-2548.** Do you find it possible to discipline your labour?—Yes.

**D-2549.** Is your experience yielding results?—Yes.

**D-2550.** Why are you successful and others not?—I do not know. Labour in India is not cheap, because men cannot do much work. It is all a question of temperature and climate.

**D-2551.** Do you endeavour to instruct your labour?—Yes.

**D-2552.** Is the Indian labourer an apt pupil?—He can be trained to do anything. We have men handling cutting machines as well as any British miner. It is all a matter of supervision and teaching.

**D-2553.** So you overcome the dearness of labour by mechanical aid?—Yes.

**D-2554.** What is your attitude towards Trade Union Organization?—So long as the leaders come from the ranks and stand up for their own labour, it is all right. I do not want lawyers or politicians as Trade Union leaders.

**D-2555.** What about the interim period?—It is a question of education. The whole thing is that the workers should learn to read and write their own language.

**D-2556.** Do you run schools?—Certain small ones. The miners have started one on their own initiative. We have purposely not helped them with it. This effort shows a desire on the miners' part for the education of their children.

**D-2557.** Is that exceptional?—No. You find some can read and some cannot. For instance when you are settling land, you sometimes find that the father can read and the sons cannot.

**D-2558.** Have you a stable labour force?—Yes. We dropped 6,000 tons in one month for special reasons, otherwise it is very steady.

**D-2559.** Do the same people come back to you?—Yes.

**D-2560.** For many years?—Yes. In any colliery if men are well treated, if ventilation is good, working places easy, tubs plentiful, they will come back.

**D-2561.** *Mr. James Mackie*: Whom do you employ for machines?—Punjabis.

**D-2562.** I quite agree with you as to the training of skilled labour but can the village miner be taught to undercut, etc.?—I have never tried and should not think of trying.

**D-2563.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: What value do you attach to the statutory attendance registers?—None.

**D-2564.** I saw some miners come up and one had not his name down in the register?—He probably went down another incline. I propose to revise the system and eliminate the inclines.

**D-2565.** *Col. Russell*: At what rate do you pay subsistence allowance in case of sickness?—The rate is half pay.

**D-2566.** Do you get Topchanchi water?—Yes.

**D-2567.** Have you any shortage?—No.

**D-2568.** *Mr. Sibakali Bose*: Is the miner diet generous?—I leave that to him.

**D-2569.** Are the wages adequate?—Yes.

**D-2570.** Do you prefer departmental or contract working?—Departmental. I get a closer supervision over my labour.

**D-2571.** Does the contract system encourage corruption?—I should not say so.

**D-2572.** Have you provident fund?—Only for monthly paid employees.

**D-2573.** Have you any regular system of increment for clerks?—No. We pay according to merit.

**D-2574.** Have you any leave system?—Yes. Every monthly paid employee gets 18 days paid leave.

**D-2575.** Do you appoint monthly paid men from outside?—We get them by promotion whenever possible.

**D-2576.** Do you know of the Employees' Association?—Yes. I support it.

**D-2577.** *The Chairman*: Do you give half pay in maternity cases?—No. Unless we are asked for it. We seldom hear of these cases.

**D-2578.** Does the medical staff give treatment in maternity cases?—Only when asked for.

**D-2579.** Would you be in favour of a general system for an allowance before and after child birth?—Yes, but we shall soon eliminate women both above and below ground. Within five years we shall have no women left working on the colliery.

**D-2580.** You think 10 years too long a period for elimination?—Yes. It will never go the full time.

**D-2581.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy:* You will then have men working without their families?—No. The cost of coal will have to go up to cover the loss of the women's wages or otherwise facilities given to the miner to enable him to earn as much as his wife and self.

**D-2582.** Do you then intend to give such housing as will enable the miners to keep their families?—Yes. I want them to keep their wives here.

**D-2583.** Will you not require a Maternity scheme in that case?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

<p>Hira Kharar Jasru Bhagat Chando Kheru</p>	}	<p>Miners from the Central Provinces.</p>
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**D-2584.** *The Chairman:* Do you wish to say anything to us?—The rate per tub we get is very low and deductions are made for stores. These deductions are not made anywhere else. We have difficulties and we do not get enough to eat.

**D-2585.** *The Chairman:* Are your wages here more or less than elsewhere?—I used to earn more in Raniganj, but after the pit I worked at closed, I came here.

**D-2586.** What did you earn there?—In Bakola mine I got 13½ annas for the small tubs; 4½ annas per tub myself, 4½ annas for my wife and, whatever surplus there was, brought it up to 13½ annas. By surplus I mean the cost of powder for which the mine paid. Here I get Rs. 1-8-0 for cutting roof coal and Rs. 1-10-0 for pillars per big tub (2½ tons). Deductions are made of seven annas and one pie per seer for powder and annas nine for fuse—one coil of 25 feet.

**D-2587.** How much powder do you use for one ton of coal?—I sometimes put three quarters to one seer in a hole which sometimes does its work and sometimes flots.

**D-2588.** Tell us about your work last week?—I worked six days, I used 5 seers of powder and 2 coils of fuse. I filled 11 tubs with five of us in a gang. Then there was a shortage of tubs. On last Sunday we got Rs. 2-8-0 each in wages after deductions had been made.

**D-2589.** Have you ever complained to the Manager?—No. Neither to the *Burra Sahib*, nor to Mr. Bose.

**D-2590.** Why not?—There is no chance of getting any more and they always say we have no more tubs.

**D-2591.** How many hours do you work below?—When we get tubs, we go down about 8 and come up at 6, 7 or 8. When there are no tubs we sometimes stay down for 24 hours.

**D-2592.** Why do you wait for tubs before you go to your working places?—We blast the coal and wait for the tubs then. (The Chief Inspector confirms this.)

**D-2593.** Do you wish to get your work done as soon as possible and then get out?—Yes.

**D-2594.** Have you been miners many years —

15 years,

11 „

6 „

and 4 „ respectively.

**D-2595.** Do you mean to continue?—What other work can we go to?

**D-2596.** Do you earn more here than in your homes in the Central Provinces?—We can earn nothing in our village, unless we have land.

When asked whether their families were with them, three of them replied that their families were in the village and one that his family was at the colliery.

**D-2597.** Do you send any money home?—When we have it, we send it.

When asked whether they wanted to bring their families from their homes, one witness replied that he did not earn sufficient for himself and the relation who stayed with him; the second replied that, if he sent for his family, there would be no one to look after his house at home.

**D-2598.** Do you drink?—No.

**D-2599.** Is this the real truth or has someone told you what to say?—No one has told us anything. I say what I wish, I am not a child.

**D-2600.** Then why not go elsewhere where you get more pay?—I would go anywhere else where I could get more.

**D-2601.** How much did you send to your wife last year?—When the work was good here, I used to make Rs. 10 or Rs. 20 a month. When I made Rs. 20, I sent Rs. 10.

**D-2602.** Have you been home recently ?—I came back three months ago. I had stayed at home one month. Since then I have sent Rs. 25 to my family. I earn from Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 4-0-0 a week.

**D-2603.** How many of you live together in one *Dhowrah* ?—Seven or eight.

**D-2604.** Do you stay together for choice ?—No. There are not sufficient *Dhowrahs*.

**D-2605.** Tell us about your food ?—I eat once in the morning and once in the evening, usually rice and dal for both meals. I do not eat meat because I have not enough money.

**D-2606.** Is there anything else you wish to say ?—No.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BIHAR AND ORISSA**  
**SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING.**  
**DHANBAD**

**Wednesday, 29th January 1930.**

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PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon'ble 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. 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*).

*Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. JAMES MACKIE, Agent, Eastern Coal Company, Limited.

Mr. M. N. MUKHERJI, Chairman, Indian Mining Federation,  
Calcutta.

Mr. SIBKALI BOSE (Indian Colliery Employees' Association, Jharia).

Mr. N. N. SENGUPTA (Indian Colliery Employees' Association,  
Dhanbad).

Mrs. KAMINI ROY, *Lady Assessor*.

*Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

| Mr. A. DIBDIN.

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**Mr. R. R. SIMPSON, Chief Inspector of Mines in India.**

**D-2607.** *The Chairman* : I see that the memorandum was prepared by the Officiating Chief Inspector during your absence on leave?—Yes; I am in general agreement with what he has said but there may be certain points on which perhaps I have more special knowledge than he has.

**D-2608.** What is the length of your experience of mining administration in India?—I came to India in 1901 and except for 4 years' employment on the Geological Survey as Mining Specialist I have been in the Department of Mines until this date. In 1914 and in 1920 I acted as Chief Inspector; my predecessor died and I have continued to act since then; I have been acting now as Chief Inspector for about 10 years.

**D-2609.** In the beginning was the Mines Department chiefly concerned with the technical and scientific side of mining, particularly with regard to safety in mines?—Almost entirely up to about 5 years ago.

**D-2610.** Some other Acts were passed dealing with conditions in mines, your Department has had this labour legislation brought within its scope?—That is so.

**D-2611.** What has been the expansion of your staff to meet the additional duties?—The expansion began in 1919, when an additional Inspector was appointed, and it has gradually increased, in 1922 to 8, and now there are 10. I have already intimated to the Government of India that I expect to have to ask for additional staff before long and I should have done so before had it not been for the fact that the number of coal mines working has decreased to a very large extent, though, on the other hand, the exclusion of women and the shift system will give us a great deal more work.

**D-2612.** Where the supervising staff of a mine has been paid by the contractor, what action has been taken?—We cannot take any legal action, but we write to the owner or agent of the mine and point out how undesirable a practice it is, and in every case I think they have agreed that the supervising staff shall be paid by the company instead of by the contractor.

**D-2613.** Would you think it necessary to have any additional legal powers on a matter of that kind?—I have no objection to having more legal powers; but my requests have been observed. Whenever it comes to our knowledge we draw attention to it; a new management may come in and start doing it, but when we find it out we draw attention to it. I do not think it obtains to any extent.

**D-2614.** I think I may take it that the Mines Board of Health has achieved great success in bringing about combined action through the Water Board for the provision of pure drinking water on the mines?—That is so, and I think the industry as a whole has realized that it has paid them to do so. Things had come to such a pass that it was a necessity. In 1908 a very large number of mines were closed down owing to a very severe cholera epidemic.

**D-2615.** Do you think the time is now ripe for expansion of the scope of the Board of Health to cover every question generally taken under the heading of welfare?—Yes; I think it might lead to a substantial raising of the standard of living on the mines. I think

education could certainly be one of the useful activities of the Board. Two years ago in the Jharia coalfield area with a population of 370,000 persons, including 138,000 rural inhabitants, there were 99 schools, of which 16 were colliery schools with 617 pupils.

**D-2616.** During our stay here we have found cases where little schools have been started by the miners themselves?—I rather doubt whether the miners would do that of their own accord; I think there has probably been some influence, such as a contractor or official on the mine who has actually been the moving spirit.

**D-2617.** In your memorandum you take, as an illustration, the case of Giridih?—The educational system in Giridih has been going on for about 30 years.

**D-2618.** *Miss Power*: Is education there made compulsory by the employer or Government?—By the colliery authorities, not by Government. I think it is no more than that pressure is brought to bear; the miner is asked why his child is not attending school, he is told the child must attend and the child does attend.

**D-2619.** Is the father penalized in any way if the child does not attend?—No, I do not think so. It was compulsory in the old days; there might be less compulsion now. The figures which I give as to attendance are rather out of date.

**D-2620.** *The Chairman*: From the beginning of next April the shift system will be legally enforceable?—Yes.

**D-2621.** Are you satisfied that the registers will be effective?—I am not fully satisfied; it is extraordinarily difficult to keep registers at a mine. Not many years ago even the names of the workers were not written down. All the coal raised by a gang of 5 was put down to one man. We began slowly by requiring a very simple form of register to be filled up; that was a beginning, for that register was not much use. Recently we have improved the register. It has only been enforced for about two months and I consider that it is being kept in a fairly good manner. We have had a fair number of prosecutions; last year there were 4 prosecutions for not keeping this register properly.

**D-2622.** Can you suggest any method of interesting the miner himself in the correctness of the register by linking up the register with the pay sheet?—Yes, I have considered it. It is rather difficult because they are paid entirely by the amount of coal got. I think it could be done, but I do not know of any case in which it is being done except in the Bawdwin Mine in Burma, where it is tied up with the system of payment. In quite a large number of mines managers are introducing the token system. It has been found difficult to maintain that system because the workers lose their tokens owing to the fact that it is not tied up with their payment system.

**D-2623.** Do you think there ought to be any minimum requirement for the qualification of register clerk?—We only require that he shall be



able to read and write. All this keeping of registers entails a considerable burden on the industry. In some mines there are a great many entrances and exits and the maintenance of attendance clerks on each of these openings is very difficult. It would be particularly hard on the small Indian collieries if we had an elaborate system of registration with highly-paid clerks..

**D-2624.** Do you find there is any desire among the mine-owners and managers that the period of 10 years at present provided for the exclusion of women should be shortened?—It is only in coal mines in this Province, Bengal and the Central Provinces and salt mines in the Punjab that there are any women at all now; they have been taken out of all other mines. One large group of mines in Assam took women out altogether about a year ago. On many mines there are managers and superintendents who would welcome women being taken out at once. I have always advocated women being taken out at once. Up to a few years ago there has always been a shortage of labour in the coalfields and Government were very doubtful as to whether it would be advisable to do anything which would reduce the supply of labour. Therefore my suggestion that they should be taken out at once was not accepted. I think the period could be shortened without any ill effects.

**D-2625.** I take it that you do not agree with the idea that the provision of a grog shop at the mine is in the interest of the worker?—The attitude of mine-owners with regard to grog shops has changed. At one time they were pleased to have a grog shop at the colliery because it attracted labour. Now they are quite ready to have a grog shop, but they would like to have it on someone else's colliery. I think they are anxious to have the number reduced and there has been a reduction over a period of years.

**D-2626.** Is it a fact that Government can place a grog shop on the property of the mine without the consent of the owners and managers?—I am not quite sure of that: I know the mine-owners have objected and Government have paid attention to their objections.

**D-2627.** Wages are generally paid on Sunday?—Yes.

**D-2628.** And sometimes the payment of wages drags on as late as 3 o'clock in the afternoon?—I believe so.

**D-2629.** Does the question of the time and method of payment come within your purview?—No. In certain areas they have pay boxes and get through it very expeditiously. A system of that kind generally would be an advantage; but that is not a thing of which I have any special knowledge.

*Mr. Clow:* It is said in your memorandum that the effect of the Workmen's Compensation Act on industry has been to raise the cost from half an anna to As. 3 or As. 4 per tub of coal. The statement is incorrect, it is per Rs. 100 of wages.

*Mr. Mackie* : In 1929 on the average it is 3.5 pies per ton. Insurance companies charge a percentage on wages, the rates varying with the class of work ; in a shallow outcrop mine it is small, but where there is gas and deep pits it is greater.

**D-2630.** The table which is given in your memorandum suggests that in the great majority of serious accidents no compensation is paid. Can you suggest any way of making sure that those who are entitled to compensation get it?—We do all we can to obtain compensation; I have had a form made out and in a number of cases the Inspector has got hold of the people, actually made out the claim for them, got them to sign it and submitted it. I often write to Magistrates and I ask if any steps have been taken if it is a distant district to inform the person's dependents that they are entitled to compensation. That is in regard to both fatal and non-fatal cases.

**D-2631.** I understand the Additional Deputy Commissioner here follows the practice, at least in fatal cases, of informing the dependents that it is open to them to make a claim?—Yes. I am continually writing to District Magistrates on that point. I think in a great number of cases compensation is actually paid without the Commissioner being informed. The administration of the Workmen's Compensation Act has nothing to do with me. I do all I can, but it is gratuitous.

**D-2632.** How have the tables with regard to wages in your memorandum been compiled?—During 1923-25 they merely had to give the amount earned weekly. I think that was very often filled from imagination; the manager would say to himself : " this man can earn so much a day, if he works five days a week he would earn so and so." We found that did not answer, and we made it a much more elaborate form. In 1926-28 the figures are reasonably accurate. I think.

**D-2633.** Are they based on selected mines?—It is the average for the whole coalfield; they are based on complete statistics. There is a misprint under " Giridih Coalfield Miners ". It is put down as As. 17-9; it ought to be As. 12-9.

**D-2634.** *Dixan Chaman Lal* : Is this on the same basis as that on which you get the figure for Punjab salt miners underground earning Rs. 2-9-0?—The form is the same.

**D-2635.** *Mr. Clok* : Mr. Lang suggests there is going to be increasing danger owing to the necessity of going more and more to pillar extraction as against gallery driving. Do you consider the present methods of mining are calculated to enhance that danger?—There is a method by which the danger can be greatly reduced. That is the filling method of working. But its expense has prevented its being adopted.

**D-2636.** Do you agree with the view put forward in some quarters that too much coal is taken out in the first working?—Yes, generally speaking, it is, and we do frequently interfere.

**D-2637.** Mr. Lang says that in the Raniganj coalfield the percentage of resident labour is much smaller than in the Jharia coalfield. What does he mean by "resident"?—People living on the colliery premises; a large number come in from outlying villages in the Raniganj coalfield.

**D-2638.** He does not mean permanent?—No.

**D-2639.** Generally speaking, in the Raniganj coalfield there is a greater percentage of persons more or less permanently employed in the coalfield than there is in Jharia?—Yes. I suppose the Jharia labour force is recruited to a large extent from outside.

**D-2640.** Have any difficulties from the point of view of administration arisen in regard to the mining of coal in Indian States?—I have no information about that, but I think a good many of the Indian States follow our practice; I get frequent enquiries for forms and things like that which are used in British India.

**D-2641.** But there is not the same amount of regulation there?—No. Both Hyderabad and Mysore have a Mines Act, with a mine inspection staff. There is no coal mining in the Orissa States, but there is iron mining. I have no knowledge of what is done in that respect at all. There are large quarries worked by a firm which treats its labour well on the whole; I do not think there is likely to have been any abuse.

**D-2642.** Has there not been some development of coal mining in the States south of Chota Nagpur?—Yes, but it is very small so far and all the companies concerned are large companies which as a rule treat their labour well.

**D-2643.** *Mr. Joshi:* Your memorandum says that as a rule miners remain underground for 8 to 10 hours daily; so that if the present statutory hours of 12 per day were reduced, there would be no serious departure from the present hours of work?—In these matters I think it is necessary to go very slowly; up to the present there has been no system established; we want to make a beginning by making a clean cut of one day and one night shift. In a few years time when this has been in force I think the regular statutory limit might well be reduced, but not at present.

**D-2644.** I wanted to know whether as a fact there would be any serious departure from the present practice if hours were reduced?—When there is a pressure on labour in the mine the tubs are shorter in supply and the miners remain in the mines longer, up to the full limit of 12 hours at the present time.

**D-2645.** So that you do not think this statement is accurate?—It is not accurate in so far as three months in the year, when I should say a very large proportion of coal miners remain underground longer than 8 to 10 hours.

**D-2646.** Can you give us the proportion of people coming to their mining work from a distance of more than 10 miles?—I have no figures as to that, but I think it is a decreasing proportion. It is appreciated that the shift system is going to be enforced and the distance travelled is being gradually reduced.

**D-2647.** If a little more discipline were enforced on miners and the hours were reduced to 10, would there be a large scope for alternative work in India so that a large number of workers could go elsewhere if they did not like this discipline?—No, I think they would knuckle down and accept it.

**D-2648.** Having regard to the introduction of machinery, do you think output would suffer if hours were reduced?—As more and more labour saving machinery is employed output per person will go up.

**D-2649.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* But will the cost of production go up?—It probably would.

**D-2650.** *Mr. Joshi:* In your memorandum it is suggested that the limitation of the hours of work which has already been enforced has had little or no effect on the industry?—I think that refers to safety provisions.

**D-2651.** In your memorandum you have given some comparative figures with regard to production; have you any comparative figures of the wages paid, for instance in America?—The price of coal is very low in America. In many places they are selling it for \$ 1 a ton.

**D-2652.** If you take production in relation to wages paid, Indian labour is very efficient or productive, is it not?—Indian labour is far from efficient. The conditions are very easy in India.

**D-2653.** Indian labour is very cheap?—I do not think so.

**D-2654.** I think you yourself in one of your reports have said that wages in India are one-tenth of what they are in England and one-twentieth of what they are in America?—The production in England and America is not ten times that of Indian labour, so that naturally Indian labour is cheaper. On page 28 of your report for 1928 you say that a provision may usefully be enacted which will require them to notify pillar extraction in all cases. I take it that at present there is no rule?—No, but in almost every case we know an amendment has been prepared and I have no doubt it will be made. Action has already been taken on this report.

**D-2655.** On page 30 you mention another case where another rule is necessary?—Proposals have been sent to the Government of India with a view to changing the regulation.

**D-2656.** Where prosecutions have taken place because of violation of safety rules, have the Magistrates passed sentences of imprisonment or is it always a fine?—Some years ago an agent of a mine was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. In quite a number of cases

the sentence has been: "in default, rigorous imprisonment for two months." Cases of imprisonment without the option of a fine are very rare. I think they are unknown in Great Britain.

**D-2657.** Would you object to a representative of the workers sitting on the Mining Board?—There are already representatives nominated by Government.

**D-2658.** Who is the gentleman now representing labour on the Board?—In Bihar and Orissa Mr. Mackie, and the Deputy Commissioner for the metalliferous mines.

**D-2659.** Who is Mr. Mackie?—He is a colliery superintendent.

**D-2660.** He represents the workers' interests?—Yes, and very fairly too. I also represent the workers' interests. We were appointed to save life in mines. Up till recently labour was represented on the Bihar and Orissa Board by the Medical Officer of the Mines Board of Health, Dr. Thompson.

**D-2661.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Was that the intention of the law?—It is not for me to say what the intention was; the difficulty has been to find some suitable person.

**D-2662.** *Mr. Joshi*: You say in your memorandum that copies of certain documents are supplied free to all Gazetted Government officers, a large number of newspapers, the mining associations, the owners, agents and managers. Do you send copies to the employees' associations? Is there any objection to sending copies to them?—Not at all. If it is not sent it is purely an oversight which I regret. If Mr. Bose had written to me it would have been remedied at once. I will see that he is put on the list if he is not on the list already.

**D-2663.** *Miss Power*: Would you prefer a system of withdrawal of women from the mines based on the percentage of women to men at a particular time, or would you prefer the annual withdrawal of women based on the number of women employed by a mine at the time this rule came into operation?—I think it is much better to make it general for the whole coalfield. There was a suggestion that there should be a quota for each mine, but it was considered after very full consideration that it was better to make it a general percentage applying to all mines. It is extremely difficult to check a quota system and there was no reliable basis on which to work.

**D-2664.** Do you agree with the evidence of the Bengal Government that "the regulations are considered suitable for the object for which they are framed, but they should be extended to quarries where work done by women is often more arduous than work done in mines and often not suitable to women?"—Yes, I think work in open quarries is very often more arduous. There are many shallow quarries where it is not different from the work which is carried on on railways where an embankment is being made and people have to carry a load up a height

of 10 or 20 ft.; but there are certain quarries in which the work of carrying loads is very heavy indeed.

**D-2665.** Would you advocate the general exclusion of women from quarries or only from particular quarries?—I think it would have to be based on the depth and inclination of the carrying roads. They might be required to have the carrying roads at a certain gradient and loads might be restricted, but that would be very difficult to enforce.

**D-2666.** The new Factories Bill of Great Britain suggests regulating loads by means of a clause which prescribes the maximum weight of the load lifted, carried or moved by women or young persons and allows the Secretary of State to make special orders under certain circumstances. Would you advocate that system in India?—Yes, I think the load might usefully be restricted, but it would be extremely difficult to enforce such a restriction.

**D-2667.** It would lie in the discretion of the Inspector who would be called upon to prove his case in court, if necessary?—Very close inspection would be required for that I am afraid, and I do not think we have the staff to deal with it.

**D-2668.** Apart from the question of staff, do you approve of the method of regulating weight carrying by women by such means?—I think it would be better to go on with some simple means, such as the gradient of the carrying road and the weight of the basket for anybody quite irrespective of the individual.

**D-2669.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would you restrict these clauses to mines or make them general for all industries?—I am not concerned with other industries.

**D-2670.** *Miss Power*: Do your staff find their work hampered, as many of the factory inspectors have told us they do, by the inadequacy of the fines inflicted under the Act and the generally unhelpful attitude adopted by Magistrates?—Yes, to some extent, and I have taken it up on several occasions with the Magistrate of Burdwan, for instance. I have complained that inadequate punishments have been awarded and notice has been taken of that. In the 1923 Act the maximum penalties have been considerably enhanced.

**D-2671.** In your memorandum there is a table of the comparative output of miners in Great Britain, America, Africa, and so on. Is this table of any value as a comparison of the comparative efficiency of the worker considering the different types of mine and the varying extent to which machinery is used in different mines?—It is of no great value.

**D-2672.** It is quoted in our evidence very extensively as militating against the Indian worker. Do you think it is a fair comparison?—No, I do not think it is a fair comparison. The conditions are different.

**D-2673.** In your memorandum it is said: "The physique and health of the Indian worker compare unfavourably with those of the

worker in colder climates. This, to some extent, is due to the enervating climate in which he lives and to the lack of nourishing food." When we were questioning the representatives of the Jharia Mines Board of Health the statement was made that "wages are sufficiently higher to allow of a generous diet for all workers." There was subsequently considerable disagreement on that point. What is your opinion as to the adequacy of the workers' diet?—I think it is just sufficient to support him. I do not think it is at all generous.

**D-2674.** Do you think it is adequate to support the miner efficiently, considering the arduous work that he is required to do, or does it militate against his efficiency as a worker?—I think if he were paid more money you would get more work out of him; he would be able to work harder because he could feed himself better. The same class of worker is working on other mines, such as the Bawdwin mines and working very much harder. They eat well. They eat meat most days and are able to put in a very hard day's work.

**D-2675.** In your memorandum it is stated that "at the mines of the Burma Corporation Limited no recruiting is now necessary as the high rates of pay are sufficiently attractive to maintain an adequate supply of labour." What effect has that had on the percentage of settled labour on that field?—I do not think there is any settled labour; it is not a suitable place; it is right away in the mountains and narrow valleys where they have to live in rather close lines. They come for certain periods and then go back to their homes. Practically none of them make their homes there.

**D-2676.** In your memorandum, it is stated that "at the Bawdwin mine latrines for both sexes are provided and their use is strictly enforced." A reference is also made to "the admirable results of compulsory education." In regard to the shift system in Burma, it is stated that "the difficulties encountered were not great and the workers quickly realized the benefit and preferred the present system." Again it is said that "at the Jamadoba colliery the output is higher owing to the increased use of mechanical power." Would you say that all these statements tend to show that the worker is willing to submit to discipline and that his efficiency improves when he does?—Yes, I think it does prove that.

**D-2677.** Should the next move come from the employer rather than from the worker?—What can the worker do? All he can do is to leave the mine if he does not like the conditions.

**D-2678.** But with regard to efficiency the worker responds when reasonable discipline is enforced?—Yes, I think so.

**D-2679.** Or when his conditions of work allow him?—I think if he is given better conditions he would do a better day's work.

**D-2680.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy:* It is said in the memorandum that it has been difficult to get labour to take full advantage of the midwives

and *dais* provided. Are you there speaking only of unskilled labour in the mines?—I think it applies to the miners generally.

**D-2681.** Do the families of the skilled labour also object to trained midwives and prefer untrained *dais*?—Apparently they did not accept the assistance offered. I have really no special knowledge of this; it is the work of the Mines Board of Health. I can only accept what I am told.

**D-2682.** What is your view about the Jharia Mines Board of Health scheme for maternity medical assistance for women in the coalfields including the women of skilled and unskilled labour?—I think something of the kind is needed.

**D-2683.** What are the crèches for children like?—It is merely a shed with a shelter with drinking water provided and an old woman or two to look after the children. These crèches have been set up by some large collieries. I have not seen any lately. We are continually advising in favour of these crèches. We very often find these crèches disappear after a year or two and we are told that women will not bring their children because it is said that a child has been ill-treated. They prefer to have the children under their own eyes. It is all a matter of education; it will come in time.

**D-2684.** It is said in your memorandum that a large percentage of accidents in Indian mines are due to illiteracy as the miners are recruited from the uneducated classes. Do you not think it would be advisable to organize lectures for the illiterate miners with a view to preventing accidents?—We have classes for *sardars* which are very largely attended; a large number of miners also attend; in 1925 the total attendance was 987; it has since fallen to 534.

**D-2685.** What is the cause of the increased average output of coal per person employed per year in collieries in India since 1923?—To a considerable extent it is due to machinery; it is also due to the fact that wages have been reduced and they have had to work harder.

**D-2686.** You also attribute the inefficiency of the Indian mine worker to lack of nourishing food. Have you any suggestion to make as to how he may be able to get more nourishing food?—With more wages.

**D-2687.** Then wages are the great question?—Yes.

**D-2688.** In your memorandum it is said that great efficiency will not be effected until there is a large mining population independent of agriculture; would it be to the interests of the miners to be dependent wholly on coal cutting for their living?—It is very doubtful; it will probably adversely affect his physique until better conditions were given. I suggest that the conditions should be improved until they are such that all the year round work in the mines will not be harmful to him. I think it would be a good thing to have settled labour when the conditions are such that a man can work at the mines all the year round without his physique being impaired.



**D-2689.** Do you think that is possible?—In most countries the miners work in the mine all the year round and have no other occupation. It is also the case in certain parts of India, for instance, the Khewra Salt Mines. I think the present system by which the Indian coal miner goes away preserves his physique. He goes away for a period of rest and recuperation and that keeps him fit and well. I think there are already a large number of miners who do very little agricultural work. When they go back to their villages it is more often merely for a period of rest, and the miner has to earn sufficient at the mines to support him during that rest period.

**D-2690.** Could arrangements be made by mine-owners to provide the miner with a plot of land at the colliery near where he lives?—It has been done in a number of cases, but the difficulty is to get the land. It has proved beneficial in the Giridih coalfield where they have miners' allotments. It has been tried to a considerable extent in these two coalfields; certain mines have taken up villages, they have actually made a lot of improvement in the villages and given the land to the miners on easy terms; but they have found that it does not improve their labour supply and in many cases it has been given up and the land has been relinquished.

**D-2691.** *Mr. Mukherji*: You have stated that the miner's lack of nourishing food is due to the small wages that he earns?—Yes.

**D-2692.** So that if wages were increased the nourishing food which they would then get would enable them to raise more coal?—Yes.

**D-2693.** But in this memorandum it is also stated that some years ago during the boom period an increase was given with the result that the miners worked fewer days per week?—That is so.

**D-2694.** How do you reconcile those two statements?—It is a matter of education; in course of time they will learn that leisure is not the only thing they can buy.

**D-2695.** So that you agree that an immediate increase of wages would not improve their conditions?—I think it will eventually, though it might not immediately.

**D-2696.** Is it not your experience that increased wages have synchronised with reduced output?—I think to some extent that is so.

**D-2697.** In 1919, for instance, there was a record output, but as soon as the wages were increased in 1920 I think the output fell by nearly 15 per cent.

**D-2698.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Surely wages in Jharia were increased in 1921?—I think it was 1920-21. I think the first thing the miner did when wages were increased was to buy leisure. He worked fewer days.

**D-2699.** *Mr. Mukherji*: So that you agree that a mere increase of wages will not help labour at once?—It would give him an easier time;

he would not have to work so hard. I hope in the course of time he would improve his diet. Probably in many cases he did improve his diet.

**D-2700.** If he did not earn more how could he increase his diet?—The experience at other mines where higher wages are paid is that they do live better.

**D-2701.** With regard to the prohibition of women's labour you know that the railway collieries are exempt from that prohibition?—Yes.

**D-2702.** I understand you propose a shortening of the period of withdrawal of female labour without interfering with the railway quarries at all. Do you not think that that would adversely affect at least one section, the Indian section, of the industry who work the same class of coal as most of the railway quarries work?—The railway quarries have bound themselves to observe the restriction upon the employment of women underground.

**D-2703.** But in other quarries they do not observe that restriction?—Yes, they are going to reduce at the same rate.

**D-2704.** But under the law they are exempted?—That is so, it is a self-denying ordinance. They have done it of their own accord. They are going to reduce the number at the same rate.

**D-2705.** Have they done so already?—I could not say; I have not enquired.

**D-2706.** You mean they are going to do that voluntarily?—Yes.

**D-2707.** If that is so, why should there not be legislation to that effect?—The only reason why they are doing that is because the mine-owners alleged that it is unfair competition. Government were of opinion that a case could not be made out for excluding women from quarries generally all over India. There are only a few of these quarries.

**D-2708.** But there is not much competition round about the railway quarries so that there can be no objection to legislation to that effect?—Government did not think it necessary to apply the restrictions to open quarries.

**D-2709.** Do you think it reasonable to expect women to carry the load up to 60 feet?—In a very large number of cases the wagons are taken right up to the working place and the loads are carried only through a very short lift. The work is not arduous.

**D-2710.** The Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation has stated in his note:

“ Instances have come to my notice in which miners have been allowed to rob coal inside fenced areas with the knowledge, consent and approval of the subordinate staff and such immense quantities of coal day after day and week after week have been known to have been raised that it would be safe to presume that this was done with the knowledge of the manager although it was necessary to prove the same for payment of compensation.”

Has the Magistrate reported to you any such cases and have you prosecuted the persons concerned in such cases?—The Magistrate does not make any report to me. We make the report to the Magistrate and he takes action on our report. He holds an enquiry to determine who the dependents are, and also considers evidence to prove whether the accident has been caused by wilful negligence or not. He is very largely guided by the report of the Inspector of Mines on the accident. I am accustomed to send him copies of my Inspector's reports.

**D-2711.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : I find from the Indian Trade Journal that the average production of coal per person in the Indian collieries for 1901-05 was 82 tons per annum and that it rose steadily to 125 tons in 1928. Is it not clear from that that the Indian miner has increased in efficiency?—The greater part of that increase was due to the introduction of labour saving machinery. To a small extent it was due to increased efficiency on the part of labour.

**D-2712.** In your memorandum, while dealing with workmen's compensation you say :

" Considering that the Act is comparatively new and the dependents are illiterate and do not know its provisions the figures for Jharia are satisfactory. The record of Jharia may be due to the fact that the Additional Deputy Commissioner at Dhanbad is also the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation. All notices of accidents are sent to him as Magistrate and he is thus in a position to take steps to instruct the mine managers to deposit the compensation."

Do you think that it is desirable to adopt the suggestion of the Indian Colliery Employees' Association that the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation should be invested with powers to initiate proceedings for payment of compensation to the dependents considering the illiteracy of the workers?—I think there should certainly be some agency to help the dependents to make claims.

**D-2713.** Would you not prefer that that agency should be the Commissioner himself under the present circumstances?—Yes, the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation seems to be the appropriate person under the circumstances. I frequently write to the Commissioner for Compensation drawing his attention to cases and ask if any claims have been made.

**D-2714.** Would you vest him with powers to initiate proceedings? There should be some agency to initiate proceedings on behalf of the illiterate dependents. What agency do you propose?—I think the Commissioner should have the power to take cognizance of cases in which he considers that compensation ought to be paid. He ought to make some enquiry and find out whether there are dependents and whether they wish to make claims.

**D-2715.** You say he should make an enquiry. How can he do so unless he is vested with powers to that effect?—I have not considered this question fully. But he seems to be the appropriate person to do this work.

**D-2716.** *Mr. Clow* : Is there any danger in an officer trying a case and taking steps to have it instituted?—It is true. That is a difficulty. But I cannot think of any other person who can do it.

**D-2717.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : The Indian Colliery Employees' Association say in their report : " In a country where the prosecutor is the judge it strikes one as strange that Government should be reluctant to invest the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation with powers to initiate proceedings to secure compensation ..... ".

*Mr. Clow* : I do not think the premise is correct.

*Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Why? Is not the prosecutor the judge in India in most cases?

**D-2718.** Do you agree with Mr. Thadani in extending the scope of the Act so as to remove the limitations regarding the interpretation of the word " negligence " ?—I am in favour of that. I agree with him.

**D-2719.** Do you also agree with the views of the Government of Bihar and Orissa that the definition of the term " dependent " should be widened so as to include widowed sisters, widowed daughters and widowed daughters-in-law?—I do not know anything about that. In England there is only one dependent now who can claim compensation. We have enormous difficulty now-a-days in proving who is a dependent.

**D-2720.** *The Chairman* : If dependence is proved?—If you widened the scope of the word you would be frittering away the benefits which would have to be shared among all these people. Anyhow I have no definite opinion to express on the matter.

**D-2721.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Mr. Thadani has stated that there is no representative of labour either on the Board of Health or on the Water Board. Should there not be a labour representative on these Boards?—I have no objection.

**D-2722.** In your memorandum, dealing with causes of accidents you say that " in India a cultivator is allowed to start coal cutting on his first day in a mine." Would you like to place any restriction on such new recruits cutting coal at once?—It would be extraordinarily difficult to obtain compliance with a rule of that kind. Most managers do it because they realize it is common sense.

**D-2723.** *The Chairman* : Are you in favour of legal restrictions placed on a new comer that he shall not cut coal until he has been for some time in a mine?—I think a time may come when we can have such a regulation. I do not know of any other country where they have such a restriction.

**D-2724.** *Mr. Sibkali Bose* : You have stated in your memorandum that " the efficiency of the Indian worker is apparently on an equal with his confrere in Japan but inferior to those in Great Britain, America and the Transvaal." What is the daily average output of a miner in this country?—The annual output is 132 tons per person employed. A miner ordinarily fills 2 or 3 tubs of coal carrying 13 cwt.

**D-2725.** The miner here does not work 3 to 4 months in the year whereas the miners in other countries work throughout the year. Has this fact been taken into consideration in estimating the average output?—A European miner if he were doing the work done by the Indian miner would probably obtain at least twice as much coal merely by his natural skill with the same technical help that the Indian miner gets. That means that the Indian miner is not as efficient as the European miner.

**D-2726.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Bose is under the impression that your figures are based on the number of days average attendance?—No, we have taken the total attendance and divided it by the number of days the men have worked.

*Mr. Cliff* : I think, Mr. Chairman, the witness has admitted that the paragraph as it stood is not a complete statement of the position?

The Chairman : I think so.

**D-2727.** *Mr. Sibkali Bose* : You have given the daily average earnings of a miner as As. 13-6. Do not the miners always work with their loaders?—Does not this As. 13-6 include the loader's wages also?—This figure does not include the loader's wages. If the loader is included it will be double this.

**D-2728.** You said that the average output of a miner was two tubs?—I said two to three tubs.

**D-2729.** This includes the loader also?—Yes, it includes the loader also.

**D-2730.** How then can it be As. 13-6 a day?—3 tubs at As. 7 each tub will give Rs. 1-5-0. The loader being a woman will be paid less than the miner. The miner will get As. 13-6. That will explain the discrepancy.

**D-2731.** How did you get those figures?—These figures are based on the information received from the mine owners regarding the wages paid in a particular month and the total number of persons who received those wages. By dividing the one by the other we get the daily average wages. The figures given here refer to the month of December when the output is near the average.

**D-2732.** Do you think that the Subsidence Enquiry Committee should be made a permanent body?—The Committee has been working for a year and it will go on for a good many years.

**D-2733.** Should there be not be a labour representative on that committee?—I have no objection, but it is a technical enquiry entirely. It deals only with scientific and technical questions.

**D-2734.** Do you not think it necessary that there should be an Accident Enquiry Committee with a labour representative on it?—I do not know of any country in the world where labour representatives are appointed to committees enquiring into accidents. In Great Britain

the Chief Inspector does it alone. The assessors appointed under our Act are persons possessing legal and special knowledge. There is no objection whatever to labour representatives taking part in such enquiries and being allowed to question witnesses. Already Local Governments are passing a rule to that effect. The rule made by one of the Local Governments runs as follows :—

“ A court of inquiry appointed under Section 21 of the Act shall permit a relative of any person whose death may have been caused by an accident with respect to which an inquiry is being held, and the owner, agent or manager of the mine in which the accident occurred, and any person appointed by the order in writing of the majority of the workmen employed at the same mine, and any person appointed in writing by an association of workmen to which the deceased at the time of his death belonged, or by any association of employers of which the owner is a member, or by any association to which any official or workman employed in the mine belongs, to attend and examine any witness, either in person or by his counsel, solicitor, pleader or agent, subject nevertheless to the power of the court to disallow any question which, in its opinion, is not relevant or is otherwise not a proper question.”

Other Local Governments also are about to make such rules.

**D-2735.** Does the Subsidence Enquiry Committee investigate into accidents also?—No.

**D-2736.** Do you think it necessary to have an Accident Enquiry Committee to prevent accidents?—No, I do not think it necessary.

**D-2737.** *Mr. Mackie :* Mr. Simpson, there seems to be some confusion with reference to the discontent and strikes in 1920 and 1921 when the Trade Union Congress was held at Jharia. In his memorandum Mr. Lang says : “ In 1921 when the All India Trade Union Congress met at Jharia the discontent was fanned by political agitators. During the holding of the Congress the collieries were practically shut down for a week. This is the most serious disturbance during the last ten years.” Does this refer to the strike?—What happened was this, in the collieries in the neighbourhood of Jharia very little work was done during that week. But it did not affect the whole coalfield.

**D-2738.** *Diwan Chaman Lall :* Was not the real reason this that a request was made by certain delegates to attend the Trade Union Congress and that request was refused and consequently there was a strike?—I have no information that that was so.

**D-2739.** *Mr. Mackie :* The Colliery Employees' Association says that there was a strike at that time and as a result of that 50 per cent. increase in wages was given. Do you agree with that statement?—No.

**D-2740.** You say in your report that the wage standards were raised in 1920. You also say distinctly that there were no strikes in 1920?—Yes.

**D-2741.** You also say that no general increases were given in 1921 and 1922 and there were no strikes. Therefore you do not agree with the statement of the Colliery Employees' Association that there was a strike and as a result of that 50 per cent. increase in wages was given?—No. I do not agree.

**D-2742.** The Chairman of the Jharia Mines Board of Health says that there has been a fall in the total labour force on the collieries since 1924. What could be the reason for the fall in the average daily attendance within recent years?—It may be due to labour saving machinery.

**D-2743.** Do you not think it is due to migration to the neighbouring coalfields?—Yes, it might be partly due to that.

**D-2744.** *The Chairman :* On the closing down of certain mines here they have found employment in other mines in the locality?—Yes.

**D-2745.** *Mr. Mackie :* It has been suggested that the miners should be given better houses with wide verandahs, courtyards, compounds for vegetable gardens and so on. Do you think it possible, to have, on many of the coal properties, unlimited supplies of land, on which to build extensive houses like that?—That is one of the great difficulties—lack of land. It is difficult for mine owners to get land for mining purposes. Under the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act they hold the lands on lease and they cannot alienate the land.

**D-2746.** You said that you agreed with Mr. Thadani that compensation should be paid in the case of all accidents resulting in death or permanent disability even though the accident occurred through the fault of the victim?—Yes.

**D-2747.** Do you not think that the definition of "dependent" ought to be modified?—At present it includes wife or husband, parents, minor son, unmarried daughters, minor brothers, sisters, minor children and so on. Some big families have many sons and so on and the family may not be entirely dependent on the earnings of the son killed or injured. Why should the parent be paid a large sum of money as compensation in cases where the son is not the sole supporter?—I am thinking of cases where he is the sole supporter of the family.

**D-2748.** You agree that it might be qualified?—It might be.

**D-2749.** Have you any experience of the way in which the compensation money is spent?—I think very often it is squandered.

**D-2750.** You were comparing the physique of the Bawdwin miners in Burma with the miners on the Jharia coalfield. But are not most of the Bawdwin miners Chinese?—60 per cent. of them are Indians. The Chinese are coming less and less every year. There are a number

of Biharis. There are Indians of all kinds. There are some Nepalesé. They eat more meat and coming from further north their physique is better than that of the miner on the Jharia coalfield.

**D-2751.** With regard to the drinking habit of the miner is it not a fact that a large proportion of the income of the Government of Bihar and Crissa comes from excise?—It is about 2/5ths of the whole revenue.

**D-2752.** In calculating the average output per person in the coal mines you include in your calculation all the persons working in the mine such as *khalasis* and overmen and not merely the miners and the loaders?—Yes, all persons.

**D-2753.** With regard to the discipline of the miners there is a certain amount of discipline in gassy mines where the workers are aware of the danger?—I agree they are amenable to discipline. In a great number of mines there is strict discipline.

**D-2754.** You agree that they are amenable to discipline especially in gassy mines where restrictions are necessary to avert accidents?—Yes.

**D-2755.** With reference to the number of schools run by the colliery companies there seems to be some mistake in the statement made by the Chairman of the Jharia Mines Board of Health. He said that there were only 4 schools maintained by the colliery companies. But you yourself found that there were 16 schools?—Yes. Probably there are more now.

**D-2756.** There is a movement towards encouragement of education on the part of colliery companies?—Yes.

**D-2757.** *Mr. Sibkali Bose:* Are not those schools resorted to chiefly by the children of the clerks and other subordinate clerical staff?—I have gone into those schools and questioned child after child and more often than not they are miners' children.

*Mr. Mackie:* There is quite a big number of miners' children in my own school.

**D-2758.** With regard to the speed of withdrawal of women from the mines you say that the period could be shortened without much ill effect. Do you not think that in all probability in 5 years time there will be no women offering themselves for work in the mines as a result of the difficulty in deciding daily which women will be allowed to work and which women will be returned home?—I think it is quite probable.

**D-2759.** *Col. Russell:* In your memorandum dealing with the extent and nature of official supervision in matters relating to health you give a list of the activities of the Jharia and Asansol Mines Boards of Health—You agree that all these activities are reasonably to be expected from employers?—Yes, I consider they are all to be reasonably expected from employers. But I have not examined them carefully.



**D-2760.** Which of these do Government do in their salt mines at Khewra?—They do sanitation, supervise medical arrangements and exercise some control over the housing conditions although the village belongs to the miners themselves. They maintain a medical staff, supply water and attend to vaccination. I cannot say whether they register births and deaths or attend to food adulteration.

**D-2761.** A report was sent in on the general health and sanitation of the Khewra Salt mines in 1922. But no action was taken on the report. Do you know anything about it?—I do not know. That mine is far away.

**D-2762.** Was the report ever referred to you?—It was never referred to me at all.

**D-2763.** At the time of our inspection we found that the sanitation was extremely bad, in fact there was practically none?—Yes.

**D-2764.** *Mr. Cliff*: Is it part of an Inspector's duty to attend to these matters?—It is not part of an Inspector's statutory duties but we take an interest in these things and do go round the villages and the lines.

**D-2765.** *Col. Russell*: When did you last inspect the Khewra Salt mines?—Last year.

**D-2766.** *Mr. Cliff*: The primary duty of an Inspector of Mines is concerned with safety questions. Is he not under direction to inspect other matters also?—We have a number of rules passed by Local Governments on this subject. There are five rules with regard to sanitation and health and three rules regarding ambulance and first-aid. Here are the rules. (Copy of the rules handed in).

**D-2767.** *Col. Russell*: Are you in favour of appointing District Health Officers as ex-officio inspectors of mines where there is no public health control?—The District Magistrate is an Inspector of Mines already.

**D-2768.** But he has no public health experience?—I have no objection to the Civil Surgeon being appointed as an Inspector of Mines.

**D-2769.** The Civil Surgeon also is not a public health man?—The District Health Officer may be appointed Inspector of Mines provided his powers are strictly limited to health matters.

**D-2770.** Similar powers may be vested in the Assistant Director of Public Health also provided they were confined to purely health matters?—I have no objection to that; I would welcome it.

**D-2771.** Have you got any type plans for latrines which you recommend to applicants for advice?—I do not think I have any type plans.

**D-2772.** In your memorandum dealing with first-aid and medical relief you have stated that "since the first-aid classes were commenced in these districts 2,387 certificates have been issued." What proportion of these certificates were issued to miners?—I do not know but it is perhaps only a small proportion. Most of the certificates were issued to officials.

**D-2773.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I should like to clear one point, Mr. Simpson. The employers in their memorandum yesterday stated that if the hours were reduced the output would be reduced. In your memorandum you have stated that "some years ago during the boom period an increase was given with the result that the miners worked fewer days per week." The employers have stated that if the hours were reduced the output would be reduced and you say that if the wages were increased the hours would be reduced. Putting the two together and completing the syllogism it follows that if the wages were increased the output would be reduced?—Yes, that will follow.

**D-2774.** Let us see whether this conclusion tallies with the actual facts. Mr. Mackie stated that an increase of wages was given in December 1920. Before this increase came into force the output in 1920 was 11 million odd tons. The increase came into force in 1921 and the output in 1921 was 12 million odd tons. Then there is a further increase in 1922 in the total output. These figures show a consistent increase in output after the wages were increased, so that that statement could not be correct?—It depends also on the number of persons employed.

**D-2775.** You have got a progressive increase in output *per capita* also. Thus it shows that with the increase in wages there has been an increase in output?—Yes, it appears so.

**D-2776.** In your memorandum dealing with "comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers" you say that the efficiency of the Indian worker is apparently on an equal with his confrere in Japan but inferior to those in Great Britain, America and the Transvaal." You also say, while dealing with physique and health that this poor physique is to some extent "due to the enervating climate in which he lives and to the lack of nourishing food." Is that due to insufficiency of wages?—I think so.

**D-2777.** Have you any figures of the number of hours worked, the wages paid and so on in Japan?—I have no figures dealing with Japan. It is very difficult to get any figures of that kind from the Japanese Government. I do not think they publish them. The only figure we have is regarding the output of coal per person employed which is given as 132.

**D-2778.** With regard to welfare work is it your considered opinion that some Legislative provision should be made to carry on consistent and continuous welfare work of an effective kind among the mining population in the coalfields?—I think it would be a useful adjunct

to the duties of the members of the Mines Board of Health. Some thing is already done in the way of welfare. A number of welfare officers have been appointed already in certain collieries in the Jharia coalfield.

**D-2779.** That welfare work relates to education, housing and so on. Would that also include provision for old age and sickness?—As regards old age pensions I think the industry is not sufficiently organized for advanced legislation of that kind. It might be possible to have these provisions some time in the future but it is too early to make any such provision now. Of course all these things are desirable, but it is too early to introduce them in India.

**D-2780.** What do you mean?—You have not attained such a stage of organization where such things could be introduced. There will be a great deal of abuse. Labour is not permanently settled either on the coalfield or on any particular colliery. The man goes to one colliery one day and leaves it the next day and goes to another colliery. After some time he leaves the coalfield and goes to his village. When he returns he goes to another colliery. You are not able to have a record of the men year by year.

**D-2781.** Was it possible for you to get a record before you introduced the limitation of 54 hours underground?—There was no record then but now they propose to keep a record. I suppose that difficulty can be got over. You have very great experience of the mining areas. Would it not in your opinion be good to the industry if the industry could provide for every miner who has become old and feeble and unable to continue his occupation and who might have given the best part of his life for 10 or 15 years to the work in the mines?—It would be good to the industry but I think it is rather early to introduce legislation of that kind. I believe some miners in Giridih already get a pension.

**D-2782.** In your opinion apart from the difficulty of registering them it would be a desirable thing to introduce such a system?—I am in favour of old age pensions generally.

**D-2783.** Mr. Lang has stated in his memorandum that he does not consider that under the present circumstances it would be possible to provide old age pension for miners generally because only a small proportion of the labour is settled on the mines and the remainder is primarily agricultural which works when it likes.' Is that the only difficulty, or is there any other apart from that?—I have said that on general principles I am in favour of old age pension.

**D-2784.** *The Chairman:* Do you think that it ought to be introduced in one industry selected out of all the industries in India?—I think it is a general all-India question.

**D-2785.** *Diwan Chaman Lall:* In your memorandum you speak of the facilities for training and promotion of workmen. I find that

there is no facility for the training of the miners?—We have these classes I have told you about. We have vernacular lectures given in about 9 centres on mining subjects. The maximum attendance was 986 for a course of 10 lectures.

**D-2786.** Would it be a good thing if the organization that is set up to look after the welfare of the labourers undertook this work also?—This is technical education. I do not think it should be one of the functions of the Mines Board of Health.

**D-2787.** Time and again it has been stated that one of the great difficulties with the worker is that he is unskilled and illiterate and the difficulty is felt even in the matter of prevention of accidents?—The Board is doing something in that respect. They are already giving cinema lectures where the average attendance runs into hundreds. The lectures deal with elementary hygiene, sanitation and prevention of disease.

**D-2788.** In any case you agree that it is a desirable thing to give them this training?—I think so.

**D-2789.** Dealing with the extent to which medical facilities are utilized by labourers Mr. Lang has stated that there is some difficulty in inducing the miners to utilize the medical facilities. He says: "At the larger groups of mines hospitals have been provided but the labour show a certain reluctance in taking advantage of them and they are therefore used mainly for accident cases." That is Mr. Lang's experience. What has been your experience?—I think it is the same all over India. People do not go to a hospital unless they are in an extreme condition.

**D-2790.** When a *dai* has been provided is it your experience that the workers are reluctant to utilize her services?—I know nothing about it.

**D-2791.** In pages 35-38 of the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines for 1928 numerous cases are cited in which action has been taken against managers, owners and miners for breach of regulations. There is one case in which three miners were prosecuted for robbing coal from the sides of pillars. Two were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 21 days and one was acquitted. There is another case referred to at the bottom of the same page:

"The manager and overman of the Damagurria Coal Company Limited's Damagurria colliery were prosecuted under Regulations 67 and 69 and Special Rule 41 for failing to make and keep secure the sides of open workings, as a result of which a fall of side occurred and three persons lost their lives. The manager was fined Rs. 60, and the overman Rs. 100, in default rigorous imprisonment for sixty days and three months respectively."

Were you satisfied with the sentence in this case?—I was not satisfied with the judgment.

**D-2792.** What would you recommend? It is a very serious thing that the manager has done. Three people have lost their lives?—It depends on the view taken by the Magistrates. I think this Magistrate thought there were extenuating circumstances.

**D-2793.** What would you recommend to get over the difficulty?—It is very difficult to compare cases. You cannot tell the degree of negligence. I think it must be left to the Magistrate's discretion. Presumably he does his best to fit the punishment to the crime.

**D-2794.** This is a national difficulty and arises in other parts of India also. Would you recommend a special tribunal being set up to try cases of this kind?—I do not see any necessity.

**D-2795.** Do you mean to say that the present state of affairs should continue where the lives of three miners are reckoned at Rs. 100?—I do not think there is any great abuse to be remedied.

**D-2796.** *Mr. Cliff:* Regarding the prohibition of women underground are you satisfied that you have got effective check for the carrying out of this regulation?—We have got as good a check as we could devise. We had a great deal of discussion about it. That was the final result. I do not like it at all. I should like to cut out the women at once. If we had to have some system of gradual reduction of women this is the best system that we could devise.

**D-2797.** It may be that the regulation may not be carried out?—We will try to enforce it. I think in 5 years time there will be no women at all in the mines.

**D-2798.** Does the Inspector of Mines compile the wage returns?—No; the figures are given in the annual returns; we tabulate these figures and publish them in the annual report.

**D-2799.** Taking the current report, can you tell us how it is compiled?—I can give you a copy of the form of the return. We have got different classes of labour here and the total amount paid in wages for work done in December. The average daily earnings in December is calculated by dividing the amount by the number of attendances.

**D-2800.** Whose duty it is to fill in this form?—The mine owner or his official manager.

**D-2801.** In the case of a mine owner who employs a raising contractor through whom wages are paid to *sardars* and gangs of men, can you tell me how he can inform the Government as to the rates of wages obtained by those individuals?—I take it he gets the information from the contractor.

**D-2802.** I saw that many of the wage sheets or wage registers recorded a payment to one man and that one man might pay 7 or 8

different persons?—There is a column which shows the number of persons employed in a mine. You get the total wages and the total number of persons employed, and you get the average wage.

**D-2803.** I have been trying to find out whether with any degree of accuracy one could say what the miners were receiving from the wage registers and wage sheets. I find it is impossible?—Very difficult.

**D-2804.** I want to ask you a question with regard to the restriction of the 12 hours shift that is to come into force in April. The provisions under the amended Act are set out in the Mines Act. Does the duty of the Mines Inspector commence before April 7th or after April 7th with regard to giving effect to these provisions?—They do not come into force until 7th April, and so we cannot take any action. The mine owners have been informed of these amendments.

**D-2805.** May I ask you whether there was any consultation in this case as in other cases with the employers with regard to the shifts that are to be, to give effect to this Act?—No; not yet.

**D-2806.** Have you any idea how this Act is to be given effect to?—The mine owners will have to decide what hours of work will suit them and have to post a notice. We will require them to work within those limits.

**D-2807.** Keeping in view the 12 hour limitation and the 54 hour limitation, in what way do you suggest that the employers can best give effect to the Act?—All we want at present is that there shall be a clear distinction between day and night shift workers; the day shift workers should be out of the mine before the night shift men go to work.

**D-2808.** But the Act seems to require something more than that. First of all, you have a 12-hour daily limitation and there is a weekly limitation of 54 hours. Is no arrangement made on behalf of Government with the industry with a view to there being set up model regulations or model shifts for giving effect to that?—No; we have not done anything in that respect. We have these registers by which the total number of hours worked per day can be obtained.

**D-2809.** Will it be possible for a colliery proprietor on April 7th to post a notice showing that there are 6 shifts of 12 hours worked in that mine?—Yes, that is so.

**D-2810.** And he may do that for either day or night?—Yes.

**D-2811.** Could the employer post a notice saying that the day shifts shall commence at 6 A.M. and finish at 6 P.M. and that the night shifts shall commence at 6 P.M. and finish at 6 A.M.?—I think he can do so.

**D-2812.** Can he do this for 6 days in the week?—They could not all go between those hours. One man may go down at 8 o'clock and

come out at 4; another man may go down at 6 and come out at 2. He cannot work for more than 54 hours a week.

**D-2813.** I see that, but my question at the moment is concerned with the notice that may be posted declaring the commencement and finishing of shifts. From the Act I see that the colliery proprietors can post a notice for working 6 days in a week and two 12-hour shifts? A shift means that he should go in within those hours and come out within those hours; it does not mean that he should work the whole time.

**D-2814.** Is there any consideration being given to the fact that there may be 6 shifts of 9 hours?—They cannot all work on every day if they work 12 hours.

**D-2815.** But can there be 6 shifts of 9 hours working?—There can be.

**D-2816.** I am anxious to see whether Government through the Mines Department are acting in consultation with the industry with a view to fixing shifts to give effect to the Act. Has that been done, or is it being done?—I think they want to give liberty to every man to go at any time, say, between 6 A.M. and 9 A.M. and come out any time, say, between 3 P.M. and 6 P.M. Some would go down early and some would go down late. They want this shift system to be introduced gradually. At present there is chaos and they want it to be elastic in the beginning.

**D-2817.** May I postulate a case: Suppose a colliery proprietor under the Act says that the time of commencing and finishing of his shifts for 6 days of the week are 12 hours, how will you check whether a man works more than 54 hours a week?—We can only do it by the register.

**D-2818.** If the registers are kept in the way that they are kept now, what check you will have?—Every man must have a day of rest. From the register we can say whether he had the rest day or not.

**D-2819.** It is quite possible under the Act for the moment, unless there are rules and regulations, for shifts of the nature that I postulated to be put up on the notice, and you cannot challenge when the colliery proprietor says "Oh, Tom worked for 4 days in 12-hour shifts and he has not been in the mine since then"?—It is very difficult to check.

**D-2820.** Have the colliery workers been addressed in the matter of the change of the law?—I do not think they have.

**D-2821.** May I ask whether the Government notified to the Union?—It appears in the Government Gazette. We have not addressed the Union, which is not a registered organization.

**D-2822.** It is not a registered organization, but still it is a trade union association, which is not an illegal combination in this country.

Some of my colleagues ask me why did not the union do it. It may be that the union might have done it, but I am asking you whether you did not think it necessary to address the union?—I have not officially informed them; it did not occur to me; I have no objection to inform them; I am sorry I did not do so.

**D-2823.** I am not pressing it as a grievance. I am trying to see, when a new law has to be brought into operation, how the Government acts. Many of my friends and some of the employers complain that the Union is not representative. Now I want to ask what the Government does with regard to an illiterate working population with regard to making them known as to their rights under this Act?—I think the only thing they have done is to appoint a labour representative on the Mining Board. I have already read out the rule in this regard.

**D-2824.** I want to see whether you are willing to express an opinion. Here is a new Act coming into operation in April. There is a pretty difficult problem to face. Would it not be better if the Government should consult the colliery proprietors and representative work-people and any trade union there may be with a view to seeing how this Act shall be applied? There is room for elasticity as between pit and pit, but there may be model rules. Is it not better that there should be consultation before the Act comes into operation?—Yes, it would be better. Before framing bye-laws I have called for meetings of mine owners, superintendents and managers to decide as to what the new bye-laws should be.

**D-2825.** I want to ask you whether if the employers object you have got any official status to do this?—No.

**D-2826.** It must be done in friendly co-operation?—Yes.

**D-2827.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Was there any objection to that?—No.

**D-2828.** *Mr. Cliff*: I want to ask you whether you as representing the Mines Department would be prepared in the time that is left, that is, before 7th April, to consult the parties to see whether there could be some recognized working shifts with a view to seeing that the law is properly applied?—It takes a very long time before the industry acquires a thorough knowledge of the rules and regulations. I think we will find for a time that the law is not observed very closely, but as we go on pointing out the mistakes they will eventually come to observe it reasonably.

**D-2829.** That strengthens my submission, that there should be consultation before the Act comes into force in order to see that it shall be effectively worked. May I put this question: Here is a revolutionary change which requires a good deal of work. Will you express an opinion as to whether with the staff under you that is designed primarily for safety you would be able to tackle this kind of work?—It is distinctly onerous.



**D-2830.** But it is distinctly necessary work?—Yes.

**D-2831.** Do you think it is possible for your staff to get into consultation with the Mining Association and representatives of the work-people with a view to seeing whether there can be mutually agreed terms for carrying out the Act?—I will do so.

**D-2832.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* In your memorandum, dealing with the question of labour turnover, you refer to the fact that miners absent themselves in great numbers during certain months of the year. Is it not a fact that, apart from the question of wages, the supply of labour depends very largely on the position in the agricultural districts from which the labour comes?—That is so. If there is a good harvest you will not get a great number coming to work.

**D-2833.** You refer to the personal touch between the managers and the labour. Can you speak from your experience whether any friction or misunderstanding has arisen between the managers and their workers as a result of the managers not understanding the workers' language?—Yes, more often with the managers who have been not very long in the country. They acquire a sufficient knowledge of the language as a rule within two or three years.

**D-2834.** Many of the troubles that have arisen on the coalfields between the employers and the workers have been due to a lack of understanding?—I think so.

**D-2835.** On the question of shifts, have you ever had any complaints from workers about the hours of work?—I have had some complaints and I have made enquiries in all cases. I have got two such cases here; there is not very much in it.

**D-2836.** Have you had many of these complaints?—No, not more than 2 or 4.

**D-2837.** What form does the communication usually take? Do you get any direct representations or merely anonymous communications?—As a rule they are anonymous, but we make an inquiry in all cases.

**D-2838.** Why should there be anonymity about it? Is there no means of conveying to you directly or indirectly any troubles of the workers as regards their being forced to work contrary to the regulations?—There is a free access to me. They sometimes come to Dhanbad to see me, and I write letters to managers or superintendents and try to get their grievances remedied.

**D-2839.** What form does your examination of *sardars* and other people take before you grant them certificates?—Their eye-sight, hearing, and some knowledge of rules and regulations.

**D-2840.** I can understand their possessing practical knowledge, but how can they get to what we might call the book side of it if

they cannot read and write?—The regulations which affect them are fairly simple. Their superior officials explain the rules to them. Some of them can read and write. There are vernacular translations of these rules.

**D-2841.** Do you think that on the whole the *sardars* who get the certificates are conversant with the rules they are meant to be conversant with?—I think so.

**D-2842.** Dealing with the managers, do you find that they are conversant with the rules and regulations, the bye-laws and the Act?—If they do not observe them they will find themselves in court. The number of prosecutions in India is very much greater than it is in England; there are far more managers prosecuted in India than in England. Last year there were 65 prosecutions of owners and managers for breaches of rules in addition to 44 for failure to submit annual returns; there were 13 prosecutions against workmen.

**D-2843.** I see that the Indian Colliery Employees' Association say that the inspection staff is not adequate and that the method of inspection should be improved as there is a wide impression, not altogether unfounded, that false prosecutions are conducted against poor workers at the instance of the management?—I think that is based on one case. I have made a full inquiry into the case, and I have the papers with me here. It is the case of an overman who incited people to rob pillars of coal. This is what the enquiring officer after listening to the evidence of the persons concerned says: "I consider that an example should be made of this man and his certificate cancelled. He has already been dismissed by the management of Bhalgora colliery. As for the *sardar*, I do not think any action need be taken against him. He was undoubtedly a little afraid of the overman and acted entirely under his orders. The dismissal of the overman and the loss of his certificate will probably be sufficient to put an end to pillar robbing at this colliery." The man came to see me and I told him at that time that he appeared to merit dismissal and that he would probably lose his *sardar's* certificate.

**D-2844.** On the question of statistics relating to raisings, despatches, wages, accidents, etc., the Employees' Association say: "Statistics are published in the reports of Chief Inspector of Mines on the basis of returns submitted by the management, the accuracy of which the Chief Inspector of Mines has himself doubted and the following remarks were made in his report of 1924. "It is to be feared that no great reliance can be placed upon the figures." I have verified this statement from the 1924 report and find it remarked therein that no great reliance can be placed upon the wage returns that you are getting?—That was in the early days when the information to be given about wages was not properly understood and the form itself was defective. Since that time we have improved the form. I think the figures now are reasonably reliable.

**D-2845.** You think that the figures of the numbers employed, the raisings, the wages and so on are reasonably accurate?—I think so.

**D-2846.** How do you make sure that the various types of workers are included under appropriate heads?—We have got to trust them. I may say in regard to these annual returns that they are all scrutinized very carefully by the Inspector before they are passed on to me, and if there is anything that appears to be discrepant in them they are sent back and the party concerned asked to explain or to alter.

**D-2847.** I see that reference is made in your memorandum to the leisurely manner in which the miner works. Do you think that as a result of the prohibition of employment of women underground the miner will speed up the rate at which he can work?—I think he will do so.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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**Mr. A. A. F. BRAY, Mr. J. THOMAS, and Mr. T. ORD, Calcutta representatives of the Indian Mining Association.**

**D-2848.** *The Chairman.* Mr. Bray, I understand that you are the Chairman of the Indian Mining Association?—(Mr. Bray): Yes.

**D-2849.** And that your colleagues are members of the Committee of the Association?—That is so.

**D-2850.** Your Association represents nearly 60 per cent. of the total output of coal in British India?—Yes.

**D-2851.** Therefore you are, if one may say, the main representative body concerned with the interests of the coal industry?—Yes; I think we can fairly claim that. The Indian Mining Association has been in existence for the last 38 years.

**D-2852.** You concern yourself, I understand, with general questions of policy affecting the interests of your industry?—That is so.

**D-2853.** We have seen here some of the good effects of your co-operation in the interests of the industry of which I think we may say that the outstanding success is the establishment of a plentiful supply of pure water to your industry. That has been a great success in that it has completely stopped the danger to the industry from epidemics?—I think so. I may say that for 20 years we have been free from any serious cholera epidemic.

**D-2854.** Am I rightly informed that a recent success of your Association has been the establishment of the Indian Coal Grading Board?—That was the result of a Commission appointed by Government

in the year 1925. We had been passing through rather a trying period. Government had put an embargo on exports of coal principally because the coal raised in India was not more than sufficient for the requirements of the country. They did not allow exports except on a very limited scale, and that embargo was in existence from the year 1920 to the year 1923. After that it was very necessary to get back the export trade in Indian coal and there were various other matters to be considered; and the Coal Committee was appointed in 1925. One of the chief recommendations of that Committee was the formation of a Grading Board, which has been in operation for the last 3 or 4 years. We have regained our export trade, and the Grading Board has worked very successfully. It has re-established the reputation of Indian coal in our export market.

**D-2855.** I see in your statement of objects you include "in developing the mining industry and to foster that industry." May I take it that one of the first essentials of a prosperous and successful mining industry is a prosperous, contented and plentiful labour force to work the mines?—I accept that completely.

**D-2856.** Then, would your Association be ready to co-operate in an effort to raise the standard of your labour supply, I mean in its general contentment? Its health you are already attending to a large extent through the Mines Board of Health?—It is a very slow matter; our record is before you. It has always been our ambition, our aim, our wish that we must have a contented labour force, and we are anxious to raise their standard. We are practical people.

**D-2857.** A suggestion has been made that following the success of these Mines Boards of Health it might be possible to expand them, building on what you have already experienced and worked successfully, expand their scope so as to take into consideration the general welfare of the mining population in order at the same time to increase the efficiency of the people as workers and also to raise their standard of life so that they might overcome what we are told is their ancient habit of doing just so much work as satisfies their old time needs but not exerting themselves for any increase in output which would appear to be practicable even within the existing limits of hours?—We are quite prepared to do anything for the improvement of our labour supply. I am not sure whether you are not interfering with the liberty of the individual when you wish him to raise, say, 5 tubs when he wishes to raise only 3 tubs. Of course, I do not accept the proposition that the want of physique prevents him from doing more work than he does now. The miner, as we have stated in our paper, works to earn a certain amount of money enough to keep him in comfort, and in many cases it enables him to make remittances to his home; quite considerable sums are sent home. If the miner feels that by loading 3 tubs a day it gives him all he requires I do not know whether it is in anybody's mouth to say that he should work harder.

**D-2858.** No. All you say shows that the miner suffers from frailties which are common to the rest of us human beings, but at the same time you would consider it an advantage to the industry if his ambition was widened, if his own conception of his needs were greater, and therefore, in order to have more spending power, he was prepared to exert himself more than he has been in the habit of doing?—We have had that in view for many years, the question of making the miner ambitious and making him wish for a better standard of living. At one time it was a serious matter, because we were anxious that he should have more money to spend. If he wants more things he has to earn more money, and we were very anxious that he should earn more, but he did not respond to that. His wants are very few, and for many years they have remained constant.

**D-2859.** We are aware that certain efforts have been made on individual collieries and individual groups of collieries, but perhaps there has not been a concerted effort to that end with the same degree and effectiveness as you put into the two cases I have just mentioned, namely, the provision of water-supply and the institution of your Coal Grading Board, which you recognize to be of great advantage to your industry?—We are getting on to welfare measures which conduce to the well-being of the miner and which would enable him to produce more coal, as I understand. We are quite prepared to support any measure and co-operate with anybody in order to make our miner a more efficient worker.

**D-2860.** And in addition to that to make the mining industry one of the brightest spots in India and a credit to the whole country?—Yes, if possible.

**D-2861.** I take it that you as an Association—and I understand that in Calcutta to a large extent you guide the policy of the mining industry—would give your ready support to any reasonable and practicable scheme towards that end, lending your experience and knowledge to make it a success?—Yes.

**D-2862.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* From what you said I take it that your view is that even though the physique of the miner here may not be up to the physique of the miner in other parts of the world, yet he could produce more than he is producing without undue effort?—He could work harder without undue effort.

**D-2863.** That is to say that the lack of increase of his output is not due to his deficiency in physique?—Certainly not.

**D-2864.** I wonder whether your Association would be prepared to try and enable him to produce more by disciplining him perhaps a little further?—Is it your idea that the miner should produce more coal for the good of the industry, or that he should produce more to enable him to earn more money?

**D-2865.** Both?—The first obstacle is that the miner has no ambition. You might create one, but he has no ambition, and he does not

want to produce more coal. Having in view our experience of the last 5 or 6 years of a depressed market due entirely to over-production of coal, we do not want to produce more than is necessary.

**D-2866.** I was just wondering whether it would not be a good thing if you could employ perhaps a slightly fewer men and enable them to earn more; that is to say, although your actual output might not differ there would be a bigger output per head?—One of our aims and objects is to give employment to any miner who comes into the mine for work. We have done that consistently, and the Chief Inspector of Mines' Reports will bear that out. We have given employment to anybody and every body who offer themselves for employment almost every year.

**D-2867.** Speaking from memory, you have a very big difference in output during the months of July and November compared with the months of February and March. If you could so organize yourselves by which fewer men at a higher wage could produce more you might encourage your men to be more permanent; in other words, instead of having a large number of men earning a very small amount you can have fewer men earning more money?—That is hardly within our control. The first proposition you make is that we should employ a smaller number of workers continuously throughout the year, January, February, March and so on. The other difficulty you raise is accommodation. There is no very large amount of land available on which they can settle. Besides which, of course, as you know perfectly well, you cannot interfere with the habits and customs of the people to that extent; if they are accustomed to going to and from their villages they will continue to do so.

**D-2868.** But you can increase the trend of the agriculturist to become an industrialist?—Not by offering attractive wages. The wages, I contend, are from his point of view attractive.

**D-2869.** It might be a question of not only wages but wages and welfare combined?—Even then you might not succeed.

**D-2870.** But I do not feel at the moment that the management is making things sufficiently easy for workers. For instance, in a number of mines we have been to, we understand that they refuse to start cutting until they have got the tubs?—That is an idiosyncrasy on the part of the labour, not on the part of the management.

**D-2871.** The idiosyncrasy on the part of the labour is based on the fact that they are not sure of getting their tubs; if they are sure of securing their tubs you would not get that difficulty?—The point rather is this that in February it is impossible for any colliery to provide the full number of tubs required, because that is the month in which you have the largest number of labour working. They probably have to utilize each tub three times a day. If you could speed that up a bit make it 4 or 5, it would be better, but that is not possible under existing conditions.

**D-2872.** I am told that there is a gassy mine in this area in which men are only allowed to work 8 hours a day; and every man knows that he is going to get his supply of tubs, and knowing that he has no objection to work without waiting for the tubs?—That is what we are aiming at.

**D-2873.** Do you not think that the shift system will help you?—I believe it will.

**D-2874.** Do you not think that in order to make your shift system work satisfactorily, you should, instead of having two 12-hour shifts, have shifts of smaller number of hours to clear up the mine just as it takes place in the Loyabad colliery where they have two shifts with an interval of 2 hours between the shifts?

In other words you are going to let them spend less time waiting underground and a greater percentage of their time working?—The larger collieries can afford to put in a large number of tubs, but the smaller collieries would find it very difficult.

**D-2875.** If you can get a smaller number of men producing more, with more facilities, would you then be able to turn away surplus labour instead of finding you have not enough labour?—But I am not at all sure that we wish to turn away labour. In the month of February every year labour flocks into the mines, but it would not come into the mines except that the pay is attractive. The collieries are very glad to have them because the heavy raisings in the months of February, March and April enable the collieries to build up stocks against the rains when raisings are smaller.

**D-2876.** In July I think 600,000 tons are raised, while in February 1,100,000 tons are raised; I want to narrow that difference?—I cannot suggest any means by which you can keep the miner, who is an agriculturist, in the mines in the month of June.

**D-2877.** You are now coming to a period when you are not going to be allowed to employ women. If you have no means by which you can employ the women on the surface, I suppose the family budget is going to be reduced?—Not necessarily.

**D-2878.** It is going to be reduced unless the man underground is able to earn more. You will not be in a position to give all these women employment on the surface at the same wages as they are now receiving underground?—That is correct; there will not be enough surface employment for the women who are displaced. My theory and belief is that the man underground will then earn more. We shall have to offer wages that will attract the men.

**D-2879.** You might adopt an arrangement by which your tubs would be circulated faster?—You must consider the prejudices of certain classes of miners.

**D-2880.** That is why I suggest discipline?—That will not do because the unwilling man will go away and will not come back.

**D-2881.** If you are not going to help or encourage or discipline him to produce more he will come to you and say: "My earnings are not sufficient for my family budget and I want you to raise the rates so as to enable me to earn what I and my wife used to earn before." That would have the effect of raising your cost of production?—Yes.

**D-2882.** If you can adopt a system by which the miner by very little increased effort can earn as much as he and his wife used to earn before, you will have a very good answer to his demand for increased rates?—I think the miner would object to raising 4 tubs for the same money as he previously received for raising 3 tubs.

**D-2883.** But you can point out to him that his increased raisings have been rendered possible by the introduction of labour saving devices and are not due to his increased effort?—The miner is a much simpler individual than that. It is our constant wish that the miner should raise more tubs; but nothing will induce him to do so, he will not change his habit of loading 3 tubs per day. We once put Anglo-Indian labour into the mines.

**D-2884.** In your report you say that it is known that in many cases, due to the trying times through which the industry has been passing, these rates of wages have been reduced. Some of the managers who came before us said their wages had not been reduced?—The colliery managers were perfectly right; in the case of miners the wages have not been reduced; but the wages certainly have been reduced in the case of other labour, some surface labour and a very little underground labour. Building labour is one kind of labour which occurs to me at the moment.

**D-2885.** Can you give us a note as to which classes of labour have been reduced and by how much?—Yes, I have that information in Calcutta and that information is available. You have drawn attention to the circular granting increases in 1920. There has been no circular or anything of that sort from the Mining Association recommending its members to make decreases. Collieries under the stress of much lower prices have had to economize.

**D-2886.** You say that the introduction of intermediaries between employers and the employed might quite possibly create grievances or wants that at present simply do not exist. Do you allege that an intermediary can create a want that does not exist?—He cannot create a necessity but he can create wants.

**D-2887.** Might not the creation of a want encourage the miner to earn more; so that really it would be an advantage if the intermediary could create new wants?—If he could, yes. You have seized on that word. We do not want grievances created by intermediaries. The miner has no grievances at present.

**D-2888.** Would your Association welcome the existence of a proper trade union developed on Home lines?—I think so. The point has never been put to the members of the Association, but speaking for the



people here to-day I see nothing but advantage in a properly constituted union. We have said so. We would certainly consider a properly constituted trade union representative of the classes it professes to represent; it would be to our advantage to do so.

**D-2889.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Are you all not aiming at doing something like what Jamadoba colliery has done with regard to the use of machinery?—The Jamadoba colliery can do things on that scale because it is owned and worked by Tatas who can take every ton of coal produced. They have equipped the colliery exceedingly well. The seam is thick.

**D-2890.** Is it not the tendency of modern industrial development to introduce such improved machinery?—Yes.

**D-2891.** Will it not be necessary for you to improve your mines so that your employees will be able to raise more than 3 tubs a day?—You must remember that at Jamadoba the miner who is working mechanical coal cutters is a specially trained man; he earns in many cases Rs. 60 a month.

**D-2892.** You say it has been noticed that when wages were highest raisings were lowest. How do you support that statement?—It is a well established belief founded on fact. In the year 1919 we had a record production of 22,623,000 tons, while in the year 1920 it declined to 17,962,000 tons for all India.

**D-2893.** *The Chairman* : But that was after the peak of the boom?—No, not in 1920.

**D-2894.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : You increased wages in December 1920?—Yes. There was a feeling of alarm that the raisings of coal were insufficient for the country's needs. Government put an embargo on exports and in order to get a greater output we increased wages. What actually happened was that in 1921 the raisings went up by 1,400,000 tons.

**D-2895.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : So that increased wages did not decrease your output?—It is a matter for much closer investigation. At the present moment I am not sure that it did not attract more labour to the mines; between the year 1920 and the year 1921 roughly 8,000 more people were employed in the mines. That was in Bihar where the bulk of the output is obtained. For all India the output per head in 1919 was 111 tons, in 1920 it was 94 tons and in 1921 it was again 94 tons. There is a further explanation of it. During the five years prior to 1919-20 the collieries had been starved of machinery and boilers. By 1920-21 machinery was beginning to arrive. The Chief Inspector of Mines in 1921 stated : Although the increase in the total output was considerable, 7.47 per cent., yet there was an actual decrease in the output of first class coal. There was a great extension of quarrying operations owing to the ease with which labour working in open quarries can be obtained.

**D-2896.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Under the heading of "Administration", you say that the Government of India have accepted the principle that they should not come into the market in competition with private enterprise, but nevertheless they have done so?—In the course of last year Government found they had accumulated a very large quantity of slack at the State Railway collieries. The first intimation we had was an advertisement in the papers inviting tenders for this slack. The Mining Association took strong exception to that. Sir George Rainy, Member for Commerce, happened to be in Calcutta and he met us. We had an undertaking from Government that they had no wish and no intention to interfere with private enterprise.

**D-2897.** Government are large consumers, buyers and raisers of coal?—Yes. I can give you rough figures. In the Railway collieries in 1928 the total raisings were just over 3 million tons. The Railways and other concerns consumed about 6 million tons. Many years ago the Association objected to the State acquiring and working mines. The matter went as far as the India Office, and I think the Secretary of State at the time said he saw no objection to the State Railways owning collieries so long as they did not come into the open market with their production. We objected at the time but we had to accept the situation. The Railways have their collieries now and are working them hard.

**D-2898.** The result is that prices are regulated by Government?—Government make no secret of the fact that they have these collieries in order to enable them, as they say, to obtain their coal requirements at a reasonable price.

**D-2899.** Had they not good reason for taking up that attitude; were they not rather squeezed?—That is their allegation; they have made that statement on several occasions and possibly there is some amount of truth in it. The pit-head price of coal at that time was Rs. 12-8-0 per ton.

**D-2900.** *Mr. Cliff*: Would you oppose a cess for a welfare fund?—I do not think the miner is entitled to be put into a special class in that respect.

**D-2901.** *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Why should the mine owner be put in a special class and demand special facilities from the Railways?—The mine owner is not entitled to special facilities from the Railways.

**D-2902.** You have been demanding special facilities?—We can demand, but under the Railway Act no one is entitled to any kind of preferential treatment.

**D-2903.** *Mr. Cliff*: The work of the present Mines Board of Health cannot be extended without money; would you oppose a voluntary cess for welfare work?—It depends. We do not want to oppose anything reasonable and practicable. We have always supported measures which will benefit labour. I do not think a voluntary cess would be possible because everybody must join in.

**D-2904.** If the Commission made a recommendation with regard to an expansion of welfare work, would that have your support?—I should like to know a little more about the welfare work.

**D-2905.** *The Chairman:* I suppose you would say "Yes, provided it was reasonable and practicable?"—And proper and necessary and acceptable.

**D-2906.** *Mr. Cliff:* We have recently had a proposal put forward involving the expenditure of Rs. 20,000 annually by the Chairman of the Mines Board of Health for a hospital?—It came before the Mining Association. Our attitude was that we were sympathetic to the idea behind it, but it is too soon.

**D-2907.** Would an expenditure of Rs. 20,000 per annum for maintenance be beyond the purse of the industry?—I do not say that.

**D-2908.** I understand you opposed that on financial as well as on other grounds?—I do not think we considered the financial grounds particularly; it was on other grounds.

**D-2909.** Is an expenditure of Rs. 20,000 per annum beyond your capacity?—No.

**D-2910.** Has the Association any declared policy with regard to primary education?—Primary education is not a thing for the coal mines alone; if you are to have primary education it should be available to every body. Then one has to consider what would be the effect of this system of education. I was here yesterday and I heard some body say that the sons of miners who receive education would no longer wish to be miners. The logical result of that process would be to close the mines.

**D-2911.** Has your Association a declared policy in regard to education?—We realize that education would be a good thing.

**D-2912.** Has your Association in session considered and made a declaration in regard to primary education?—No.

**D-2913.** The Officiating Inspector of Mines says that the present attitude of the employees towards trade union is one of indifference. Do you agree with that?—It is indifferent at the moment; there are no registered trade unions.

**D-2915.** I have in my hand a copy of a letter which was addressed to the President of the Indian Mining Association and to the Indian Mining Federation, dated March 1928, from the Secretary of the Indian Employees' Association, in which they are forwarding resolutions. The complaint of the Indian Employees' Association is that your Association have neither acknowledged nor replied to the subject matter of their letter?—I have no recollection of any such letter; I do not say that such a letter was not received.

**D-2916.** As an Association are you prepared to recognize the Indian Colliery Employees' Association?—It entirely depends on whether they are representative of the people they claim to represent. I do know of the Indian Colliery Employees' Association. Their preliminary attitude towards employers is distinctly hostile.

**D-2917.** Are you prepared to recognize this Association?—I know so little about the constitution of the Indian Colliery Employees' Association that I cannot give you an answer yes or no. I want to know more about it; whether they are representative of the people they claim to represent. If they merely represent a lot of dissatisfied office clerks or dissatisfied colliery employees, I should say offhand "No". I do not consider there is any reason why we should recognize an association of dissatisfied employees.

**D-2918.** Why do you say they are dissatisfied?—I have seen certain literature which they have issued. Their attitude towards employers is hostile; they have not approached employers in the proper way. I do not remember the letter and I do not remember whether a reply was sent. We are ordinary business people and we should deal with an ordinary business communication in the ordinary way. We should certainly send some acknowledgment.

**D-2919.** With regard to the paragraph from "India" in 1927-28 which you quote, has there been any sustained effort on the part of your Association to increase the needs of labour?—I hardly think that is the business of an employer.

**D-2920.** As an Association are you anxious to have a permanent labour force in the mining industry?—I am sure it would be a desirable thing.

**D-2921.** Have you a policy directed to that end?—We are not faced with any difficulty, our mining force is as great as we wish it to be, and our output is sufficient for our needs.

**D-2922.** You say the Indian miner is primarily an agriculturist, that he works roughly 8 months in the year as a miner and 4 months as an agriculturist. How has the Indian coal industry addressed itself to this problem?—There is no problem. A certain amount of coal has to be raised and we obtained that quantity. Very little coal is imported into India.

**D-2923.** Then may I take it that your Association is quite satisfied with the existing state of affairs in which, as you say, the miner is first an agriculturist and secondly a miner?—In the absence of anything better we have to be satisfied with that state of affairs.

**D-2924.** Has your Association any concerted policy with regard to the application of the law as to the daily limitation of hours which will come into operation in April?—In the year 1928 this question was before the Government of India and a select committee reported on it. We accepted the conclusions of this select committee to which I refer you.

**D-2925.** Has your Association considered any policy to be applied with regard to the law relating to shifts?—As a matter of fact it is in operation already at several mines where they have anticipated it.

**D-2926.** Has your Association a policy on that matter?—Not as an Association.

**D-2927.** *Divan Chaman Lall*: After due consideration do you say that the average number of tubs that a miner fills in a day is 3?—Yes, I deliberately make that statement.

**D-2928.** On what do you base that statement?—Every body in the coalfields thinks that is the figure, and therefore it requires very strong evidence to the contrary to prove that it is not so. But more than that I have a statement here which I think proves it. The figures are taken from the report of the Chief Inspector of Mines for the year 1928. The total output in Bihar and Orissa in 1928 was 14,788,580 tons. The total number of persons employed was 76,066. But all these persons were not employed on coal cutting and filling tubs; you must deduct the number of overmen, *sardars* and other skilled and unskilled labour which amounts to 16,514. That gives a figure of 59,552 as the number of workers employed in cutting coal and putting it into tubs. By dividing one figure by the other you get an average of 248 tons production per person per annum. If you take 5 days a week and 50 weeks to the year, it is equal to one ton per day per person, which for two persons, (one miner and one loader), would be 2 tons per day or 3 tubs because each tub takes 13 cwt. We have made a further calculation with regard to Bengal and we find the figure is practically the same. It is a figure of 254 tons as compared with 248 tons.

**D-2929.** That means that the number of tubs per day per person is 1.5?—Yes.

**D-2930.** What is the average rate per tub which is paid in Bihar and Orissa?—That varies at different mines.

**D-2931.** The Chief Inspector of Mines says that the rate paid for filling averages As. 6.75. That would be an average of As. 10½ per day per person?—(Mr. Thomas); Yes, that is about correct.

**D-2932.** You said that in 1920 you gave an increase. What was the rate in 1920?—In February 1920 the rate for steam coal was As. 5 and for slack As. 3 in one particular mine. In September of that year it was raised to As. 6, the slack rate remaining the same. In October one-fourth of an anna commission was added for steam coal and one-eighth of an anna commission for slack. In December the rate was raised to As. 7 with one-half anna commission. In July 1921 the rate for slack was raised to 4 annas. They have remained at these rates ever since.

**D-2933.** It was provided that any increase of rates given before the 1st September was to be deducted from these increases?—(Mr. Bray): The reason for that was that although these rates were

fixed in December 1920, some people put the higher rates into operation three months previously, and in order that all the collieries should be on the same basis that was done.

**D-2934.** If you take December 1920 and take the average which you agree was As. 6.75 per day, it follows that the miners are worse off as far as the wages are concerned to-day than they were in 1920?—(Mr. Thomas); Your figure of As. 6.75 as an average is near enough to the figure of As. 7 which I have given you. We say we have not reduced the rates and the rates are what they were in 1920 in spite of the depression in trade.

**D-2935.** You have undertaken good housing in the Mines Board of Health and you have given a water-supply which you had to give because there were serious epidemics of cholera and the Government stepped in?—(Mr. Bray): We were the originators; we asked for a better water-supply, and we went to Government for assistance.

**D-2936.** Since 1920 what have you done for the mining population apart from those matters?—You mean in addition to employing them, giving them good water, houses, free fuel and free medicine?

**D-2937.** The Government of Bengal in their memorandum say that schools in collieries are of recent growth, some free institutions, have been started in the Asansol subdivision, subsidized mainly by Government, and only to a small extent by the district board; that there is little or no help from the mine owners?—Education is not a subject that the mine owners in particular should take up; it is a matter for the whole of India.

**D-2938.** Then I take it that you yourself have not done anything in that regard during the last ten years?—I would not like to say that. You are speaking of Bengal now, not Bihar and Orissa.

**D-2939.** Take any part of the mine area which you represent. If it is your policy that it is not your business to look after education, have you done anything?—I take it you are referring more particularly to the education of the miners' children. (Mr. Thomas): Where it does affect the industry, that is the training of *sardars*, we do take a direct interest in it.

**D-2940.** With regard to the education of the children of the miners, may I take it that during the last 10 years you have done nothing?—No. There are colliery schools but there are very few of them.

**D-2941.** *The Chairman:* As an Association you have not discussed or arrived at any policy with regard to schools in connection with the mines?—The question of education for miner's children is not a question that should be dealt with particularly by colliery owners any more than by any other class of the community.

**D-2942.** Your view is that that is a matter for Government rather than for industry?—Yes.

**D-2943.** In regard to welfare work has there been any definite policy of your Association as an Association to promote welfare work amongst the miners?—We have had the Mines Act, the Water Board and the Mines Board of Health. We have had 5 years of very acute depression in the coal industry.

**D-2944.** As an Association have you at any time sat together and discussed any particular policy in regard to welfare work amongst the colliery people?—As an Association we will support any measures that are designed for the welfare of the miners.

**D-2945.** Yesterday I read in a newspaper a statement by Mahatma Gandhi. That is this :

“ I would have waited if I could have been convinced that the condition of the masses has undergone progressive amelioration under British rule. Alas, he who runs may see that it has progressively deteriorated under that rule.” If you substitute for the words “ British Rule ” in Mahatma Gandhi’s statement the words “ The Indian Mining Association ” and for the word “ masses ” the word “ miners ” what is your record in regard to the amelioration of the condition of the miners?—We are colliery owners; we are not here to follow the precepts of Mr. Gandhi. I do not accept them at all. They are unsound in my opinion.

**D-2946.** You consider it an unsound policy to look after the welfare of the labourers?—No, I am entirely ready to support any beneficial measures.

**D-2947.** *Miss Power* : The word “ support ” has been used more than once. Do you not consider it advisable to initiate measures for the welfare of the labourers?—We are willing to initiate measures sometimes, but we are always willing to support measures taken by others.

**D-2948.** *Mr. Mackie* : We have heard of attempts to make the labour contented. But have you a contented list of shareholders in the various companies under your Association?—I can only give you an indirect answer to that question. I should like to refer you to a statement in an official document which says that out of 82 coal companies with a total aggregate capital of about Rs. 6,64,00,000, 41 companies declared no dividend.

**D-2949.** Do you not think that more profits will be gained by the companies if you have a contented labour force?—It is an essential part of the success of a colliery that the labour should be contented.

**D-2950.** Are not many companies in your Association spending large sums of money to improve the conditions of work underground and thereby make labour more efficient?—Undoubtedly many large companies have spent large sums and are still spending large sums in that direction.

**D-2951.** You pay the weekly wages on Sunday. What is your objection to paying it on Saturday?—We would get no output on Saturday.

**D-2952.** But would not that help the miners to begin work early in the week on Monday morning?—It depends. Monday may be a bazaar day and you would have to change the bazaar day also.

**D-2953.** Anyhow you do not think that a change from Sunday to Saturday will give them an incentive to work more days in the week?—No, it would not give them an incentive to do more. (Mr. Thomas) : It would merely be a case of substituting one day for another. (Mr. Bray) : We are willing to pay wages on any day in the week. Sunday was chosen many years ago because it was a convenient day. But we are willing to pay wages on any day but not at the expense of the output for the day. I am not speaking in the interests of the industry alone but in the interests of the country as a whole when I say that Jharia cannot afford to lose a day's output, nor can Bihar or Bengal.

**D-2954.** Any how you would lose only one day and it might be made up by another day probably?—It might be.

**D-2955.** So that there would be no difference to the industry as a whole whether it is Saturday or Sunday?—It might be, but Saturday is the best raising day of the week.

**D-2956.** So that there will be no difference to the industry as a whole and the bazaar day will adjust itself to suit the convenience of labour?—Yes.

**D-2957.** Is it a fact that in times of high prices at the end of the War several companies imported rice and cloth for sale to the labourers at cheap rates?—Yes. I can tell you that from my own knowledge.

**D-2958.** Mr. Thomas, from your practical experience have you anything to say with regard to the apprentices appointed under you?—(Mr. Thomas) : We find that few become mining apprentices owing to the dangerous character of the occupation. On the other hand we take apprentices for mechanical and electrical engineering and train them. We pay them Rs. 25 a month for the first six or twelve months. As soon as there is a vacancy we appoint them and give them Rs. 35 a month. In the meantime if they get a job elsewhere they leave us. They do not fulfil the contract.

**D-2959.** So that an apprentices Act is really necessary?—I do not think it is really necessary unless it is intended to compel these apprentices to stay on till the end of their term of contract. We find that compelling students to do anything does not help matters at all.

**D-2960.** Would it not help you if it was provided that no colliery should employ an apprentice before his term was over?—Our object is to keep them with us after we have trained them. We do not want to lose them after taking so much trouble to train them.



**D-2961.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Have you enough vacancies for all your apprentices?—As a rule we have. We do not take more apprentices than we can eventually keep.

**D-2962.** *Mr. Bose:* In your memorandum dealing with trade combinations you say that practically no union exists in the coal trade?—(Mr. Bray): Yes, that is so.

**D-2963.** Have you not heard of the Colliery Employees' Association which has a number of miners on their roll?—Yes, I know of their existence.

**D-2964.** Would you like to modify your statement at all?—The statement is that practically none exist in the coal trade. That does not exclude your Association.

**D-2965.** Dealing with industrial disputes you say: "The Association considers that the introduction of intermediaries between employers and employed might quite possibly create grievances, or wants, that at present do not exist." Would you explain what you mean?—I mean that our miners are a contented body and when the agitators get among the miners grievances are created.

**D-2966.** The miners are illiterate?—Is it not?—Not all of them. Some of them are very sharp.

**D-2967.** Do you mean that if any trade union is started among the miners your autocracy will come to an end and your interests will suffer?—I do not mean that at all. I have no objection to an intermediary if he does not create grievances and if he comes along with legitimate grievances. He will then be entitled to be heard.

**D-2968.** In your memorandum you say that the "attitude of colliery proprietors in general is sympathetic towards improvements in labour conditions, though there is no particular demand for them from the workers most concerned." What improvements have you made in labour conditions?—Plenty of them. For instance to mention only one we have given a good water-supply and freed them from any liability to epidemics.

**D-2969.** Are there not some collieries which do not get a good water-supply?—If the collieries do not take the water it is a different matter. But the water is there. The collieries which I represent have got the Topchanchi water.

**D-2970.** Messrs. Jardine Skinner's colliery at Jealgora have not got the Topchanchi water all over the mine and the miners in some place have to drink the mine water?—The Topchanchi water is there on the colliery, but you say that it is not taken to the remote corners of the colliery.

**D-2971.** You say that "there is no particular demand for them from the workers most concerned" Has there not been a demand from

the workers for higher wages?—There always will be. There are very few people in this district at any rate who would not like more wages,—miners and everybody.

**D-2972.** Is this not a demand from the miners and what have you done to show your sympathy and satisfy their demand?—The demand is ever present.

**D-2973.** What is the cost per ton of your coal?—It is a very difficult thing to answer satisfactorily. It varies from mine to mine according to the conditions of each. It may be Rs. 3 to Rs. 4. Under the present circumstances I would put it at Rs. 4 a ton, but I want to be free as regards that figure. I cannot commit myself to any definite figure.

**D-2974.** I want to know whether the profits in the coal industry are not sufficient to enable them to do welfare work such as maternity benefits, education, increased wages and so on. I should say that the profit on a ton of coal is at the present market rates about As. 8 to Rs. 2. In some cases it is more. The cost of raising is Rs. 4 and the selling price is Rs. 4-8-0. There are other coals which sell at Rs. 6 and the profit on this will be Rs. 2.

**D-2975.** *Mr. Joshi:* Do you prepare any general balance sheet for the industry as a whole?—No.

**D-2976.** *Mr. Bose:* If we proposed a levy of 6 pies per ton of coal to meet the cost of welfare work among the labourers would your Association have any objection to that?—We have had no opportunity of considering that proposal. As a matter of fact there have been so many levies on the raisings, despatches, profits and so on that it is time the industry had a little rest. But when the scheme is approved the industry must pay for it in some form or another. But you say you will collect the money first and then decide on the scheme.

**D-2977.** Yes, we must have the money first. Is your Association ready to recognize the Indian Colliery Employees' Association?—I have an open mind on the question. As far as I know I do not know whether they represent the colliery employees or not. If you send me full information regarding your Association, the number of members you have and so on, whether you are registered or not, we will give the matter our best consideration. I do not wish to commit the committee or the Association to a recognition of your Association.

**D-2978.** In your opinion which is the best way to work a mine departmentally or through contractors?—It depends on the mine. The contract system has stood the test of time. In our own mines the system has been in existence for well over 20 years. It usually works very successfully. In other mines it is more advantageous to work *sarkari*. I cannot give you an answer as to which method is the best. Both the systems are good; sometimes both are bad?—I think they are as well off under a contractor as under a company.

**D-2979.** What is the cost per ton under the *sarkari* system and the cost per ton under the contractor?—I can give you a rough figure. The raising contractor's cost per ton for loading the coal in the wagon varies between Rs. 1-6-0 and Rs. 1-10-0. But there are cases where the cost is considerably higher than that. It depends on the conditions in the mine, what is included in raising contractor's contract and so on. The *sarkari* cost might be anything. It depends to a large extent on the colliery manager whether he scrutinizes the necessity for every item of expenditure or not. But if a large colliery find it advantageous to employ a contractor they prefer that to the *sarkari* system. If they work *sarkari* it is only because they hope to raise coal cheaply, otherwise they employ a contractor.

**D-2980.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta*: Have you any objection to have labour representatives on the Water Board and the Board of Health?—Personally I have no objection. But I would like to consider the matter.

**D-2981.** You have stated that the Indian Colliery Employees Association is hostile to the employers. Have you any grounds to say that?—One has only to read the speeches delivered by you. I read one of your booklets which was full of wrath against the employers. Your present memorandum is not breathing any friendly spirit. Possibly you are not hostile.

**D-2982.** Are you prepared to modify your statement?—No, I ask you to read your own words on the subject which is sufficient ground for my statement.

**D-2983.** Would you prefer an enlightened and intelligent labour force to an ignorant labour force of the kind that you have now?—I am not admitting the statement that the labour force at present is ignorant but I prefer an enlightened labour force.

**D-2984.** Would you welcome any organization to teach the labourers to be more ambitious and realise their rights and obligations?—To the first part of the question, yes; but the second part of the question dealing with rights and obligations is a very dangerous one. Your view of their rights and obligations might be very different from mine.

**D-2985.** Let us take the common acceptance of these words?—I will accept those words but not according to your interpretation of them.

**D-2986.** There was an unrest in 1921 among the colliery labourers. Was that due to the holding of the Trade Union Congress at Jharia and the activities of Trade Union preachers?—Up to the time of the Trade Union Congress I have a rather clear recollection that the miners were a quite contented lot. The Trade Union Congress met at Jharia and made a great *tamasha*. There was a great unrest. The miner was told that he was going to get more pay; he was invited to join the union and pay a subscription. But the whole thing failed; the miner thought there was a catch somewhere.

**D-2987.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Is it not a fact that your Association and the Indian Mining Federation sent their representatives to attend the Congress regularly and address the meetings?—Yes.

**D-2988.** *Mr. Khetra Nata Sengupta* : Dealing with wages you say : " At a typical mine in Jharia, where coal is won entirely by manual labour, the average earnings per miner per shift amounted to annas 9.6, 10.4 and 11.25 respectively for the months of November, February and July—the average number of tubs loaded per shift being 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7 respectively." Are not these figures taken from Messrs. Jardine Skinner's colliery at Jealgora of which you are the head?—I hope you will excuse me if I say I am not appearing in that capacity. I am now a representative of the Indian Mining Association.

**D-2989.** We were at Jealgora the other day and the figures given there were exactly the same as those given here. So the figures must have been taken from that colliery. Do you know that that colliery is a well equipped colliery?—Yes, it is a well equipped colliery.

**D-2990.** *The Chairman* : The question is whether the introduction of machinery raises the income of the miner above what he gets by pure manual labour?—For the same work it is immaterial whether he is working in a well equipped colliery or a colliery where he has to put in manual labour for everything. If he loads 3 tubs a day he will get 3 times  $7\frac{1}{2}$  annas or Rs. 1-6-6.

**D-2991.** *Mr. Mukherji* : Has not the working of State Railway Collieries tended to withdraw a huge custom from private collieries and thus hit them hard?—Yes, the development of State Railway Collieries has hit certain collieries very hard. The second class coal which they used to buy they no longer buy.

**D-2992.** Has not the withdrawal of this custom brought down the price of second class coal to below the economic level?—The price of second class coal would be rather different to what it is, if second class coal was wanted by the Railways. In that sense it has brought down the price of unwanted coal.

**D-2993.** Can this section of the industry bear any cess or tax to finance welfare work among the labourers?—Obviously if the industry is not prosperous and not making profits it cannot afford to pay anything.

**D-2994.** Are second class collieries making any profits and paying any dividends during the last few years?—I cannot answer that definitely. Some second class collieries are kept going; some must have been making a little profit—very few of them I should say. The best evidence on that point is that many of them are closed down. The others that are alive are struggling hard.

**D-2995.** In reply to Mr. Cliff you said that all welfare work is not beyond the purse of the industry. Did you mean only first class coal raising collieries?—No. If welfare work was undertaken it should be paid for by people who received the benefits of that work. I do not

suppose you would say that first class collieries should pay for the benefits enjoyed by second class collieries. It all depends on whether you take this expense out of the cost per ton or out of the profits. For instance if you put up a water-supply scheme costing over 90 lakhs that would be beyond the capacity of the industry; but if you put up a small scheme for a small hospital that is a different matter.

**D-2996.** Is not any additional expenditure in this direction beyond the capacity of second class collieries which are invariably losing?—If you add to their expenses and if they are making a loss already it would obviously increase their loss.

**D-2997.** Mr. Thomas, you have had occasion recently to visit the Argada colliery. Do you know what is the quality of the coal they quarry there?—I have no intimate knowledge of that. There is a section of that coal of very superior quality, but they are quarrying the whole.

**D-2998.** As a whole the quality is not superior to second class Jharia coal?—I would not say that. I would not be justified in making that statement without looking into the matter more closely.

**D-2999.** Are you aware of the prices paid to miners in the railway collieries adjoining your own collieries?—I know the price paid in our own colliery; I have no information as to what is paid in the adjoining colliery.

**D-3000.** If I put the figure in the region of As. 3-6 per tub of coal cut and put into tubs, what would you say?—There is not much cutting done. It is all blasted. They only do the loading.

**D-3001.** Anyhow the big pieces have got to be cut?—My last visit to the quarries was in connection with the Mining and Geological Institute last year. We are working underground; we do not quarry. I do not know what they pay per tub.

**D-3002.** If they paid as little as that?—I doubt very much if they do. I should be very surprised if that was the case, for cutting and loading.

**D-3003.** But that is my information. Do you not think the competition is very unfair in the case of second-class collieries if they do like that?—I do not know. You pay a miner for the work he does irrespective of the quality of the stuff he produces.

**D-3004.** Anyhow they have got to pay the same pay that is paid by the trade generally, but they scarcely pay half of it?—I do not understand why the labour goes there if they do not pay them.

**D-3005.** Mr. Bray, have you been able to dispense with the recruiting cost in your collieries?—(Mr. Bray): I should like to have notice of that question. My impression is that we pay no recruiting expenses. The labour contractor undoubtedly has to pay to bring his miners and it is customary.

**D-3006.** To the labour contractor you pay something for doing recruiting work?—No; I hardly think so.

**D-3007.** Is it a fact that you have been able to dispense with the recruiting cost because you have recently purchased a *zamindari* somewhere near Tundi from where you force the labourers to come for you?—To the question whether we have recently acquired a *zamindari* property, the answer is no. We acquired a *zamindari* property ten years ago. That statement would be incomplete without my telling you that we have given it up; it was a failure.

*Mr. Joshi* : How force is applied?

*Mr. Mukherji* : By threat of bodily assault.

*The witness (Mr. Bray)* : Mr. Mukherji has used the word "force" without meaning exactly what we take it to mean. Mr. Mukherji means, I think, that we have acquired a property in order that we shall have control of that mining labour and induce it to proceed to our mines in preference to other mines. I have just told you that we acquired a property but we have given it up because it was a failure. If you want to know why that property was acquired it was because the bulk of our miners came from that district, and it was the Company's intention to carry out schemes of welfare work for the miners it employed in their villages.

**D-3008.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy* : As a member of the Indian Mining Association, do you not advocate the payment of maternity benefit to your women labour?—It is rather a difficult question that you have asked, because I am not at all sure how far it is the duty of an employer to provide maternity benefits. I have no doubt that the coal companies would provide maternity benefits; I know some of them do now. But I take it that your object in asking this question is that instead of it being a voluntary payment it shall in future be a compulsory one. At present voluntary payments are made, and if you ask me whether the collieries would continue to make these payments I would say that my own opinion is that they would.

**D-3009.** You think it is not the duty of the colliery owners to give maternity benefits?—It is a matter of opinion. I do not know it is a duty of the colliery employer or any other employer.

**D-3010.** Do you think that the provision of aid to women in child-birth and the training of native midwives are sufficient for the need of women working in the collieries?—Do you think that all that is being done by the two Boards of Health in Jharia and Asansol is sufficient?—I think that is a direction in which the Mines Board of Health might do a little more. We have our representatives on the Board, and they will have our sympathy and support.

**D-3011.** Do you mean support only as regards views?—Financial support.

**D-3012.** *Miss Power* : On that point, I believe that your Association was not in favour of the scheme of the Chairman of the Jharia Mines Board of Health?—The reply given by the Mining Association may be accepted as our answer; it was a considered reply.

**D-3013.** You were not in favour, was it not?—At the present time I am not in favour of it; it is premature; it is somewhat unnecessary at the present time.

**D-3014.** You say it is premature, but the Government, I understand, has been pressing for the solution of the problem of medical help for women on the coalfields for some time?—I have taken an active interest in that subject. I was talking about that particular scheme.

**D-3015.** Do you feel that the time has come for some sort of scheme?—Yes; I think so. We have got the Mines Board of Health. Every colliery has its own doctor. We might go a little further.

**D-3016.** *The Chairman* : I take it that you were not consulted in the drawing up of the scheme that has been referred to?—No.

**D-3017.** And there are practical points in it with which you are not in agreement, but you told me that you would be willing to co-operate in the building up of a practical scheme based on your knowledge and experience of the industry?—Certainly. It does not necessarily mean a hospital.

**D-3018.** *Miss Power* : In your memorandum you refer to the question of land for cultivation as one of the inducements in recruiting. Could you give us any idea as to the extent of such land available for distribution?—The amount of land available in Jharia is very small. In the lower field certain *zamindaris* have been taken up in order to induce the mining labour to become a settled mining population.

**D-3019.** I imagine that is an inducement which can be held out to very few?—In this field we can hardly do so, but in the lower field the mining areas are more scattered.

**D-3020.** You say : "There is very little settled labour." Would you be prepared to agree with the Indian Mining Federation who said that "it was remarkable that the movement towards permanent settlement in the mines had stopped for the last 15 to 20 years"?—That supports it; there is very little settled labour.

**D-3021.** Do you agree that it has stopped for the last 15 to 20 years?—Yes, as a general statement.

**D-3022.** Can you explain to us why that is so?—In Jharia there is no land available. In the lower field the number of people who come to work in the mines has remained practically constant for the last 10 years.

**D-3023.** You think it is primarily a question of the lack of land?—I would not say that. As I said, they are agriculturists. They have their own villages where they live and to which they return.

**D-3024.** You say: "Generally speaking, the mines have been able to accommodate all those who offered to work in them." When the period of good crops coincided with the trade slump you were able more or less to equalize the supply and demand for labour. Has there since been a tendency sometimes to take on more labourers than you could give adequate work to?—In general, it is the wish of every colliery to raise coal to the limit of its capacity. Therefore every miner who comes into a mine is welcomed with open arms.

**D-3025.** You feel that you have sufficient work?—It is a different problem to that at Home. Here there is plenty of work, especially in the mine.

**D-3026.** On the question of the withdrawal of women from the mines, has your Association any policy as to the plan of selection as to which women shall be withdrawn first?—That is hardly a matter for us; it is not for us to devise any scheme. As a matter of fact, the difficulty of the scheme is to decide how the percentage shall be taken out every year; but each mine will have to decide that.

**D-3027.** You have not discussed the matter as an Association?—The law has been made; we must observe the law. We shall take care that all the requirements of Government are carried out. The Mines Department are very sympathetic and very helpful. They receive the full co-operation of the colliery managers, and the close co-operation between the Chief Inspector of Mines, or the Inspectors of Mines, and the colliery managers will result in the achievement of every desirable thing. If I may express an opinion as regards the withdrawal of women in 10 years, I am rather inclined to agree with Mr. Simpson that they will be out in 5 years; I hope they will.

**D-3028.** My point was as to whether your Association had discussed the selection of which women year by year should be eliminated so as to cause the least amount of domestic difficulty to the workers. You realise this withdrawal means a considerable domestic readjustment on the part of the worker?—Yes; I think that difficulty exists. I really do not know how it should be dealt with.

**D-3029.** *The Chairman*: It is being left to the individual mines?—Yes.

**D-3030.** *Miss Power*: Reverting to the question of welfare, you say: "Before the merits of any such claim (referring to the Miners' Welfare Fund) against the industry itself could arise for consideration, the proof of the existence of a class of regular workers in the mines—settled labour, in other words, with mining as their definite occupation—would be a necessary preliminary." Is not this rather putting the cart before the horse? The implication of that sentence seems to me to be that



at present the employer delays welfare because the employee is, in his view, primarily an agriculturist and only secondarily a miner. Do you not feel that the development of a considered policy would tend to assist the worker over the transitional period from being an agriculturist to being an industrialist?—I think we are talking about the Statutory Miners Welfare Fund. If a miners fund should be established for the benefit of the miners, the miners must be a settled body of persons, which they are not at present.

**D-3031.** My point is this: You give your reason for delaying certain measures of welfare or the inauguration of a welfare fund that these people are primarily agriculturists. Would you not assist the transition of these people from agriculturists to industrialists if you inaugurated such a fund and thereby made the occupation of coal mining more attractive?—You mean the inauguration of a welfare fund in order that miners shall give up their agricultural occupation. I do not know whether we can achieve that by instituting such a welfare fund. We are rather discussing the things on vague lines. But I might say that any measure of that sort would receive our sympathetic consideration.

**D-3032.** To continue that line of argument, you say under 'General' that "Colliery proprietors are generally sympathetic towards improvements in labour conditions, though there is no particular demand for them from the workers most concerned." I want to make sure that we had your point of view correctly. Would you be prepared to agree that the bulk of the industrial legislation of all countries has been a crystallization of the practices of the best employers, as demanded by an enlightened public opinion, and that it has not had to await a demand from the workers?—I would be prepared to agree to that.

**D-3033.** *Mr. Joshi:* Your Association do not consider the establishment of public employment agencies necessary or even desirable. I want to know why you think that any assistance given to a miner in finding some employment is not desirable. I want to make one thing clear to you that these public employment agencies are intended to help people who want a job to find out where work is available. We hear of gangs of miners going from mine to mine sometimes in search of work. If there is a public employment agency office, the gang instead of wandering about may go to the office and ask them whether there are any mines wanting workers, and the office may direct them if it has got the information. I want to know why such an office is undesirable from the point of view of your Association?—If it were likely to assist the miner to get employment, I see no objection to it, but the miner at present has not the slightest difficulty in getting work. He is welcomed by almost any colliery on which he enters.

**D-3034.** You do not think that it is undesirable: you may think that it is unnecessary?—It is quite unnecessary. It might be, from some points of view, undesirable. It depends upon how it is established and how it runs.

**D-3035.** Let us know how it is undesirable?—The office might take advantage of the miner's ignorance.

**D-3036.** What advantages?—His wandering about. I do not think it would be a remedy for the ill that you are complaining of. If the miner goes to a colliery he gets works almost at once.

**D-3037.** He may not get work in some collieries?—Very seldom.

**D-3038.** On the question of the hours of work, you seem to have replied to Mr. Cliff that 8 hours shift was the best for all the concerns. I take it that you agree with 8-hour shift?—My answer to that must be more precise. I accept the report of the Select Committee of which I see you were a member. I know that you wrote a minute of dissent. You were strongly in favour of 8-hour shift.

**D-3039.** I want to know what your view exactly is?—My view is exactly the same as that of the Select Committee that we must do these things gradually. 8-hour shifts are desirable, but we must start with 12 which must be given 3 years' trial after which we can think about it.

**D-3040.** That is my point. The Select Committee decided that you might make any change after 3 years. It is now nearly 2 years since the Select Committee wrote that?—May I point out that the Select Committee recommended reconsideration after 3 years from the date of making the change and not from the date of passing the measure. That takes you up to the year 1933.

**D-3041.** I do not wish to discuss that. What I want to ask you is this: If within three years period the hours are to be changed, any suggestion made by this Royal Commission on that point will be useful. The Royal Commission will make its report next year and it will be quite timely to make a suggestion to Government on that point. I therefore want to know from you, judging that the miner works only 4 or 5 hours a day and only 4 or 5 days in a week, whether there will be any practical difficulty from the employers' point of view if 8-hour shift, or any shift less than 12 hours, is introduced—I would rather not come to any settled conclusions now. I see no difficulty, but I think that the Select Committee recommended that the matter should be considered in three years' time, and that is the time to consider it. This must be gradual.

**D-3042.** But do you not see that if this Commission were to make a recommendation there would not be any necessity to appoint another commission or committee to consider that question?—The matter will go to the Legislative Assembly in the same form as it did the last time.

**D-3043.** Do I take it that so far as you can judge to-day there does not seem to be any difficulty?—Certainly.

**D-3044.** On the question of industrial disputes, you say: "The Association considers that the introduction of intermediaries between employers and employed might quite possibly create grievances, or

wants, that at present simply do not exist". I want you to explain to me why you should object to anybody suggesting to the workers fresh wants, because I have heard several times not only to-day but for many years that the Indian worker's standard of life is low, his wants are few and consequently he does not aspire to work very hard. I want you, therefore, to tell me why you object to any one going to the workers and telling them that they should have more wants, they should live better, they should ask for better houses and so on?—The question that was asked was 'Whether intermediaries were required.' We say intermediaries are not required.

**D-3045.** Suppose a man, you or I, go to the miners and say that they should live a better life, they should have education because at present they have no education, they should demand better housing?—He is not an intermediary. An intermediary is one who comes in between the employer and the employee.

**D-3046.** Suppose I go to the miners in my individual capacity, and tell them that they should live a better life and demand a better standard of life, shall I be an intermediary?—No. The intermediary is the man between us and our worker.

**D-3047.** I want to make it quite clear. I do not understand what you object to then. Would you object to the Secretary of an Association telling people that they should live a better life?—No.

**D-3048.** What you object to then? You object to intermediaries creating wants. Why do you object to any people telling the workers that they should require more things?—Our views were asked on the question of instituting a joint standing machinery between employers and work-people. We say that there is no necessity for any joint standing machinery.

**D-3049.** You object to intermediaries creating wants. I think that as good employers you would like to have a healthy discontent in your workers so that they may say "We must live a better life, we must have more wages." You should approve of a man who makes them a little discontented with their present lot?—I do not want a discontented lot of workers.

**D-3050.** You want your workers to live better, is it not?—Yes.

**D-3051.** They will not do that unless they are discontented with their present condition?—I do not want any intermediary to come and make them discontented when they are contented.

**D-3052.** If you want your people to be better than what they are they must certainly become discontented with their present lot. Unless they are discontented they will show no improvement?—You suggest that we should make them unhappy.

**D-3053.** I do not see why you should object to any people going to the collieries and advising people to live a better life?—No. I object

to an intermediary going there to create grievances. They have no grievances, except that they would like to have more of this or more of that.

**D-3054.** Let us understand the meaning "to create grievances". Suppose some people go and tell them that they should have education, and they begin to ask for education. Will that be creating a grievance?—No. That is a legitimate aspiration.

**D-3055.** So you do not object to some people coming in and creating legitimate aspirations or legitimate discontent with their present position?—No.

**D-3056.** On the question of trade union, you said that you do not recognize the Indian Colliery Employees' Association because it is not a registered union. I want to know, suppose a body of 10 people start mining business as a private company and do not get themselves registered, and they write a letter to Government asking for some license or some concession, or offering a tender, and the Government says "We are not going to deal with you because you are not a registered company"; do you not think that the Government will be justified in giving that reply?—It is not the same thing at all.

**D-3057.** How is it different? I am wondering why you should expect people to get themselves registered. Is registration a necessary thing for recognition or for having correspondence?—I gave that as one of the reasons. My chief reason is that I want to know more about the constitution of anybody which applies for recognition.

**D-3058.** If that is not an objection then the point is clear. Do you agree therefore that it is not a point on which recognition should be refused?—You are asking us whether we would recognize an unregistered association. I cannot say till they apply.

**D-3059.** You were asked a question about the second class coal industry competing with State industry and the second class coal industry being hard hit. I want to know whether it is not a fact that it is this second class coal industry that really sets the pace for labour conditions in the coal mining area; that is to say, the conditions of the industry as a whole are governed by the conditions existing in the second class coal industry?—No.

**D-3060.** It is quite natural that if they cannot give better wages and cannot afford to give better welfare facilities, the others will not give?—I should say that the pace was set up by the big collieries. The conditions that obtain now are those which govern the majority of the collieries.

**D-3061.** They do not want shorter hours than 12; they are against maternity benefit?—The coal mining industry has to raise sufficient coal both for internal and external requirements; when I say external requirements I mean the export trade. Those are met by raising something like 22 million tons a year. We have to see what effect the new

drastic change will have on the industry—I refer to the withdrawal of women. Now you have got the 12-hour shift, and you want to make it 8-hour one. I am not arguing whether we could raise 22 million tons with 8-hour shifts. But what I say is let us adopt the recommendations of the Select Committee who in their wisdom said that we should give the 12-hour shift a trial for 3 years. We would like to see what happens in three years.

**D-3062.** *Mr. Clow:* There have been several cases of acquisition of *zamindari* rights with a view to recruiting?—Yes, with a view to getting supply of mining labour.

**D-3063.** Is that policy being abandoned generally?—(Mr. Ord): Most of these properties were acquired for the minerals below the surface.

**D-3064.** I am thinking of properties outside the coalfield. For instance, the Settlement Report of this district published in 1928 says "Several mine owners have acquired *zamindari* rights as *patnidars* or *mukarraridars* with a view to recruit labour and to have a better hold on their labourers"?—That is so in the lower fields.

**D-3065.** You think that is a desirable policy?—These properties were acquired in most cases many years ago; when the coal industry was in its infancy and labour had to be introduced into the field, land was one of the inducements. But settlement on the land is not done now to any extent at all.

**D-3066.** Referring to the difficulties of the settlement, the Settlement Officer says: "The mine-owners had complete hold over their men, who were sometimes even not allowed leave to attend the attestation camps on the date fixed to put in their claims. The *malkatas* were always afraid that if they opposed the claims of the mine-owners they would not only lose their lands but lose their employment as well"?—But it is not their land; it is company's land.

**D-3067.** Was that threat held over the heads of the miners?—No.

**D-3068.** You do not agree with the report?—No.

**D-3069.** Yesterday a suggestion was made to us by the representatives of the Indian Mining Federation that grog shops should be closed on Sundays and Mondays. What is the view of your Association?—(Mr. Bray): I think that suggestion was made by Mr. Thacker; I think we could support that.

**D-3070.** You have been asked a great many questions about securing permanent labour force divorced from the villages as against a labour force that is partly agricultural. Do you consider that on the whole that is a thing that one should aim at?—We are discussing this more or less theoretically. When we can get all the mining labour we want why should we bother about settling our labour on land which we cannot get.

**D-3071.** You have got to think of what is coming ahead. Do you think it is desirable that all the efforts of the mine-owners should be directed towards securing an industrial population whose sole occupation is mining?—In theory, I suppose it would be a desirable thing; in practice, I am afraid it will not work well. Miners will always be agriculturists. I do not think we can make them 100 per cent. miners.

**D-3072.** There is a very small percentage of permanent labour force, I take it?—Yes.

**D-3073.** Should your aim be to increase that or not, weighing up the advantages and disadvantages that the semi-agricultural system affords?—This is a point that has been raised rather earlier in another form. If you have got a settled labour force you will, no doubt, have regular raisings throughout the year. Of course, it is a desirable object to aim at. But they all have to be housed.

**D-3074.** You are not prepared to express an opinion one way or the other?—I do not think it is a bad thing if the miner goes away for his annual holiday; there are two holidays in a year.

**D-3075.** *Mr. Joshi:* At his own expense?—Yes I think it is a point in the employee's favour if by working for 8 months in a year, he can go to his village for four months.

**D-3076.** *The Chairman:* Following the point raised by Mr. Clow which interests me very much, do you not consider that it is a great asset in India, and one not lightly to be parted with, that these people whom you employ have their affection for their land, have their villages to retire to for recuperation of health and that it will be to your advantage to build your industry on what appears to some to be that asset?—I think it is a thing to be encouraged—that they shall have a village to which they can go for their annual holiday or even to till the land and to reap their crops.

**D-3077.** If that is the case, then why should that happy practice of being part agriculturists and part miners be in the way of organized welfare in their interests during the time they spend on and in the mines?—I do not think the fact that they spend 8 months in the collieries and 4 months in their villages will stand in the way of welfare work.

**D-3078.** But it appears from your memorandum that these things could not be brought into being until they were divorced from their land and became miners and nothing else. You do not hold to that view?—Generally speaking if you ask me whether we will support welfare work in the coalfields, I should have no hesitation in saying that we would.

**D-3079.** During the 8 months in which they are working for you in the coal industry, what is reasonable and practicable, by way of education and other amenities should be done?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

# BIHAR AND ORISSA

## SIXTY-SIXTH MEETING.

### GIRIDIH

Friday, 31st January 1930

PRESENT :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Lt. Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,  
I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mrs. KAMINI ROY, *Lady Assessor*.

#### AT SERAMPUR COLLIERY OF THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY COMPANY, GIRIDIH.

SILLUMIAN (miner) was examined and made the following statement :

I am a coal cutter, a miner. I have been working at this job for four or five years. We work in a gang of 10 or 20. The gang varies between 2 and 50. We are 25 in the gang. We work two shifts : 12 men during the day and 13 at night. At first I got As. 9 ; then I got As. 10 to As. 11 ; where it was easy to cut the coal I was paid at the rate of As. 9 ; where it was a little harder As. 10 ; and where it was still harder As. 11. The rate used to vary according to the task ; now whether the task is easy or difficult the rate is the same. It is As. 8. If I fill one tub I get As. 8. That is for cutting, loading and hauling the tub from the coal face right along to the centre point. It is 500 ft. from the coal face where we cut the coal to the point to which I draw it. The women load the tubs. I worked yesterday in the mine during the day. I went down at 8 a.m. and at 8 p.m. I stopped work ; by the time I got up to my place it was 10 p.m. Where we used to be paid at the rate of Rs. 2 a foot we are now paid at the rate of As. 8 a foot. Two of us did As. 8 worth of work each yesterday but after the deductions we shall get in the end As. 6 to As. 6½. One pice in the rupee is deducted for the benefit fund. One or 2 per cent. is taken

off for under-loading of the wagons. Out of the tubs that we fill one or two disappear. I do not know what happens to them. Whether it is that the *munshi* does not enter them or what happens to them I cannot say. When I go down I have to go and fetch the tub; we in the gang go and get the tubs. Yesterday we got the tubs as soon as we got down. Ten of us filled one tub per head; we cannot fill more than that because the work is hard. Out of the 10 people two or three people go and get the tubs; some of the gang are engaged in filling the tubs and the remainder cut the coal. Yesterday 6 people were cutting the coal. When the work is easy we can fill more than one tub. Ten people can fill as many as 50 tubs when the work is easy; that is if the coal is there. We 10 people can fill 50, 60 or 80 tubs if we get the tubs. If the coal is out and ready 10 of us can carry the coal of 150 tubs during the day. Where the work is easier we can cut, load and take to the main tramway from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 tubs per head. I have never earned as much as As. 12 to As. 16 a day. I get my wages weekly. The contractor in whose name the tubs are entered pays me. It is the contractor not a *sardar* nor the head of the gang. I am paid on Sundays. Last Sunday I got Rs. 1-5-0. I worked 4 days last week. After you have gone I do not know what is going to happen to me. We have a caste *panchayat*.

#### MAUJI DHOBI (Miner).

*The witness* : I have worked at this colliery ever since I was a boy. I am a coal cutter. I went in the mine yesterday. I went to work at 8 o'clock in the morning and finished at 8 o'clock in the evening. I was both cutting and loading the coal. When I went down yesterday morning the tub was not available when I went in. I work in a gang of 7. We all go down together and come up together. Between the 7 of us we loaded 8 tubs yesterday. Of the 7, 2 men were cutting the coal. The *munshi* enters the tubs. From the coal face to the tram lines we had to take the tubs about 1,000 feet. Two men were cutting the coal, 4 men were loading the coal and one man was bringing the tubs. We all divide the money equally, after all the deductions have been made. We 7 men always work together. The working place we were at yesterday was such that four times I had to wring my clothes because of the perspiration and heat. The name of my *sardar* is Ugan Chamar.

**D-3980.** *The Chairman* : Was not Ugan Chamar in charge of 22 people yesterday?—During the day there were only 7 people; I was at work and I know there were only 7.

**D-3081.** Because the information from the books shows that there were 22 people and they raised 60 tubs of coal, had Ugan Chamar other men besides this gang of 7?—Ugan Chamar did not go to work yesterday. He was at home yesterday. The *munshi* writes the name and these tubs were entered in Ugan Chamar's name. The *munshi* is sitting over there. His name is Samthali. Last Sunday



I drew Rs. 1-11-0 wages. Some deductions were made and Rs. 1-11-0 is what I received after the deductions were made. I worked 5 days last week. During the last three months sometimes I have earned Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a week.

**D-3082.** *Mr. Cliff*: The Sahib says that if you were to work harder you could earn more than Rs. 1-11-0. Why do you not work harder and earn more money?—When we go down we do 12 hours' work. We test the roof, we cut the coal, collect the coal, and then we load the tubs. At 7 or 8 o'clock our work stops; the *sardar* stops the work in the place where we work. We eat in the morning before we go down at 8 o'clock and then we eat again at 10 o'clock in the night. We drink the spring water in the mine. From the time we go down we keep working all the time. We never rest. You do not know the difficulties of our work. Sometimes we cannot get anything to eat but rice; sometimes we get no *dal*, etc.

**D-3083.** Is it not possible for 7 men to cut and load and take to the tramway 20 tubs a day?—If you come and see the place you will realise the difficulty of it.

**D-3084.** If it is a difficult and hardworking place do you go to the manager and ask for extra pay?—When they decreased our wages from As. 10 to As. 8 we were told that we must either do this work or go. Cases arise in which men have been working since their boyhood and then their work has been stopped.

**D-3085.** Do you ever try to raise the question of your grievances regarding wages at the *panchayat*?—We did once, but our rates were cut. My wife is working on the surface loading coal into railway wagons. For five days' work last week she earned Re. 1. I have a mother, a brother, two sons and two daughters to keep. My brother is younger than I am; he works in the mine. My children are small and they do not go to school. I have a plot of land and I am told that if I work 12 months I shall have right to plough that land, but if not, the land will be taken away from me. I cultivate that land; this year I got 12 maunds of rice. I grow nothing but rice. My youngest child is three years old. When the child was born Rs. 5 was paid by the colliery. My wife did not work then for about 6 months, but then because we had not enough to eat she had to leave the baby and go to work. My wife works for a *hazira* of As. 3 or As. 4. It all depends upon the contractor; if he says she has not done enough work he will pay her only As. 3. It takes 12 hours a day a *hazira*. She loads the big wagons. A *hazira* means a day's work. I will show you the work if you come along to that side.

**D-3086.** You are in a difficult working place; apparently there are two coal cutters, 4 loaders, and one man taking the tubs. Why were not more than 2 men acting as cutters?—It is very hot and it is very hard.

**D-3087.** Do you want to say anything further?—One of the things I have got to say is this, that the *sardar* takes Rs. 1-8-0 a week from

the whole gang. If we do not give this Rs. 1-8-0 to the *sardar* he will stop us from working. Mr. Oran, the overman, also takes a bribe from us. I shall be victimized for saying this. He takes Rs. 2 from the gang of coal cutters. If we do not pay the Rs. 2 he stops us from working. I shall leave this place after you have gone because I am sure to be victimized after this. They will beat me.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. W. T. STANTON, Manager of Serampur Colliery.**

**D-3088.** *The Chairman*: I think you have supplied me with this information with regard to Ugan Chamar?—He is head of a gang of coal cutters of 22 persons, of whom Mauji Dhobi is one. They work in one gang. They are not divided into two or three sections. They may have 2 or 3 working places, but they work in one gang.

**D-3089.** I understand they raised 60 tubs of coal yesterday?—No.; the head clerk has just corrected that. They raised 60 tubs of coal in the week ending yesterday.

**D-3090.** What would be their payment for raising 60 tubs of coal?—They get As. 8 per tub. A certain amount of oil is granted by the Company and if they take excess oil they pay for it. The total stoppages from these men were As. 14 or As. 15; As. 3½ for oil and As. 11½ contribution to the Benefit Fund for the whole of the gang.

**D-3091.** What were the net wages received by the gang?—Rs. 29-1-0.

**D-3092.** For 22 persons?—Yes.

**D-3093.** Do these persons have to pay any bribe or consideration to anyone?—No, I do not think so; if anything of that sort comes to our knowledge we immediately deal with the man who demands the bribe.

**D-3094.** Have you any method of making sure that no bribery is taking place?—If we receive any complaints that people are taking bribes in any way we investigate the case.

**D-3095.** Have you recently had any cases to deal with of that kind?—No.

**D-3096.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How could you investigate it?—By holding an enquiry.

**D-3097.** Have you ever had any success from that?—Yes.

**D-3098.** *The Chairman*: Is it generally known among the people that the management will stop any exaction of bribes?—Yes.

**D-3099.** In your view that is general knowledge among the people?—Yes.

**D-3100.** Therefore in your opinion they have no reason whatever for paying any such money?—No.

**D-3101.** I suppose I need hardly ask you that these men who have spoken to us to-day will not suffer in any way for having spoken to us?—No, they certainly will not.

**D-3102.** *Mr. Cliff:* What was the number of days this gang worked?—I have sent for the book. But it is very difficult. Twenty-two men and women are the total number of people who actually work with this man, but it is quite possible that half a dozen of these people did not work at all during that week, and none of them will have worked more than 4 days. We do not check the actual individual workers.

**D-3103.** I take it the average earnings are more than Rs. 1-4-0 a week?—The earnings are that much per day for coal cutters. I cannot tell you offhand how many men work for Rs. 29 but I can find out.

**D-3104.** How is the *sardar* paid?—He is actually one of the gang; he works and he shares with the other men. The boys and women are paid *hazira* rates from the total amount and then the balance is divided amongst the men. I cannot say how many boys and women there are among that 22 people; I should have to enquire from Ugan Chamar. I can let you have that information.

**D-3105.** What do the boys and girls get paid for the *hazira*?—The coal carriers engaged in loading coal for the coal cutters receive a minimum of As. 8 per day. From As. 8 to As. 10 per day is the rate the coal cutters pay to the women and boys who carry coal for them. They pay that out before they share the balance of the money between the coal cutters. The rate varies between As. 8 and As. 10 because in some cases they are young boys and fairly young women while in other cases they are stronger and capable of doing more work.

**D-3106.** Provided they stay there the whole day they get an amount of As. 8?—Yes. If the gang men are doing sufficiently well, the extra money which they earn is shared amongst them mutually.

**D-3107.** Is the remainder of the money shared equally?—Yes.

**D-3108.** Then the ganger gets nothing extra?—Nothing.

**D-3109.** What are his duties as ganger?—He is the man who gets oil for them, he interviews the *sardar*, takes instructions for the days' work and directs his miners as to what they should do.

**D-3110.** Does he get no payment from the colliery at all?—No.

**D-3111.** Does he get payment from the gang?—No.

**D-3112.** Is it your belief that a man acting as a leader or ganger gets no more pay than the others?—He does not act as a leader; he is the man in whose name the money is put down; nominally he is an

ordinary coal cutter. I do not think he takes any money for being leader of the gang.

**D-3113.** He acts as leader of the gang, what are his duties?—He is paymaster, he takes instructions from the European or Indian staff who are his immediate superiors; he takes the oil from the stores. The point is that he generally is a man who does little or no work.

**D-3114.** He lives on the others, does he?—I do not know that you can put it in that way.

**D-3115.** *The Chairman*: How does he become leader of a gang?—They appoint him themselves. It frequently happens that he is headman of the village, but he is not so in all cases.

**D-3116.** We may assume he is the man that they trust most with regard to the fair division of the money?—I do not know that one can say they trust him with regard to the division of the money, because they are all there at payment time. They see exactly what he receives and how it is divided.

**D-3117.** *Mr. Cliff*: How does the *sardar* obtain the money paid for the work of the whole gang?—Direct from the office.

**D-3118.** Does he distribute the money?—Yes, generally on the office verandah or somewhere in the vicinity.

**D-3119.** Does he distribute it in the presence of an officer of the Company?—There is always an officer of the Company here when payments are made, but of course an officer of the Company could not supervise the individual disbursements.

**C-3120.** Would it be a totally unknown thing if a man who was leader of a gang took the difference which you mention, to take an extra rate for himself of Rs. 1-8-0 per week?—I have never had a case reported to me of it having occurred. I do not think they would agree to his taking it.

**D-3121.** *The Chairman*: Are they entitled to get rid of him as leader?—Yes, any time they wish to.

**D-3122.** If they had any suspicion that he was not giving them a fair deal?—Then they would complain to their immediate superior or perhaps direct to me. The matter would then be enquired into and if I considered this man was doing it I should remove him.

**D-3123.** *Mr. Clow*: Who is the immediate superior?—They are the Indian *sardars* and deputy overmen; then there are overmen. The overman is in daily attendance at the mine.

**D-3124.** *Mr. Cliff*: Do the gang always go down with their ganger?—Yes, the head of the gang comes and takes his miners down each morning and the chief reason probably why he does not actually work as a coal cutter during the shift is that he comes again in the

evening, if necessary, and sees the night shift go down. In some cases he has coal cutters working on both shifts.

**D-3125.** Does this particular man lead another gang as well?—No, but he has coal cutters working on both shifts.

**D-3126.** He comes in the morning and sees his gang down?—Yes.

**D-3127.** Does he see them out in the evening?—Not always.

**D-3128.** Does he come in the evening and see the evening coal cutters go down?—Frequently, but I cannot say that he does it every day.

**D-3129.** Would he see them come up in the morning as he is taking the others down?—Yes.

**D-3130.** Can he stop a man from working?—No.

**D-3131.** He has no power to stop a man from working?—None whatever.

**D-3132.** Does he see that their names are entered in the attendance register?—No, he has nothing to do with that; that is done by the miners' timekeeper who is paid by the Company.

**D-3133.** Does he time them down in the morning?—Yes.

**D-3134.** What is the usual time for them to go down?—The day shift usually go down between 9 and 11.

**D-3135.** What time do they usually come up?—They start to come up as soon as they like; sometimes they come up as early as 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

**D-3136.** How late do they come up?—Possibly some of them come up at 8 to 9 in the evening.

**D-3137.** Have you any system of calling the gangs out of the mine?—Yes, in order to comply with the Mines Act, which says that a man shall not work down below more than 54 hours per week, we close the working places. Taking the day shift first, we start to open the working places at 10 o'clock in the morning, and we close them at 7 in the evening. Then at night we open them again at 10 o'clock and close them again at 7 o'clock the next morning.

**D-3138.** Who carries out this duty?—The subordinate staff.

**D-3139.** Who does it?—The European overman is responsible for seeing that it is done, but he has Indian deputy overmen and *sardars* too to help in the discharge of this work.

**D-3140.** When you say a place is closed, do you mean you put up a fence?—Yes, it is fenced off so that no one can go and work there.

**D-3141.** So that between those hours when you are closed there is no one working in the mine?—No coal cutters; of course people like engine *khalasis* are working. As soon as the place is fenced off the coal cutters cannot do any more work.

**D-3142.** Then they cannot work more than 9 hours a day?—No, the working place is not open longer than that.

**D-3143.** So that if any man says he is working 12 hours a day, he is not telling the truth?—He is not.

**D-3144.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How long does it take to get from the face to the bank?—That depends upon the working place.

**D-3145.** Take the worst place?—Probably a quarter of an hour.

**D-3146.** Not more than a quarter of an hour?—No. The night shift start to come up as early as they like in the morning, but it is compulsory for them to leave their working places before 7 a.m.

**D-3147.** When would they get to the surface; when is the mine clear of the night workers?—Well before 8 o' clock.

**D-3148.** The mine is empty at 8 o' clock?—Yes.

**D-3149.** When do you start allowing the day men to go down?—When they come.

**D-3150.** At what time?—It is generally about 9 o'clock.

**D-3151.** You do not allow the day men to go down until the night men are up?—Sometimes the day men are going down while the night men are coming up.

**D-3152.** Then a day man can go down at 8 o'clock in the morning?—Yes, but he cannot start work.

**D-3153.** *Mr. Cliff*: Does the same thing apply in the evening between 7 and 10?—Yes.

**D-3154.** You have really tried to institute a 6 days week and a 9 hours shift?—We have to do so, the law demands that we should do so.

**D-3155.** *The Chairman*: That is your way of making sure that they do not exceed 54 hours per week?—Yes.

**D-3156.** *Mr. Clow*: If you have a gap of three hours between the end of the night shift working on the face and the beginning of the day shift, how can it happen that the day shift is going down while the night shift is coming up?—These people do not always come straight up; sometimes they stay down below to get a bath.

**D-3157.** *Mr. Cliff*: Will you send for your register of attendance with regard to this gang we refer to?—(Same produced)—Mauji Dhobi, son of Manuk Dhobi in this week worked 5 days and had two

days rest ; in the following week he worked only 3 days and had 4 days rest. In the succeeding week, the third week of the month, he worked 5 days and had 2 days rest. In the last full week he also worked 5 days and had 2 days rest. During one of those weeks there was a holiday and we were closed down for 3 days ; that is the week he only worked three days.

**D-3158.** *Diwan Chaman Lall* : I understand you pay wages weekly ?—Every Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning ; the books being made up to 7 o'clock on the Thursday morning. It gives us three days in hand, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This system has been in vogue now since 1921. The reason we pay on Sunday morning is that we work on Saturday night. If we paid all the miners on Saturday afternoon in all probability they would not work on Saturday night. The work closes down for the week end and the bazaar opens as soon as they are paid. The mechanical staff are paid on Saturday afternoon, but the miners are paid on Sunday morning from 8 to 9:30 o'clock. Payment is completed by 9:30. About 1,500 men are paid between 8 and 9:30 on Sunday morning. Money is all put into little tin boxes ; each man has been issued with a ticket of a number corresponding to that of the box. He presents that ticket and receives the tin in exchange. There are four centres on this office verandah and four different men make payment simultaneously.

**D-3159.** *Mr. Cliff* : Have you 1,500 *sardars* ?—No.

**D-3160.** You pay the *sardars*, do you not ?—Not in all cases ; we pay quite a lot of daily wages on Sunday morning. The wages for 1,500 people are paid out. I should think 700 of these boxes are paid out. I am always in attendance when it is done. The bazaar does not open until 10 o'clock.

**D-3161.** Do you work your mine on Monday ?—Yes. About half the men turn up on Mondays.

**D-3162.** What is the average weekly earning of coal cutters and loaders ?—The average is about 4 days per week, I should say ; As. 8 to As. 10 per day for the loaders and for the coal cutters probably about Rs. 1-4-0 per day on the average.

**D-3163.** If your average is only 4 days a week, these people are violating your rule, and would therefore forfeit their land ?—Yes.

**D-3164.** Is the rule observed ?—Yes.

**D-3165.** Then they must work more than you say ?—No ; some of them work even 6 days for certain periods.

**D-3166.** How many of your men have land ?—I could not give you that number offhand, but of the coal cutters who own land I should think that would be 80 per cent. of the people who live inside the property. The coal carrier or trammer does not get land ; it is only the cutters that are granted land ; 80 per cent. of the coal cutters who

actually live inside the property get land. Practically everybody has a small plot of land round about his house.

**D-3167.** According to your rule the coal cutters who hold land have to do so many days' work in the year?—We do not make it a hard and fast rule. We aim at allotting the land as a sort of bonus to men who attend work regularly.

**D-3168.** Are the people living on your estate all coal cutters?—No; fitters, masons, carpenters, and all sorts of people live on the estate.

**D-3169.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* I understand you only give land to the coal cutters!—*Eket* land for rice. We have a register of the coal cutters who hold that land. I can give you the percentage of coal cutters who hold *eket* land. Twenty-two is the biggest number that ever worked with Ugan Chamar. It is not the number regularly employed, or anything like it.

*Sir Alexander Murray:* We have looked up the books of the Company and we have got the records of Ugan Chamar who works under two numbers, 21 and 22. For the week ending the 29th January the gang raised 66 tubs, which at As. 6 per tub makes Rs. 36 for the week. As. 3-6 was deducted for excess oil and benefit, leaving a net payment of Rs. 24-5-0 for the week. We are unable to say how many men worked under Ugan Chamar's name that week; it may have been 7 men or 22.

*Dines Chaman Lall:* Looking at the register I see that in the week ending January 8, this gang under Ugan Chamar raised 69 tubs at As. 8 a tub. During the week ending January 15, in which week there was a holiday, they raised 41 tubs making Rs. 22-8-0. In the week ending January 22 they raised 72 tubs.

**D-3170.** That would be Rs. 36. Among how many people would that Rs. 36 be divided?—I should have to send for Ugan Chamar and ask him that.

**D-3171.** *Mr. Clow:* The rates for tubs are now lower than they have ever been?—That is not so.

**D-3172.** They are as low as they have ever been since 1920?—Yes. It is As. 6 per tub at present on this colliery and it was As. 9 per tub in 1926.

**D-3173.** *Mr. Cliff:* Are you restricting the production of coal?—No.

**D-3174.** *The Chairman:* Are your men given an opportunity of earning as much as they can?—Yes.

**D-3175.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Are these 22 men given a chance of working 5 days a week?—They are given the chance of working 6 days a week; the only exception is when there is any danger which prevents them going into the working places.



**D-3176.** Why should one of them say that if he did not keep on good terms with his *sardars* the *sardar* could stop him working?—The *sardar* cannot stop him, he has no power to do so.

**D-3177.** On the average would you say that the man could earn 50 per cent. more than they do actually earn?—Easily.

**D-3178.** *Mr. Clow* : What is the weight of a tub?—10 cwt. This year they had an exceptionally good harvest, with the result that there has been abnormal absenteeism during November, December and January. Under those conditions it is only when there is some special inducement such as a *pooja* for which they want extra money that they will be induced to come and work 5 or 6 days and earn more money. Normally they just earn enough to provide them with the necessaries of life.

**D-3179.** *The Chairman* : If a man says that from his earnings he is not able to provide himself with enough to eat, what do you say about that?—He is not telling the truth. He could easily increase these earnings by at least 50 per cent. ; we should only be too pleased for them to do so because we want the coal.

**D-3180.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What is the output per head underground?—I could not tell you offhand ; a certain amount of the work is done in this office and a certain amount in the Colliery Superintendent's office.

**D-3181.** *Mr. Clow* : Why is it that with more settled labour here apparently than in Jharia, the output per miner is substantially less?—That may be because the system of calculation is different. The figures which we give are for the whole of the people employed, while the figures which other people give may apply to coal cutters only.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. H. Lancaster**, Superintendent of the East Indian Railway, Colliery Department, Operating the Colliery in Giridih and the Joint Collieries of the East Indian Railway and the Bengal Nagpur Railway at Bokhara ; **Dr. H. Mullick** ; **Mr. J. Brown**, Assistant Superintendent, Bokhara East Indian Railway and Bengal Nagpur Railway Joint Collieries ; **Mr. A. D. Tuckey**, Deputy Commissioner, Hazaribagh District.

**D-3182.** *The Chairman* : What is your total experience of coal?—(Mr. Lancaster) I have had over 30 years' experience of coal, 12 years at home and 18 years in this country. I have held my present position since 1922 ; before that I was Inspector of Mines.

**D-3183.** What is the nature of the compulsion by which you get this remarkable attendance of miners' children at school?—The schools were opened years ago ; I think I am correct in saying that they were very nearly the first schools of the kind in the Province. When

children did not attend in the old days parents were fined by the Colliery Superintendent or by the Manager. The fine was small.

**D-3184.** Does the method succeed in getting all the miners' children of school age into your lower primary schools?—Yes.

**D-3185.** Therefore you are acting really as an education authority within your own area?—That is so.

**D-3186.** It was suggested to us in one place that even if the gentlest pressure was brought to bear upon the miners to send their children to school with one accord they would flee from the district; I take it that has not been your experience?—No. Of course we have had the advantage of having a population here for several generations and the system started years ago and was followed through by all my predecessors without exception and by myself. We are in a sort of ring fence. The fine is rarely inflicted. The children come willingly except in a few cases.

**D-3187.** I understand that from the lower primary school the brighter children go to the higher primary school; from there the brighter ones go to the industrial school; and by that means they supply a large part of your requirements in your workshop?—Yes.

**D-3188.** And any positions in your mines as well?—There are fitters in charge and mechanics in the various pits.

**D-3189.** You pointed out certain boys in the schools that held scholarships. What was the nature of those scholarships?—There is a Government scholarship awarded by annual examination.

**D-3190.** I understand that your schools are wholly maintained by yourself?—Yes.

**D-3191.** Are they inspected by Government at all?—They used to be but they have not been lately. It is only within the last six months that we took absolute charge and ran the whole thing ourselves. The District Board used to give us a grant but they reduced the grant to such a small moiety that I said it was impossible. I wrote to the Agents and asked that we should be allowed to pay for the whole thing ourselves.

**D-3192.** Do any of the boys who have the advantage of this system here obtain positions elsewhere?—Yes, quite frequently.

**D-3193.** We are informed by the Chief Inspector of Mines that a considerable number obtain employment in other coal fields?—Yes; they obtain employment as mechanics and a boy who wins a scholarship and is a smart lad may get a position as a surveyor or something of that sort eventually. The object of our schools is really to supply our own collieries with intelligent and trained staff.

**D-3194.** What becomes of the boys who go no further than your own primary school?—They take to various posts; we have

a telephone system all over the colliery and one of them may become a telephone boy. Some of them go back to coal cutting, but in these days we find the boys do not favour that so much.

**D-3195.** Even if they have just learnt to write their names?—Yes, I am afraid that is so.

**D-3196.** The number who go to coal cutting is small?—Smaller than it used to be.

**D-3197.** *Miss Power*: Does that mean that you are educating all the boys out of the mines?—Yes, we are getting a second generation who want something where there is not quite as much hard work and where there is a bit more money.

**D-3198.** *The Chairman*: Now that you have taken over control of the schools, do you think it would be possible to design the education in the primary schools to make it practical and suited to the actual life of a miner?—Yes, certainly.

**D-3199.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: On your reconstructed syllabus do you think they would then become miners?—I think so. I am now training young men to become superior officials; we have lectures twice a week and an Indian lectures to what we call the illiterate apprentices in order to teach them the theory of mining. If the boys in the future are to be educated on more practical lines they will naturally take to this other training more easily. It is a very good thing to promote men from the coal cutting rank to the rank of overlooker underground because they have the practical experience.

**D-3200.** You are not trying to train a more efficient coal cutter who can make more money by better production?—I do not think you can teach them that theoretically; they have to learn that underground with their parents.

**D-3201.** All this education is going to deplete the next generation of coal cutters?—To a certain extent.

**D-3202.** Only those who are no good will become coal cutters and they will not be any better than their fathers?—I do not know; I think they might be.

**D-3203.** *The Chairman*: Have you plenty of paddy land?—We have 3,991 *bighas* under cultivation. 2,796 of it is under paddy. People other than miners have paddy land but not many; we endeavour as far as possible to give it to coal cutters to encourage them to work so many days a year.

**D-3203a.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How do you know that the men who get this land work for 240 days a year?—We know pretty well. The managers look after the attendance; if a man really slacks badly they write to me and then I say that the land must be taken away. But it is not often done.

**D-3204.** But your manager has no records of what each gang consists of?—He should have. There ought not to be much difficulty in getting the information.

**D-3205.** How many workers have had their land taken away for bad attendance?—I do not think more than 20 in 8 years.

**D-3206.** *The Chairman:* Three of the mines are let out to raising contractors?—Yes, in Giridih; that is 3 out of 10 pits.

**D-3207.** How do you decide between the one system and the other?—One pit here is on contract because the contractor's father was a very old servant of the Company here and he has a large *zamindari* outside. If he had not the contract presumably he would take all his labour to Jharia. The same thing applies to the other pit. In some cases it is done from the point of view of economy; it saves a great deal of clerical work. There are contractors, petty contractors and individual miners to be paid. The petty contractor is a man generally picked out because of his ability as a miner.

**D-3208.** We thought the men made their own group and chose their own leader?—I do not think so. He forms his own gang. The leader of the gang is a coal cutter and he directs operations on instructions received from the manager or some other official.

**D-3209.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* We met a gangman to-day who had 45 men working under him?—I generally limit it to 15 or 20. I did not know we had such a big gang.

**D-3210.** I understand that at Bokhara all the coal is raised by contractor?—Yes.

**D-3211.** What is the rate per ton?—Rs. 1-3-0 per ton into wagons. It is a quarry and there is a large output.

**D-3212.** What rate is paid here to the raising contractors?—It varies according to the pit; it may start at Re. 1-3-0 and work up to Re. 1-6-0. The minimum is fixed and some increase is given for every 500 or 600 tons above that minimum.

**D-3213.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* What is your cost of loading into wagons including other charges in these collieries?—My cost for the whole thing here was Rs. 4-2-0 last year. That includes all charges and sinking fund. The output for the year was 746,286 tons for the year ending March 1929.

**D-3214.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Look at the report under the Indian Mines Act, for 1928, Appendix I; I cannot reconcile your figures with other figures in Bengal and in Bihar and Orissa. The general figure seems to be an average tonnage of about 137 tons per person employed, whereas your corresponding figure seems to be 93 tons per person. How do you explain that?—I think the number of surface workers is more than in other places.

**D-3215.** Taking the loaders alone, the general figures for Bihar and Orissa works out at 248 tons per annum per person, while your corresponding figure is 143 tons?—One reason is that we have the smallest tub in India; it is only 10 cwt. The miner is paid by the tub, not by the ton. But he is paid the same rate or even more than other collieries pay for the bigger tub. There may be some discrepancies in these figures.

**D-3216.** Looking at these figures it would appear that the coal cutter and loader in the Giridih Collieries must be earning very much less than the average earned elsewhere. What are your rates?—Our maximum rate is now annas 8. I very much doubt whether those figures are correct. Our minimum is annas 5. We have what we call loose coal, and immediately that occurs the price is reduced. The drop coal is simply loaded out. In many cases it is more difficult to get coal here than in Jharia.

**D-3217.** The figures given in the report for Bokhara must be wrong because the surface workers cannot handle 770 tons per person?—They must be wrong. The Bokhara miner fills a great deal more coal than the Giridih miner does; the conditions are much easier.

**D-3218.** Will you give us a statement dealing with these figures?—Yes.

**D-3219.** The miner who gave evidence before us to-day said that whereas he used to get Rs. 2 per foot he is now only getting annas 8?—That must be for different work. The rates vary according to the position in the mine, the hardness of the coal and difficulties of other kinds. We have to alter the rates from time to time; sometimes we have to alter them week by week. They are all paid very fairly for everything that is done. The detail of it does not come to me except in the pay sheets every week and it is impossible for me to scrutinize every item. I do not think there is much foundation for that statement.

**D-3220.** He told us there was a benefit fund. Is that fund obtained by taking so much per tub?—Yes; the money deducted from the day labourers, coal cutters, contractors and everybody is paid into the central fund, which is administered by the Central Committee and the Branch Committees. The Branch Committees meet weekly and the Central Committee meets monthly. Payments are made for sick benefit, marriages, loans, and part of the pension that we pay. The Committee consists of myself as Chairman, the colliery managers and representatives of all the miners and workshop staff chosen by the Committee to represent the work-people.

**D-3221.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are they work-people themselves?—Yes.

**D-3222.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: I see that last year you spent for partial disablement Rs. 15,249?—Yes.

**D-3223.** Do you give pensions?—Yes. Last month I think the pensions amounted to Rs. 1,500.

**D-3224.** Is that in addition to workmen's compensation?—Yes.

**D-3225.** Will you give us the latest balance sheet of this Benefit Fund?—Yes, I will write you a special note on the subject; I will also deal with the Benevolent Fund of Bokhara. The benevolent fund applies to the whole of the employees including miners. The Company contributes a certain amount towards the pensions, but the actual money in the benefit fund is drawn from the employees and contractors. The Company's contribution towards the benefit fund is quite a small part. The provident fund only applies to staff paid monthly. This benefit fund has been in existence since 1893.

**D-3226.** You tell us in your memorandum that the efficiency of the mining community remains unchanged and is satisfactory, but on the other hand you tell us they are only raising one or two tubs a day. Do you call that satisfactory?—When I speak of efficiency I mean the quality of their work. They know the conditions prevailing on this particular coalfield which are peculiar.

**D-3227.** Do you think they could earn very much more if they wanted to?—Certainly. I think lot of men could fill an extra tub of coal in an easy place.

**D-3228.** Will you give us figures of the actual number working month by month in your mine and the raisings?—Yes.

**D-3229.** You do not give leases of paddy land?—No, we give a yellow *patta*.

**D-3230.** What are the hours of work?—The practice is that they go down somewhere between 9 and 10 o'clock usually. Then they have to walk to their working places and the working place has to be opened. If it is a place which has been on weight, sometimes it has to be opened by the European official. He cannot get there immediately and the men have to wait.

**D-3231.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do they find the tubs waiting for them?—Yes.

**D-3232.** Is there any shortage of tubs?—No. Generally, the lead is so short for the trammers that there is no difficulty in getting them to push their own empties in from the top of the haulage. The day shift probably comes out at about 7 or 8 o'clock having gone down somewhere about 10 o'clock. That is about 9 hours.

**D-3233.** Do you issue token?—Yes.

**D-3234.** When the new Act comes into force on the 1st April are you going to make any attempt to check the proper *hazira* of the individual at present put down under the name of the ganger, contractor, or *sardar*, so that you will know the actual number of hours worked by the individual?—That would be compulsory; we shall do that all right.

**D-3235.** You have not so far made any arrangements?—I do not think anybody has done much towards it. We shall do it. At home the men have to go down the pit at 7 and at one minute past seven no body can go down; but the men at home have not got to walk in the distance they have to walk in India where some of these Santhals walk in 4 or 5 miles every day.

**D-3236.** Do you intend to make them come down at a particular hour?—We are not going to try that. It must be gradually brought in; you cannot do it here as you do it at home.

**D-3237.** In the lower coal fields most of the evidence we had from the miners was to the effect that a man and his helper could more or less easily do 2 tubs a day. This morning your employees seem to say they could only do one tub, or at any rate they were doing only one tub. Will you get out figures for us showing how much the average man does?—Yes.

**D-3238.** We found that a gang of a nominal roll of 22 took Rs. 29 for the week?—They are not back from their harvesting. Output has only just started to pick up. It has been very bad on that account.

**D-3239.** One of the men said that only 7 were working in the gang?—That would be about right.

**D-3240.** The Manager told us that the duties of the leader of the gang were to get oil and so on; he said that the colliery paid the leader nothing and the other miners did not give him anything; he merely divided up with the others equally. Do you think that would be a fact?—I think so. Being the head of the gang he would probably take a little more for himself, but I should say he would pay them a reasonable wage; otherwise they would not work for him.

**D-3241.** Surely he would expect something more than an equal share?—I should think so; it does not sound to ring true; I have always understood the head of the gang naturally got something out of it.

**D-3242.** Do you think there is much bribery going on between the *sardars* and the head of the gang?—I do not think so. It does not go on to a great extent but of course it exists as it does in any colliery.

**D-3243.** One of the men said that if they did not bribe the *sardar* and others they would not get any work. Is there any lack of tubs or anything of that kind which would create a difficulty in their getting work?—The *sardars* would not control that.

**D-3244.** During next month when there will be more men in the pit will there be too many miners for the organization? Does that ever take place here?—No.

**D-3245.** You never have so many men coming in that there are not enough tubs available?—No.

**D-3246.** Will you let us know how many tubs you have?—Yes.

**D-3247.** Will the miner start cutting coal before the tubs are actually there?—Here they cut the coal before they get the tubs. But in the other coalfields they will not start until they get a tub because often they never get a tub at all. There is no trouble of that sort here.

**D-3248.** So that really you would expect a better output here than in the other mines?—Yes.

**D-3249.** *Miss Power* : Are there any grog shops on the collieries?—We do not permit any inside. There never have been in my time; the excise people once tried to set one up but I would not have it.

**D-3250.** Is there any discontent among your men because there is no grog shop?—No.

**D-3251.** Is there any illicit distilling?—There have been a few isolated cases, but nothing serious; the excise people are pretty smart with regard to that and we co-operate with them.

**D-3252.** Do your people go a long way for drink?—Some of them do. We have here a fairly large Muhammadan population; some of them do drink, and some walk a long way for the drink. (Mr. Tuckey) The aboriginal tribes have the right to brew in their homes rice beer. That has been stopped in Dhanbad, and it has been proposed that it should be stopped in the colliery areas in this district. It is supposed to be only enough for the family, but it is rather difficult to stop them brewing more.

**D-3253.** *The Chairman* : I understand you have a 50 per cent. attendance on Mondays?—(Mr. Lancaster) Yes.

**D-3254.** Whereas in the other coalfield they cannot work on Monday at all?—No. The attendance gets better on Tuesday; it is best on Wednesday which is the end of the financial week. The attendance falls again on Thursday, while Friday and Saturday are better. Market day is Sunday, pay day being Saturday. We keep three days' pay in hand. They are all paid at 10 o'clock on Sunday. The workshops are paid on Saturday.

**D-3255.** *Miss Power* : What is the extent of the fining you impose on the parent for not sending his children to school?—It is a fine of perhaps As. 8; it goes into the fines fund.

**D-3256.** Is it your genuine belief that all the children of the coal cutters on the colliery are going to school?—Yes.

**D-3257.** If a man absolutely refuses to send his child to school, do you dismiss him from the employ of the Colliery?—It has never been necessary to do so.

**D-3258.** Is there any adult education?—Only on the technical side.



**D-3255.** Are you considering a scheme for adult education?—No, not yet; I am afraid I have not considered it so far.

**D-3260.** I presume that the bulk of the adult coal cutters are illiterate?—Yes. They have been through the schools; they have remembered something and have forgotten more.

**D-3261.** The effect of the education of the children has not been to make them set up small adult schools of their own?—No; a lot of them go to the high school at Giridih.

**D-3262.** You are recruiting at one colliery only?—Yes, at Bokhara.

**D-3263.** When the workers are brought in by the contractors are they in debt to these men?—Yes, I think they are advanced so much, which they pay back; that is the usual system of recruitment.

**D-3264.** The advance is entirely from the contractor?—Yes.

**D-3265.** Is anything given to them free?—I could not say. The railway fares are paid and they are fed on the way. I should say each person owes about Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 to the contractor which they have to repay.

**D-3266.** Is there any check on the contractors as to whether they charge interest on that advance?—No interest is charged.

**D-3267.** Can the contractors fine the men?—Not in connection with the work. If a man committed a fault he is fined but the money is put into our fines fund.

**D-3267a.** Is the contribution of the worker to the benefit fund a compulsory payment?—Yes.

**D-3268.** Is a man told that when he is taken on?—Yes, he knows.

**D-3269.** Is he free to refuse to pay?—The contractor pays the benefit fund; the miner does not pay. We deduct it from the contractor's bills. Three pies in the rupee are recovered from the contractors' bills.

**D-3270.** Are the men directly employed given the option of joining the benefit fund or not?—No, it is compulsory.

**D-3271.** They must take the employment or leave it on those terms?—Yes.

**D-3272.** If they go away for any reason can they recover the payments they have made to the benefit fund?—No.

**D-3273.** It is lost altogether as far as they are concerned?—Yes.

**D-3274.** *The Chairman:* Presumably they have had the benefits while they have been working?—That is so.

**D-3275.** *Miss Power:* Is the maternity bonus paid out of the benefit fund?—Yes. (Mr. Brown) Every woman who has a child is paid the benefit for 8 weeks; it is about Rs. 1-8-0 or Rs. 1-12-0 a week.

**D-3276.** I suppose that is on condition that the woman is off work and at home during that time?—Yes.

**D-3277.** Do they avail themselves of that?—(Mr. Lancaster) Yes, without exception; it is supposed to be 4 weeks before and 4 weeks after the birth.

**D-3278.** *Colonel Russell:* Is it controlled by the medical staff at all?—(Mr. Brown) Yes, the medical staff are on the-Committee.

**D-3279.** But does the medical officer decide in an individual case when a woman should stop work and when she is fit to go back?—The officials in the colliery generally send the woman out.

**D-3280.** Is the money paid to the woman out of hospital?—It is paid to the woman herself or to her relation at the office. If the woman is not in a condition to come to the office to receive the money it is paid to her mother or husband. It is paid by a European in the presence of the Assistant Surgeon and the pay clerk, the head clerk and the benefit clerk.

**D-3281.** So that there is no real medical control of the payment?—No; the medical staff have no power to stop it; we pay everybody.

**D-3282.** *Miss Power:* Were the men and women told of the Government regulation as to the gradual exclusion of women from underground?—(Mr. Lancaster) Generally speaking, they have been told; I think it is known.

**D-3283.** On what system are you selecting the women to be excluded?—We have quite a number of elderly women working and quite capable of working; we should gradually put them on the pension list. Then we are going to fix the age for pension rather lower and that will eliminate women under the age of 40. We can find out the age more or less as we know the women very well. By raising the age and stopping all recruitment of girls we shall gradually get the women all out. We shall have to find places for many of these women above ground.

**D-3284.** Do you propose to take the full ten years?—Yes.

**D-3285.** Has any man left the colliery because his wife has been excluded?—Not yet. It is early to say what will happen.

**D-3286.** Is there any alternative employment for women?—There is not much.

**D-3287.** I see you are only employing 20 per cent. of the women underground now instead of 29½ per cent. which you are entitled to employ, so that it will be two or three years before the restriction will have to be made?—Yes.

**D-3288.** Are the two-roomed houses we saw this morning a new experiment?—Yes.

**D-3289.** Are they popular?—They are with some, but not with others. When a family have lived in their own little mud house for many years it becomes their home and they do not want to move to a new house, but they are compelled to do so.

**D-3290.** Do you find any tendency for two families to go into one such house without the knowledge of the management?—That is quite possible; it is very difficult to prevent overcrowding.

**D-3291.** Is it your intention in future to build only two-roomed houses?—Two and three rooms always.

**D-3292.** What is the cost of two or three-roomed houses of the kind we saw this morning?—(Mr. Brown) Including bricks and material two-roomed houses cost Rs. 650. (Mr. Lancaster) Santhals would certainly refuse to go into those houses.

**D-3293.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are there any of your workers who have no land?—Yes, a great number.

**D-3294.** *Miss Power*: Do you prefer the agriculturist who leaves you for so many months in the year or the man who is a full time worker?—Provided he is not too much a gentleman farmer and does not have too much land I think the one who works his land is preferable.

**D-3295.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy*: If those of your employees to whom you have given land refuse to work as miners, do you take back the land from them?—Under the system I think we ought to, but we have been rather benevolent about that; we consider the old people who have worked in the past.

**D-3296.** Have you any arrangements for educating the girls?—When I first came a few girls attended the lower primary school, but there were so few that the idea fell through.

**D-3297.** Are there lantern lectures here?—Lectures are given on technical matters. Miners do not attend those lectures.

**D-3298.** Your hospital has doctor, but has it any midwives?—No.

**D-3299.** Has it any lady doctor?—No. I think a lady doctor would be a good thing. Years ago provision was made for a lady doctor but the suggestion was rejected by the Chief Medical Officer. The hospital is not under me; it is under the Chief Medical Officer of the Railway under whose control are all the staff in the hospital.

**D-3300.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Sixty patients a year with a population of 19,000 in a hospital of 20 beds seems very low?—(Mr. Brown) There are 60 in-patients, but that does not apply to out-patients.

**D-3301.** *Mrs. Kamini Roy*: We have been told by several witnesses that Santhals, Kols and such other aboriginal people dislike Western medicines, and that their women are unwilling to be treated by a doctor. Is that the case also here?—Yes.

**D-3302.** Do you not think they would probably come to a lady doctor?—I think it could be done by gentle persuasion. We have a Mission hospital here under the United Free Church of Scotland under the control of Dr. Dempster. We pay him for his hospital so much a month out of the benefit fund because he treats cases of cataract. We also give a donation from the benevolent fund to the Lepers' Home, to which we send our lepers and have had a lot of very good cures.

**D-3303.** What is the number of women workers in the mines and what is the population?—I will let you have those figures.

**D-3304.** Do you not think that unless the wives of the miners remain here working on the surface it will affect the family life, the morality and efficiency of the miners?—Yes; very much so; but I am afraid we cannot provide employment for all the women who are prevented from working underground.

**D-3305.** *Colonel Russell*: The type of house with country tiles does not cost very much?—No, but it costs more to repair.

**D-3306.** Is it more popular?—Yes.

**D-3307.** What is your total population?—(Dr. Mullick) The population in 1925, including other people besides the colliery staff, was 8,246 of staff and 17,214 families. The total population was 25,460.

**D-3308.** The births in 1928-29 were practically 500, which gives a birth rate of 20. Do you think you are registering all your births?—Yes; we have got a separate department for that.

**D-3309.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do any of these women go to their own country to have their children there?—(Mr. Lancaster) Here they are in their own country. They live outside the estate, perhaps three miles beyond the boundaries.

**D-3310.** Would they come in your figures?—No.

**D-3311.** Therefore this figure of 20 might not refer to all the children born to your employees?—No.

**D-3312.** What proportion does not live on your area?—Say a third.

**D-3313.** *Colonel Russell*: Do these figures cover the estates?—Yes, and all the various departments whose staff is in Giridih.

**D-3314.** You are the doctor for the Railway Station too?—Yes.

**D-3315.** Then this figure includes the Giridih *busti* population?—Only the staff that live in Giridih.

**D-3316.** *The Chairman*: These figures are obviously wrong by about 50 per cent. ?—The births per thousand are 18.35; the infantile mortality per thousand of population is 1.73.

**D-3317.** Do you keep a separate register for still births?—I do not know; it is done in the *Zamindari* Department.

**D-3318.** Is there much malaria here?—Yes, we get malaria mostly in the months of September and October, when 30 per cent. of my patients are suffering from malaria; last year I treated 13,774. The figures I give in the memorandum are of cases; if a man gets malaria in January and dysentery in February they would be treated as two separate cases. Last year there were 3,965 cases of malaria and 596 cases of dysentery. We do not get any cases of hookworm here. We have a District Medical Officer of the Railway in Asansol; we all work under him and he is responsible for the administration of Giridih. We are subordinates that work under him; among the subordinates there are 1 Assistant Surgeon and 5 Sub-Assistant Surgeons. I am an Assistant Surgeon.

**D-3319.** I suppose your chief work is in the hospital?—Yes. One of the 5 sub-assistant surgeons works with me in the hospital and there are four more in the outlying colliery areas in the dispensaries. It is part of my duty to visit dispensaries. We have to inspect the villages and deal with illness in the villages. The sub-assistant surgeons inspect every village at least once every week. If a sub-assistant surgeon finds something wrong in a village he reports the matter to the Manager; he has a conservancy staff to deal with the matter. (Mr. Lancaster) The matter is reported to the Manager, and if the Manager did not deal with it it would be reported to me; but nothing has ever been brought up to me.

**D-3320.** Colonel Russell: Have you any Sanitary Inspectors?—(Dr. Mullick) Yes, in the Colliery Department, but not under me. (Mr. Lancaster) The sanitary inspector has no direct control over the conservancy staff; he simply reports what he sees wrong.

**D-3321.** I understand you have no lady medical officer at all?—(Dr. Mullick) No.

**D-3322.** How many in-patients per annum do you have in your hospital?—Last year I had 50. This hospital was started 7 months ago. We had a hospital before but as it was too far from the Colliery settlement the new hospital has been set up. It is getting more popular. We now have 12 beds whereas in the old hospital we had 9 only.

**D-3323.** Have you any nurse in the hospital?—No.

**D-3324.** If you appointed a trained nurse in the hospital do you not think you would get more female patients?—People only go to the hospital when they are compelled to do so. The only cases that come are injury cases. If a man or woman is very ill with pneumonia or anything of that kind they do not care to come to the hospital. In a few years when they find it is to their benefit I think they will come.

**D-3325.** Have you any trained *dais* or midwives?—Not under me. There is a lady doctor here under the District Doctor.

**D-3326.** The collieries do not maintain any trained midwives? No. (Mr. Lancaster) Provision was made for a nurse but since then we have not thought about it.

**D-3327.** You have not had any proposal to appoint a health visitor or trained midwives under the health visitor to do child welfare work ?—No.

**D-3328.** Do you not think it would be a reasonable thing to have one or more child welfare centres on the estate ?—I think so. (Mr. Brown) We tried to get a midwife for Bokhara, but we have not yet succeeded.

**D-3329.** You get a good deal of cholera, do you not ?—(Dr. Mullick) There are some cases of cholera.

**D-3330.** What do you do when an epidemic occurs ?—Here in the Giridih Colliery Settlement we have not had any epidemic for the last 8 years ; the last epidemic we had was in 1921.

**D-3331.** What water supply have you ?—(Mr. Lancaster) We have two gravity water supplies. One is obtained from some abandoned workings on this side which are absolutely uncontaminated. We have a supply on the other side where the workshops are which is piped down. On the other side of the colliery the houses and villages are so scattered that miles and miles of piping would be required to convey water. The wells are usually used for drinking and this other water for washing and culinary purposes. These wells are regularly disinfected and they are improving.

**D-3332.** Is the supply of water which you say is obtained from disused workings ever examined bacteriologically ?—It never has been, but I do not think there is any necessity because it is away from everywhere and there is such a large volume of it that I do not think there is any danger of contamination.

**D-3333.** What supply of water is there in the area near the lower primary school where there are a large number of houses ?—There are wells there and piping.

**D-3334.** What are the washing and bathing arrangements for miners ?—There is nothing elaborate ; the overflow from the underground pumps generally flows into a channel. At the central pit we have made a sort of bath room with a delivery pipe.

**D-3335.** But ordinarily, except in that instance, do they bathe ? They generally prefer to bathe under one of these taps.

**D-3336.** What are the general sanitary arrangements ?—According to the Factory Act we have to provide them in workshops. There are no sanitary arrangements for the general population ; they would not use them. (Dr. Mullick) I provided latrines but they would not use them and I had to close them because they were only wasting water.

**D-3337.** You have closed your hospital latrines ?—Yes.

**D-3338.** What do your patients in the hospital do ?—The sweeper attends to the helpless patients, and the patients who are not helpless go to the fields.

**D-3339.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Will you analyse the figure of 11,232 which you give in your memorandum with regard to Giridih?—Yes.

**D-3340.** Have your wages been decreased?—Yes.

**D-3341.** Will you let us know the percentage of your costs per ton which represents labour costs excluding supervising and clerical staff and royalties for the last two years?—Yes.

*Sir Victor Sassoon*: Will you tell us the number of actual coal raisers, raising coal to-day, to whom you have given this special rice land?—Yes.

**D-3342.** You have here no trade union or labour combination at all?—No.

**D-3343.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: They are not members of the East Indian Railway Union?—No.

**D-3344.** I see you had strikes in 1920 and 1922?—Yes.

**D-3345.** Since then you have had no trouble of any description?—No.

**D-3346.** *The Chairman*: Are the people living in your *zamindari* compelled to work in a particular district of your mines?—No; we regard them as our tenants and they work just where we want them to work.

**D-3347.** Does that mean that they work with you as a condition of their continued tenancy?—Yes. The coal cutters are obliged to give so many days' work in the year. The others feel that if they do not work here we shall not allow them to remain, and they would not be allowed to remain.

**D-3348.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: People who have *zamindari* land here hold it on condition that they shall work on your mine?—Yes. (Mr. Tuckey) If any man held the land before the Colliery started he would not be under any obligation to work in the mine, but if the colliery gave him the land on condition that he should work in the mine he must work in the mine.

**D-3349.** Have you any tenants who do not work in the Colliery?—(Mr. Lancaster) We have tenants who do not work now because they are too old, but as far as I know there are no people capable of working who do not work in the colliery. These *zamindaris* were acquired many years ago.

**D-3350.** At the time of acquisition it was the means of tying labour to a particular pursuit?—That is so, and of course the bulk of the labour living inside was recruited from outside districts, such as Monghyr. The number of original tenants must be very small. (Mr. Tuckey) The Forests Department give land under a similar service tenancy.

*The Chairman*: So do the Forestry Commissioners in England.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**AT THE SERAMPUR COLLIERY, GIRIDIH.**

Statement by *Ugan, a Sardar.*

"I have 24 men under me. Of them 8 are working on this shift in the mine. 7 men came on the last night shift and the other 9 are resting. The 24 includes 4 women also. If I tell the 9 men to come to-night they will come, otherwise some of them will stay behind. I filled 6 tubs last night. Last night we took coal out from above the band of stone and loaded it into the tub. We have to take the tubs from here to where it meets the haulage way. It is about 300 feet. I get As. 8 a tub. The money is divided equally among us. Everyone who comes gets the same whether he is a man or a woman. The 8 men working to-day include me. Of the 7 who were working yesterday 6 are here now. Some of the 9 who did not come either last night or this morning are away in their villages. The village is about 6 miles off. There is no woman in the 8 who are working at present. The women who were working yesterday did not come to-day. The boy who is working with us gets the same share as an adult. This boy has been working here for 3 years. His name is Jamruddin Meyar. All the men are able to cut coal except the boy. The men here came of their own accord in the morning. I did not call them. I never told anybody not to come. There is work enough for all those who are here. We do not get as many tubs as we want because the distances are long. If we do not get tubs we sit down and wait and then go home. I came at 8 o'clock this morning. We have filled 5 tubs up to now (3-45 p.m.) We will work till 7 and then go home at 8 o'clock. The reason why we cannot fill as many tubs as some other miners is that the work is much more difficult here and the distance is greater. We have been asking for higher rates but our rates were reduced by one anna about a year ago. At 8 o'clock we start off and get here at 10 o'clock. It takes us nearly an hour to get here. We are not allowed to start work before 10 o'clock. After 8 o'clock we are not allowed to work and they test the roof. I got Rs. 2 last week. Mauji (another worker) got Rs. 2-4-0 the week before last for 5 days' work. He got Rs. 1-14-0 last week for 6 days' work. Mauji looked after the work yesterday when I was not here. We were all living together and I collected about 10 men and so I became a *sardar*. I have been here about 7 or 8 years. When the rates were not reduced I got as much as Rs. 4 a week at the most."

Statement by *Gangia Kamin, wife of Ghansham with her husband.*

"I am a loader. I have been working since childhood. I worked 2 or 3 days this week. I have 5 children. The smallest is about 2 years. My husband gets the money: I do not know how much he gets. I got Rs. 4-8-0 when my child was born. The head clerk gave it. When the last baby was born I stayed away 3 months before the birth and 6 months after the birth. The eldest chap looks after the others while I am in the mine. We have no land of our own. Those who do full amount of work get land. We have one *bigha* of land belonging to the Company. We each got Rs. 2-3-0 for 5 days' work last Sunday."



Statement by *Kailumia*, a trolleyman.

"Formerly we used to work in three shifts and used to get As. 12½ for each shift. Now we have two shifts and get As. 9 for 12 hours day. The reduction was made about a year ago. Those who come at night do 12 hours work also. We work 6 days in the week. When the miners go out they leave the tubs full here and I have to send them up. I work alternately on day and night shifts. Formerly there were 12 men doing this work. Now there are 8 men. If we go away at 7 o'clock half the *hazira* is cut off by the contractor. I have been working in this colliery for 3 or 4 years. When we complain to the contractor he does not listen to us and when we go to the manager he does not listen either. I work in front of the engine."

Statement by *Kudirat Meyan*, a trolleyman.

"I have been working here 9 or 10 years. Since the rates of the contractor were cut we changed from three to two shifts. That was about a year ago. There were three men at this corner formerly and there are two now. The one is myself and the other two are Akbar Meyan and Chattu Gho. Now Chattu Gho is in his house. He works at another point. I came here at 10 o'clock. We came at 10 and we can leave as soon as we have loaded the tubs after the miners have left. On the night shift we come at 10 o'clock and leave at 9 o'clock in the morning. The haulage is stopped when the trolleyman are out."

(The witnesses withdrew. The Commission adjourned to Calcutta.)

# BIHAR AND ORISSA

## EIGHTY-FIRST MEETING.

### JAMSHEDPUR

Friday, 21st February 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E., (*presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, BART.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Sir IBRAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,  
C.I.E.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt. Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

} *Joint Secretaries.*

**Mr. H. HOMI, President, and Mr. H. H. SHARMA, Joint Secretary, (accompanied by Mr. MANGAL SING and Mr. AZIMUDDIN), of the Labour Federation.**

**D-3351.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Mr Homi, what has been your experience in connection with Jamshedpur?—I have been in Jamshedpur for about 15 years. I was working for the Tata Iron and Steel Company for about 5 years; then I went abroad; in 1923 I returned; then I gave evidence before the Tariff Board; and since 1926 I have been practising here as a lawyer. In 1928 my help was sought by the workmen in respect of their troubles with the Company, and since then I have been connected with the movement.

**D-3352.** What has been your experience, Mr. Sharma?—I have been here since 1927, practising as a lawyer. My help was sought during the labour troubles in June 1928. Since then I have been connected with the labour movement.

**D-3353.** What has been your experience, Mr. Azimuddin?—(Mr. Azimuddin) I have been here for the last 17 years. I am employed in the Accounts Department of the Tata Iron and Steel Company.

**D-3354.** What has been your experience, Mr. Mangal Sing?—(Mr. Mangal Sing) I have worked in the Electrical department as a fitter since 1922.

**D-3355.** When was your Union started?—(Mr. Homi)? On September 16, 1928.

**D-3356.** When was it recognized by the Company?—On the 8th March, 1929. It was registered in January 1929.

**D-3357.** Are you affiliated to the Trade Union Congress or to the Trade Union Federation?—We are not affiliated to any body as yet.

**D-3358.** What is your membership?—(Mr. Sharma): About 9,000 paying members and about 3,000 non-paying members.

**D-3359.** Will you let us have a copy of your constitution and also a copy of your latest accounts?—(Mr. Homi): Yes.

**D-3360.** Does your membership cover only workers in the Tata Iron and Steel Company, or does it cover other workers?—We have recently enrolled members from the Tinsplate Company as well.

**D-3361.** What type of people does your membership represent?—It represents only actual manual workers and none of the supervising or clerical staff.

**D-3362.** What is the proportion between skilled and unskilled workers?—(Mr. Sharma): There are about 3,000 unskilled workers. About 8,000 of the paying members are classed as skilled and semi-skilled labourers.

**D-3363.** Does your Union include unskilled labour of the class of the aboriginal workers?—Yes.

**D-3364.** Referring to the aborigines you say in your memorandum, " Given a preference they would revert to their native soils ". What do you mean by that?—(Mr. Homi): If they did not want to supplement their income by manual work they would not come to the factories.

**D-3365.** Do you think, as they have to work in factories, provision should be made for them periodically to return to their homes for one, two or three months?—At present there is no other alternative in the present state of industrial organization in India because most of these people are not very big landholders and they must supplement their income from the land by working in factories.

**D-3366.** You say, " A central employment bureau was substituted with, according to labour view point, very little change or success ". What do you mean by that?—The institution of a central employment bureau by the Company did not conduce, according to the labour view point, to any particular change in respect of the prevailing abuses. Many feel that preference is still given in respect of the securing of jobs. Also it does not lead to very great confidence with the foremen to whom the workmen are sent, because the foreman feels that some body else has sent a man which he himself would not take. Therefore

there are troubles between the foreman and the man who has been sent. Then again men are sent back as unsuitable who, if the foreman had employed them himself, would have been classed as suitable. Under those circumstances it cannot be said that the change has led to any success.

**D-3367.** I see that for 7,000 vacancies there were between 9,000 and 10,000 applications. Is it not advisable to have an employment bureau under those circumstances. If there are 10,000 applicants for 7,000 jobs, do you not think it would be a good idea to have an employment bureau in order to select the most suitable men?—There is always a good and a bad side to every question. The employment bureau, constituted as it is here, is in the hands of a person in whom the labour has very little confidence. He is a man who is ordinarily called "*Chor Sahib*" a thief catcher.

**D-3368.** You do not mean he is a thief himself?—No, but he goes by that name. He was at one time a Labour Inspector.

**D-3369.** *Mr. Joshi:* Was he not in the Forest Department?—Yes, which Department he had to leave. Then he was employed by the Steel Company as Labour Inspector. As such his duty was to sneak around different places to see whether the workmen were asleep or whether they were working, and reporting against them. He also used to meddle in the domestic affairs of individuals trying to settle quarrels. That led him into a very bad position. Then the Company put him in charge of the employment bureau. He also acts as Hotel Superintendent. Generally any kind of work that has to be done is entrusted to him.

**D-3370.** You state about workers having recourse to politicians in the neighbourhood "who put a totally different complexion on the struggle. False issues are raised". Further you say. "We have known cases where industrial disputes have degenerated into political tussles." What is it you have in view when you say that?—I find that where employers are stiff in their attitude towards meeting the workmen in their struggles, these men, like drowning men clutching at straws, try to have recourse to anybody who can possibly help them. Politicians are generally very prone and quick to catch hold of any mass of men who they might try to help. Generally what sort of help is rendered is best known to them, but is not always of a very happy nature. Where material assistance has not been rendered by these politicians in respect of the alleviation of their sufferings or remedying their wrongs, they try to raise all kinds of political issues such as "It is the foreigners who are ruling the country."

**D-3371.** Have you any particular Union in view when you say that?—Not only one Union, but from reading the newspapers of various troubles in India I have come to this deduction, and one very nearer at home—the Tinplate situation.

**D-3372.** There are two Unions prominently mentioned here in connection with Jamshedpur. What attitude, do you suggest, it is

possible for employers to take with regard to both Unions. Do you think that recognition should be given to both Unions?—If that was the view point, I cannot see any point in the Company refusing to grant recognition to this Labour Federation. It was the strongest Union which the Company had.

**D-3373.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What is your view?—I say that when it is a question of according recognition to any Unions that come forward I do not see any point in the Company refusing us recognition. Now the Company says : “ we are prepared to recognize any Union which comes forward.” I do not know how far they are sincere, but because we asked them to withdraw the recognition of the old Union, which was a very small Union, both in respect of membership and importance, the Company threw up its hands in righteous indignation and said “ we cannot do that because we have extended recognition to it, and we are prepared to recognize any Union that may be formed.” Time will tell whether they are sincere in that view point.

**D-3374.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : The other Union was in existence. Therefore if your suggestion, that they should recognize only one Union, had been acted upon by the Company, they would not be able to recognize your Union?—Then the Company would have acted accordingly in a false sense, because a Union to be recognized must be a Union that consists of a good majority of the employees. If out of 20,000 workmen 10,000 were in a particular Union, the Company would be very wrong in withholding recognition from that Union.

**D-3375.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is it your view that the Company should recognize only the Union which happens to be a strong one, or is it your view that they should recognize any Union which is registered, whether strong or not?—What Union do you mean? There is a Clerical Union, a Foremen's Union and a Workmen's Union.

**D-3376.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : It is a question of the Unions generally?—If there is a Clerical Union and the Company want to recognize it, let it do so. If there is a Workmen's Union side by side with the Clerical Union, the Company should recognize that. If there is a Foremen's Union side by side with that they should recognize that Union.

**D-3377.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Suppose there are two Workmen's Unions?—Then the Company should say which one is the strongest.

**D-3378.** It should also recognize one Union of each Branch?—It may, but where there is more than one Union of one particular branch, the Company must find out which is the strongest Union.

**D-3379.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Under the law, Unions are entitled to be registered, and if they are registered they are entitled to certain privileges. Do you suggest that if a properly constituted and properly registered Union representative of a section of workers in an industrial undertaking comes up to the employers, the onus is

on the employer to recognise it or not according to the total number of the workers in it?—Yes.

**D-3380.** *Miss Power* : May we know on that whether the paid and unpaid membership should count?—There are very few unpaid members.

**D-3381.** I want your view on the principle. Should an employer evaluate the strength of a Union by the combination of its paying and non-paying members, or by its paying members only?—I do not think there are any non-paying members.

**D-3382.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : In some Unions there are. You do not propose to count non-paying members?—No. The full membership of the Union should be counted.

**D-3383.** Whether paying or non-paying?—That is a question for the Union itself to decide.

**D-3384.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : What are the relations between your Union and the Tata Iron and Steel Company?—At present they are not very happy.

**D-3385.** What have you been endeavouring to do as a Union during the past year for the benefit of the workers?—Twelve-month is too short a period to do any good for the workmen, especially with the types of grievances and troubles which they have. A great deal of correspondence has been going backwards and forwards, but the Company moves very slowly.

**D-3386.** Is your Union friendly disposed towards the employers at the moment?—The Union does not display any tendency except one of friendliness towards the Company.

**D-3387.** You say, "Government's neutrality has been seriously questioned and it is open to doubt whether in the struggles between labour and capital in this country in its present state of development it can or should remain neutral". At what stage do you think Government ought to intervene?—At every stage when there is a likelihood of a trouble or when the trouble is on.

**D-3388.** When does Government know when there is a likelihood of a trouble arising. We hear of a legitimate difference of opinion between workmen and employers on one day and we hear on the next day that the workers have withdrawn from employment. At what stage should Government intervene?—If the notice is too short for Government to intervene before the struggle is on, then it should intervene just when the struggle is on.

**D-3389.** Do you not think there is a responsibility on the workmen to wait a little?—Yes, the workman will never lose by waiting. In fact the workman generally waits too long.

**D-3390.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : As regards the point of paying and non-paying members of the Union, we have had cases where there have been two Unions existing for the same class of workmen, and in regard to which we have been told by one Union that some of their members originally belonged to another Union and now belonged to them. The workmen are non-paying to the old Union and they are paying to the new Union. It is suggested to us that there the workmen are paying to the Union of which they are members, they should not be considered members of the Union which they had joined previously. They have not sent in letters of resignation. They have merely not paid, and have joined the new Union. Would it not be rather difficult, if you include non-paying members, to find out the real strength of two rival Unions?—I do not think there is any difficulty in trying to put matters on a definite basis. Have you Jamshedpur in mind?

**D-3391.** No; I am thinking of the Railway in which there are two rival Unions, where the workmen have admittedly not sent in resignations. They say that it is not the custom to do so. They merely do not pay. Would your position not be stronger if you said "We ask you to recognize the Union with the largest number of paying members"?—It is difficult for me to say what would be the position between paying and non-paying members, but I think it should be the Union's duty to make its position clear beyond any question by satisfying themselves that the members definitely belonged to the Union.

**D-3392.** Do you not think it is a little difficult to expect a member to be the real member of your Union if he will not even pay the usual dues?—I think each member should pay his dues.

**D-3393.** Ought you not to say that if a member has not paid his dues for a period of six months he shall cease to be a member; or would you prefer to retain his name in order to swell your nominal membership?—In our Union we have a rule that members automatically cease to be members if they fail to pay their dues for three months.

**D-3394.** Some Unions have not that rule. Therefore perhaps you would be agreeable to say that membership should count by the number of members who have paid?—Yes. The real membership should be that of members who pay. As a general proposition, I feel that persons who pay should be regarded as members.

**D-3395.** In your memorandum you make a remark which I have not seen before in a union's memorandum. You say: "We fully realise the handicaps the employers have at present moment in the shape of insecurity of tenure of his workmen". By that I take it you mean that you realise the difficulties of an employer when he does not know whether he can count on having a stable labour force?—*(Mr. Sharma)*: Yes. *(Mr. Homi)*: We want to be fair to both sides.

**D-3396.** Generally speaking, would you say that, on the whole, your Union has to a large degree been met by the administration of this Company?—It is difficult to say that we have been met “in a large degree”.

**D-3397.** They have put offices at your disposal?—We do not for a moment deny that they have offered us facilities.

**D-3398.** It appears that they have offered you facilities and met you in a way which has not been the case with other industries and with other Trade Unions. Generally speaking, would you say that this Company has been treating labour unions more favourably than is usually the case throughout the country?—I have no experience of other labour unions.

**D-3399.** We have been told that if unions were met on the lines on which this Company have met your Union, namely, direct access to the administration, that would in itself lead to a more cordial relationship between capital and labour, resulting in greater efficiency?—Yes.

**D-3400.** You have apparently in Jamshedpur those relationships which are asked for elsewhere. Would you say that, in consequence, the working efficiency of the men is more, and the likelihood of strikes is less, than in other industries which have not treated their unions as well as the Company here has treated yours?—(Mr. Sharma): We have only had a year's experience, so we cannot say.

**D-3401.** Take the previous relationship with the old Union: would you say that the efficiency of the men has risen in consequence of the administration treating directly with labour?—To some extent it has.

**D-3402.** You think the efficiency is better than it would have been if the administration had not had this close intercourse with the trade Union?—Yes.

**D-3403.** You ask for accommodation more consonant with modern thought, and you compare the conditions here with those of the work-people in America and so on. Would you say that, on the whole, the housing of the employees here is better or worse than that granted to employees by other industries in other parts of India?—(Mr. Homi): We have not gone into the housing conditions in other parts of India, and therefore cannot make a comparative statement.

**D-3404.** Would you say that labour here is better treated and better housed than it is in the mill industry in Bombay or in the Jute industry in Calcutta?—We cannot make such a comparative statement because we have no experience.

**D-3405.** You say “The sum total of these handicaps react very adversely on the moral tone of the workman and his family”, and you go on to say that the consequence is that ties of family life are loose.



Can you tell me whether they are looser here than they are in other industries?—We cannot say.

**D-3406.** You realise that this Commission has to deal with the conditions of India as a whole?—Yes.

**D-3407.** You suggest that the men should be supplied with towels and soap, but I notice from the Company's memorandum that towels and soap are supplied for the women?—Since when, and how many women have taken advantage of it?

**D-3408.** It says: "13,000 to 14,000 women use this rest house every month and they are supplied with soap and towels?—It is news to us.

**D-3409.** I notice you also ask for bands. Do you think the supply of bands will stimulate the efficiency and activity of the workmen?—We do not mean that bands should be supplied for the purpose of producing more steel. We say that these amenities all help in the production of efficiency.

**D-3410.** You do not think it is very important?—Certainly not.

**D-3411.** Again in your memorandum you say, "that employer does not need to exist who cannot take care of his employees". I suppose you do not suggest that this industry should be favoured over the rest of the workers in the country?—No.

**D-3412.** You will admit that this is essentially an agricultural country and the number of workers employed in industry is a small percentage of the total workers of the country?—Yes.

**D-3413.** Do you suggest that comparatively small percentage should be placed in a better position than the majority of their compatriots?—Why not start with a small number?

**D-3414.** You will admit that in regard to wages, housing, workmen's compensation and the general amenities of life the industrial workers of this country are in a better position than the agricultural workers?—Yes.

**D-3415.** You appear to be desiring to raise the standard of the part of the community which is already better off?—The Labour Union which we represent deals with them.

**D-3416.** *Mr. Ahmed:* You say that a number of your members do not pay their subscriptions; is that so because they have gone home to their villages?—No; that discrepancy is due to the fact that the Company made alterations in their ticket numbers and we were not supplied with the altered ticket numbers; that led to great confusion; we could not trace them for quite a long while.

**D-3417.** This is an agricultural country and the industrial workers are mainly agriculturists. The employers apparently take shelter behind that as their sheet-anchor and their cry is that the members of

the union do not pay their subscriptions?—That is not our complaint; our workmen, whether they go to their villages or not, pay their dues. Some men come here with the intention of spending all their time in this industry, while others only come here to supplement their incomes.

**D-3418.** What was the difference that led to the tinsplate strike?—There were certain questions on which the workers felt they had a difference; I did not think it was necessary to have a stoppage on those differences, but some members of the union thought otherwise and precipitated a crisis.

**D-3419.** Did the workers put forward any demands?—As far as I know nothing was put before the Company.

**D-3420.** There were no legitimate grievances of the workers such as would justify a strike?—There may have been justifiable grievances but there was nothing so acute as to necessitate a stoppage of work.

**D-3421.** Then what was the reason of the strike?—I suppose the union officials know better than I do.

**D-3422.** But you are President of this Federation?—I was President of the Tinsplate Union also. It is rather a long story and I do not know whether the Chairman is able to give me the necessary time to explain it all.

*Mr. Ahmed:* You can deal with it shortly. (*The witness.*) I could not give a correct idea of the whole situation if I dealt with it shortly.

**D-3423.** Were not the wages paid to the tinsplate workers a little lower than the wages paid to other workers?—Some people thought so; they compared the wages of the tinsplate workers with those of the sheet mill workers of the Tata's Company. The sheet mill work is heavier and more arduous than the tinsplate work, and therefore I suppose it is quite right that the wages should be higher.

**D-3424.** What is the position of the workers with regard to indebtedness?—It is very bad; I should say 50 or 60 per cent. of the workers are indebted.

**D-3425.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* I understand there are many co-operative credit societies here?—Yes, each department has a co-operative credit society.

**D-3426.** So that, it would appear that the Company are attempting to deal with the problem of indebtedness?—That is so, but it has not yet got to the root of the evil; the societies have not much capital and have not been able to meet the needs of the members.

**D-3427.** The societies seem to be collecting a lot of money here?—Quite likely, but you must remember there are a large number of workers here.

**D-3428.** *Mr. Ahmed:* Do you think the Government of Bihar and Orissa should increase the strength of the Co-operative Department?—I find the Co-operative Department here is anxious to give any help they can in order to start new societies and stores.

**D-3429.** Do you think the employers might assist these societies by making loans at low rates of interest?—Yes, that would be helpful, but I doubt whether it would eradicate the evil of indebtedness.

**D-3430.** *Mr. Cliff:* You do not deal with strikes in your memorandum?—The Labour Federation has not yet called a strike, so that it is difficult for us to give an opinion on that subject; it is only a year old.

**D-3431.** My information is that you have taken a leading part in strikes which have occurred in this place?—Yes, but that was before the Labour Federation was formed.

**D-3432.** How is the Executive Committee of the Labour Federation constituted?—It is given in the rules and regulations of the Federation.

**D-3433.** Does your Executive Committee deal with the direction and conduct of any movement?—It should; that is its duty.

**D-3434.** Do they do that as a Federation?—Yes.

**D-3435.** What are the shops or departmental committees of which you speak in your memorandum?—These shop committees were instituted with the co-operation of the management in various departments; they are different from the Executive Committee. Each shop committee consists of 7 members, 4 being nominated by the Labour Federation from the actual workers in that department and 3 nominated by the Company also from actual workers in the department. No foreman or member of the clerical staff is nominated. They elect their own chairman and a clerk is supplied by the Company to take minutes of the proceedings. Any grievance of any individual workman of that department is sent for consideration by that committee through the General Manager. We are only permitted to correspond directly through the General Manager. It goes from the General Manager to the General Superintendent; from him it goes to the Department of Superintendents; from there it goes to the Department of Foremen, and then this shop committee considers the matter, coming to a decision and communicating its finding to the management, which the management is not in any way bound to accept. If the shop committee finds that a man was not at fault, though the Company had dealt with him as though he were, the management still insists on having its own way. Then the man has a right of appeal to what is called Board A, which is composed of 2 representatives of the Labour Federation who are not workers and 2 representatives nominated by the Company. These four persons consider the matter and arrive at their decision. If their decision is in favour of the man, the management is not bound to accept it, it still has its own way.

**D-3436.** How long has this system been in operation?—Since July or August last.

**D-3437.** You say in your memorandum : “ it can safely be said that they have not been found unsatisfactory so far ”?—This was written in September; we had great hopes of this; but then the members of these shop committees sent in their resignations, saying it was impossible for them to remain on these shop committees, because, no matter what decisions they arrived at, the management had its own way, and it was no use discussing these matters.

**D-3438.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Did such a matter ever go right up to the top?—Yes, in two cases.

**D-3439.** What was the result then?—In one case the man was put back in his job though not in the same place nor on the same rate; it was merely recommended that the man should be given some work, that is all. Where the President of the Labour Federation and the General Manager could not arrive at any sort of understanding on any particular case we felt it was no use arguing further. In one case we reached agreement. (*Mr. Sharma*) : In the second case the General Manager gave his definite decision which he would not reconsider and we thought it useless to put it before Board B again.

**D-3440.** *Mr. Cliff* : I take it in that case you did not use the machinery?—(*Mr. Homi*) : No, we thought it was useless in that case.

**D-3441.** What do you mean when you say in your memorandum that one of the handicaps to these committees is “ Interference from the Superintendent of the department or of the Foreman ”?—It has been reported to us that some of the Superintendents busy themselves telling the workmen who are members of the committee that if any decision is arrived at contrary to the decision of the Superintendent, it will not be very healthy for them.

**D-3442.** Have you raised that matter with the General Manager?—Yes, we have.

**D-3443.** What has been the result?—It has never come to a show-down in the form of an investigation.

**D-3444.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What did he say to you?—That it was very unlikely that such a thing should happen.

**D-3445.** *Mr. Cliff* : Why does this machinery not work?—The machinery does not work in the first instance because the members of the shop committee say it is useless for them to discuss these matters because in no case is any reply vouchsafed to them as to what the decision of the Manager is; secondly, they say that when they come to know what the decision of the management is, it is invariably contrary to the decision of the committee. They feel it is useless for them to go on.

**D-3446.** What alternative do you suggest?—We feel there is considerable scope for the work of these committees, but rules and regulations should be made and adhered to. In the first place we did not frame any rules or regulations because we wanted to see how these committees would work in actual practice and we desired to frame rules and regulations in the light of experience. But we felt that the management never wanted to bind itself to any rules or regulations; it wanted to have as wide a discretion as possible.

**D-3447.** When you speak of rules and regulations you mean the procedure to be adopted?—Yes.

**D-3448.** Is that not a matter for the Union to settle direct with the management?—Yes, but we found that the management were not willing to come to any terms in that respect; we have frequently had talks on this matter and have not come to any solution.

**D-3449.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: This committee system was evidently introduced at the instance of the Labour Federation?—Yes.

**D-3450.** You have not given it up in despair yet?—No, we have not given it up; we feel that in modern industrial development these shops committees would be the best thing both for the workmen and the management of any industry in getting rid of strikes and labour troubles.

**D-3451.** *Mr. Cliff*: Does that mean that you intend to stick to this machinery?—Yes, we do.

**D-3452.** But you are seeking to have some rules of procedure established?—Yes.

**D-3453.** How long does it take for a case to go from the first committee to the final board?—Quite a lot of time. In some cases it is quick but in others it takes quite a lot of time. We correspond directly with the management; the General Manager sends it down to the General Superintendent; the General Superintendent sends it down to the Department of Superintendents. We find that great delay occurs there; no doubt they have other work to do, but this is not a matter which can be neglected. (*Mr. Sharma*): A man was discharged on the 6th August, 1927. We put that case before the shop committee. The case is still going on. The first shop committee meeting was held on the 30th December, 1929, and it has not arrived at any decision yet. (*Mr. Homi*): A man was discharged from the blooming mill department on the 26th October. We urged that his case should be put before the shop committee. There was a sort of shop committee in existence. We had reasons to complain that the man particularly concerned in dismissing that man was taking a very lively interest in the working of that shop committee and we protested to the management about it. We felt constrained to stand upon our rights with regard to the constitution of that shop committee and had a new shop committee appointed, the management agreeing to that. The shop

committee is considering that case. Members have complained that the witnesses are not being sent and it is very much felt that an effort is being made to tutor those witnesses. Not only has there been that pressure, but undue delay has been caused by that. From the 26th October till to-day, the 21st February, the matter has not been disposed of.

**D-3454.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : The matter is still in the first stage ; it is still before the committee consisting of four members—Yes. We have suggested that in these cases a date should be fixed ; if by that date no witnesses are forthcoming, it should be decided in favour of the man. We wrote to the company several times making that suggestion, but the matter has not yet been disposed of.

**D-3455.** *Mr. Cliff* : What machinery do you suggest to prevent lock-outs and strikes?—When two parties do not agree, I suppose it is necessary that a third party should intervene. Presumably that third party would be Government. Certain machinery is provided under the Trade Disputes Act. It is not certain at what stage Government should intervene, but when we sent our representations to Government with regard to the Trade Disputes Bill we suggested that if Government received from either side notice of an impending labour trouble anywhere Government should immediately proceed to constitute a conciliation board or a board of enquiry under the Trade Disputes Act and take steps before the matter came to a stoppage of work.

**D-3456.** Does that mean that members of your union would be prepared to accept the decision of a court of enquiry or a conciliation board?—I suppose if the claim is just and the finding is just there ought not to be trouble.

**D-3457.** Justice depends upon your point of view, but would you be prepared to accept the findings of a court of enquiry?—It is a difficult problem looking at it from an academic point of view. It has to be seen what are the practical implications and how it stands. Each case has to be considered on its merits.

**D-3458.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Would you be prepared to recommend to your union that in the event of a court of enquiry or conciliation board being set up they should await its decision?—Certainly.

**D-3459.** And that they should not precipitate matters?—Yes.

**D-3460.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do you think that all over India the men would agree to such a procedure?—It all depends on what confidence the men have in their own labour union ; where the union does not really represent labour, they would not accept it.

**D-3461.** *Mr. Cliff* : I understand you were vitally concerned in the tinplate dispute?—Not as President of the union ; my relations with the union ceased immediately on the workmen going on strike.

**D-3462.** Will you tell us the history of the Tata dispute?—Yes, I will tell you what I know about the affair. There were sporadic troubles and strikes in the various departments of Tatas from February, 1928. The first time I appeared on the scene was on the 12th April, 1928, when I addressed a meeting. The agitation was mostly with reference to the old trade union, the Labour Association. My advice then was that if the old trade union did not assist the workers they should throw out the executive and put in a new one. In that same month some boiler men and sheet mill men, numbering about 1,600, went out. They came to me after they had gone out. The boiler men came first and then the sheet mill men. I sent them to the old Labour Association to which they belonged. The old Labour Association told them they would not be able to take up their work. Then meetings were held to agitate for their grievances. I tried to get in touch with the Company in order to put their view-point before the Company; in fact, about March I wrote a letter to the General Manager about the troubles of certain men who had come out and had come to me after they had gone out. As an outside man I wrote to the General Manager asking for an interview in which I could explain their troubles and attempt to effect a compromise. I got no reply to that; I did not even receive an acknowledgment of that letter. Then about the beginning of May, when the boiler situation was very acute, the Company declared a partial lock-out with reference to certain mill workmen because it could not run the mills. So about 4,000 or 5,000 men were thrown out of work; they did not know how long they would be out or whether they should stay here or go to their homes; the Company had not settled with them either. So I led a deputation of these men to the Deputy Commissioner with a view to considering what they should do. They wanted to have a settlement, but the Company refused to give them a settlement of all the money, the men had in the Company in the form of provident fund, wages, notice pay and so on. Then the Company served a notice of dismissal on the 8th May against all workmen of the boiler and sheet mills departments, dismissing altogether about 1,600 men. I felt that that was not the right thing for the Company to do, and I led the agitation. I got all the other workmen out on the 23rd May. As a warning to the Company I got them to stop work for 24 hours. I did all this on my own responsibility. The workmen stopped work for 24 hours; 90 or 92 per cent. of the workmen were out. I felt that a demonstration of that nature would be enough to show the Company the extent of the agitation and grievance in the minds of the workmen and that they might come to some sort of arrangement with the workmen. That did not move the Company at all, so on the succeeding Friday, a week after, we declared a stoppage of work for 48 hours and the workmen all willingly participated in that. The Company then declared a lock-out on the 1st June. At the end of the 48 hours they all presented themselves at work at the gate but they were sent back. Then the trouble began in right earnest. The Company refused to correspond

or negotiate with me, though the workmen said I was their legitimate spokesman. Over and above that, they went to the length of saying they would not deal with Mr. Homi or any body connected in any way with the old Labour Association. The result was that this trouble was long drawn out. On the 10th or 11th July the Company declared the lock-out at an end and said they would take in such workmen as presented themselves for work, but they would only take those workmen whose names did not appear on the reduction list. We set our faces against any sort of reduction by the Company, and that prolonged the trouble. On the 10th July the Company had very little success in getting any workmen in. This trouble continued until about the middle of September. What I am about to say will illustrate what I have said about workmen having recourse to politicians. We secured the assistance of Mr. Bose, who was the President of the Bengal Congress Committee. We got him here to make an appeal to such of the Bengali workers who were working to come out and keep with the other workmen so that the Company's works would stand still and the Company would come to terms. Mr. Bose came here on the 18th August and made an appeal to the workmen; on the 20th August practically all the Bengalis left work. I think there were about 2,000 or 3,000 working inside the plant as well as quite a lot of office staff from the general offices. They all left work on the 20th August. During the course of this trouble I made two unsuccessful attempts with the Company in Bombay at negotiation or arbitration. In July some prominent men in Bombay made a proposal for arbitration and I accepted it without reservation. The matter awaited the Company's acceptance but the Company gave no reply to that arbitration proposal. That was somewhere in July. Just before Mr. Bose came on the 18th August, I had been to Bombay in the beginning of August on the invitation of Mr. Mehta, who is a Member of the Legislative Assembly. A conference was held with two Directors of the Tata Company, myself and Mr. Mehta. The proposition was put to me that I should accept a 10 per cent. reduction. I kept the matter pending and refused to accept that. I also consulted Mr. Joshi, who is a member of your Commission. We felt that partial reduction could never be accepted in any industrial trouble, because you can never get the workmen to accept any such arrangement, because no body knows who will be affected by the reduction. No men were specified; it was merely 10 per cent. It was too broad a proposition. They began to ascribe all sorts of motives to me for rejecting that term. I came here, got Mr. Bose here, got the Bengali element out and the struggle continued. This was in July. After that, somewhere about September, some of the Directors came to Jamshedpur. The arrangement between me and Mr. Bose was that in any negotiations that should take place Mr. Bose should take me along with him and a group of workers who were working with me. I do not know what happened, but Mr. Bose put me off from day to day, and he finally faced me with certain terms which he said he had agreed to and signed and sealed. I was very much surprised.



That was on the 11th September. The Directors went away from here on the 8th September. Mr. Bose said that nothing had been done, no terms had been arranged, that everything had fallen through. Then we went through the terms; we were discussing the terms that he had brought from the Directors. We never knew that he was dealing with the Tata Iron and Steel Company as President of the Labour Association; that was never known to us. If he had ever said that he was treating with the Tata Iron and Steel Company as President of the Labour Association we should never have supported him and would never have permitted him to carry on. We never knew about that until I saw a statement in the "Times of India" that Mr. C. A. Alexander, General Manager of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Limited, and Mr. S. C. Bose, President of the Labour Association, had been able to effect a certain settlement of the strike. We were discussing the terms that he brought and we fell foul of him on two important issues; one was regarding the workers' right to form their own association without any let, hindrance or interference by the Company, and another was on the subject of lock-out wages. Mr. Bose refused to take into consideration any one of those propositions.

**D-3463.** Do you mean with regard to the first point that he compromised the right to form an association without let or hindrance from the employers?—Yes, whether the employers had any right to refuse recognition to any association the workers chose to form, and whether the employers had any right to say who the executive or office-bearers of the workers' organization should be. Mr. Bose said nothing about it. We fell foul on those two questions. When we put it to the workmen I thought it my duty not to interfere at that stage, and I let the workmen take their own decision; I did not even attend the meeting at which he was putting these terms to the workmen, but half-way through the workmen came over and forcibly took me to the meeting. All the advice I could give them then was to wait for 24 hours, patiently go through the terms and see whether they could accept them or not. The next day I had a meeting. If I had desired to keep the workmen out, I could have done so on that day also, but I asked them to stick to their work, with this reservation, that when we had the opportunity and the power we would fight for both of these and get them. Two or three days later we formed this Labour Federation. I think that meeting was on the 13th, and we formed the Labour Federation on the 16th. A letter was duly sent to the Tata Iron and Steel Company and we asked for recognition. No reply was given to us. Then we launched a campaign to obtain recognition from the Company; that was some time in December. The Company's reply was in the form of a injunction suit to restrain us from what they considered to be inducing their workmen to commit certain breaches of contract, although there was no contract at all, and suing us for damages for certain loss they had sustained. We continued to fight this suit also. Then the situation became very acute somewhere about February. On March 8th we received recognition. As a result of that

recognition: the suit was withdrawn. Certain workers who had been fighting for recognition of the Labour Federation had been dismissed. Fortunately that did not cow the workers. Then these workmen were taken back. The Company paid 1½ months' pay. We said we assumed that was lock-out wages, and that the correct period was from the 1st June to the 10th July. If we fought it out I felt sure we should get payment up-to-date, and if we made a further effort we should get 8 to 10 days more, because it had not been specified who were to be the workmen who would be affected by this proposed reduction and therefore they had stayed out. These are niceties of law which need not be discussed here, but we felt that this 1½ months' wages that the Company had given should be regarded as lock-out wages and that the reductions which the Company were making in respect of January and February should be stopped immediately. The Company very kindly agreed to that and said that the question should be left pending for two months. The same thing was done with regard to the workmen who had been dismissed: they were given their pay, and the same condition was given that they also would be considered later on. Since then the Labour Federation has been carrying on its work.

**D-3464.** *Col. Russell*: Under Housing you say in your memorandum: "Private agency has not received any kind of encouragement from the Steel Company either by way of guaranteed returns to the capitalist or providing facilities to small money holders". What do you mean by that?—I mean that the Steel Company is getting its houses built through a certain fixed number of contractors, three or four of them, and that the Steel Company spends its own money. We suggest it should encourage private agencies such as housing societies or other limited corporations or private persons who would invest money in building houses and to whom a return on their money would be guaranteed. Of course no guarantee would be necessary in many cases because the houses would be occupied and the rents paid would afford a return on the capital invested.

**D-3465.** You say: "The Company's scheme of helping the employees desirous of building their own houses has not proved much of a success". The Company in their memorandum say: "Total building loans given up to the 31st March, 1929, were Rs. 2,02,967".—Those few lakhs have not solved the housing problem; still there are about 50 per cent. without houses.

**D-3466.** Why have more workers not taken loans?—Because there is very great trouble in getting these loans and in getting areas allotted. There is also too much interference from land and town officers which causes the workers to desist from going in for their own houses.

**D-3467.** Has your Federation taken any steps to improve the conditions under which loans may be obtained?—We have made suggestions to the Company but the Company has not seen its way to accept our proposals. We have suggested that certain areas should be

given to us for building quarters, but the Company has refused to give it in the name of the Federation.

**D-3468.** Again you say that one house has to accommodate a family with one or 20 members. Are there families of 20 members in Tata's Company?—People come from different places hunting for jobs and stay with the people here. There may also be occasional visitors.

**D-3469.** Do you suggest that Tata's Company should provide additional accommodation for any number of relatives of workers that like to come along and stay here?—We have never suggested that.

**D-3470.** But that is the implication?—For instance, one man may have 15 to 20 members in his family while another may have only 2 or 3 members. While allotting quarters no consideration to the number of family members is given, but only the question of service and rate are taken into consideration.

**D-3471.** Is it possible for a company to cater for variations in family numbers such as these?—I think so.

**D-3472.** You say that water supply is hopelessly inadequate. The company in their memorandum say: "The town has an up-to-date Paterson Filter Plan which has capacity of four million gallons of good filtered water per day." Taking the population as 100,000 that comes to 40 gallons per head per day. Do you think that 40 gallons per head per day is hopelessly inadequate?—I do not care whether it is 4 million gallons or 40 million gallons, but the fact remains that the *bustis* are without water.

**D-3473.** After 40 gallons per head has been provided?—In the Northern Town, people may be getting 400 gallons while people in the *bustis* may be getting only 4 gallons.

**D-3474.** Is that what you mean?—There are various *bustis* that are without water. I do not care whether other people get water or not, but I want that all the *bustis* should get a sufficient supply of water.

**D-3475.** You have made a suggestion, I think, in another part of your memorandum that wells might be sunk?—Yes, but the Company do not want to accept the scheme of sinking wells as it is very expensive.

**D-3476.** I understand that in at least 50 per cent. of the area of Jamshedpur there is no water even supposing you sunk wells?—About Sonari I was told that water will not be available there even if they sunk wells, but I have seen people having wells in that area with about 10 or 12 feet of water.

**D-3477.** You say: "One would like to see an extension of these out-door patients treatment in some of the outlying *bustis*." Have the company not provided a number of outlying dispensaries?—In various *bustis*, no.

**D-3478.** Have you made any suggestions to the company where additional dispensaries might be provided?—In fact, we started one of our own and the Company was good enough to give us the facility of having prescriptions made out on our doctor's signature. That we started as an experiment in Sonari.

**D-3479.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Was it a success?—(Mr. Sharma) : In two months we got 1,000 patients. (Mr. Homi) ; If we get the same facilities from the Company, we hope to extend the experiment in due course.

**D-3480.** *Colonel Russell* : Further on you say : " we would like to see medical facilities brought to the very door of the sick and the ailing." Does that mean that the medical officers employed by the Company do not visit the sick?—If they are paid their fees they do.

**D-3481.** Is a sick employee not visited by the Company's doctor if he is too sick to go to the hospital or to the dispensary?—I do not think he is.

**D-3482.** Are you quite sure of that, because I have information from the Chief Medical Officer this morning that is done?—I do not think so.

**D-3483.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Can you speak with personal knowledge?—The medical officer may go into the towns, but as far as my information goes he does not go to the *bustis*.

**D-3484.** *Colonel Russell* : You do admit that a certain amount of visiting is done?—Yes, but it is done only in towns.

**D-3485.** Is it your point that the family of an employee should also have free medical treatment?—Yes. Because this town is laid out by the Company and the employees are brought in here, it is the duty of the Company to give medical facilities to the families of the employees as well. If it was in a city that the industry existed then, of course, it would be a different proposition.

**D-3486.** You say that facilities must be provided for private medical practitioners. Are they prevented from settling in the town here?—The Company is not in favour of private medical practitioners settling in towns.

**D-3487.** There are no private medical practitioners settled in the town here?—No.

**D-3488.** The Company would not admit them?—I do not think they will.

**D-3489.** Are you perfectly certain of that?—First of all, you can very well imagine that if a private practitioner came in he would have to prescribe. If he gives prescriptions nobody will dispense in the company's hospitals. If he started a dispensary of his own, the workmen would have to pay for medicines. When a worker could get

free medicine at the hospital he would not naturally like to go to a private practitioner.

**D-3490.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Your point therefore is not that the company would refuse to permit private practitioners settling in the town but that there are difficulties in the way of their settling down?—Yes.

**D-3491.** *Colonel Russell* : Is it your point also that the company do not employ sufficient medical practitioners?—I am not in a position to answer that.

**D-3492.** There are 23 medical officers at present?—I cannot say whether they are enough or not. (*Mr. Sharma*) : They are not enough for the *bustis* at least .

**D-3493.** As regards the question of women doctors and trained midwives, is there no woman medical officer in the whole town?—(*Mr. Homi*) : I think there is one at the main hospital.

**D-3494.** The Company in their memorandum give statistics which show that medical facilities are being increasingly used by women in the hospitals. For instance, they say that, in 1928, 27,000 women were treated. Do you still maintain that the numbers would increase much more rapidly if there was a woman medical officer employed?—We have written our memorandum with greater regard for the outlying *busti* than for the towns where a major portion of the workmen stay.

**D-3495.** What is your suggestion for reaching sick women and children in outlying *bustis*?—I think that each individual *busti* should be provided with a medical officer and a dispensary.

**D-3496.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How many would there be in a *busti*?—2,000 are living in Sonari, and the number living in Kasidih, Moulbera, Sakchi and so on may be practically the same.

**D-3497.** *Colonel Russell* : Generally speaking, you think that the medical relief given at present is not sufficient?—On the outlying *bustis*, no.

**D-3498.** Talking about sanitation and latrines you say : " There may be one latrine to several quarters or in others no latrine at all." Is it your suggestion that every quarter should have a latrine for itself?—Why should it not if it is desirable?

**D-3499.** Water supply being inadequate, do you think that it will be possible to keep these latrines in a clean condition?—Both should go hand in hand. Water supply should follow suit. I have been told that women in Sonari and other *bustis* go early at about 3 or 4 in the morning and then again only after 24 hours later.

**D-3500.** In your memorandum you say : " It would not be out of place to use a certain amount of moral suasion to enforce compulsory expert medical help just before and after child-birth." Do you think that Indian women, and even more so Indian men, would allow any

company who employs them to use even moral suasion to enforce compulsory attendance of midwives?—Only so far as the company's work women are concerned.

**D-3501.** Do you not think that that might lead to trouble?—No. With a little amount of enlightened propaganda work I think that would work well.

**D-3502.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* What you want is more of propaganda than of enforcement?—I have never said 'enforcement'; I have merely said : "moral suasion to enforce compulsory expert medical help."

**D-3503.** *Colonel Russell:* Dealing with the question of welfare you say that all welfare work should be administered by workers' agencies, and that it could be made a success only when administered through workers' agencies. You do not want the company to have any control over these agencies?—No.

**D-3504.** But you would require the company to provide you with money?—The company could have its own officers working along with workers' agencies.

**D-3505.** But you say that the work should be administered through workers' agencies?—That does not mean that the representatives of the company should be excluded.

**D-3506.** You would include the company's Welfare Officer?—Yes.

**D-3507.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Does that exist in any country in the world?—It may or may not, but that need not prevent us from adopting it here.

**D-3508.** *Miss Power:* You are against the *sardar* system and you say : " The best possible solution from a labour point of view, and we do not see why it should not be from employers point of view, is to establish an employment bureau in conjunction with a labour union that can render service both to labour and employer." Does that mean that only the workers of your labour union would be able to get employment through that bureau?—We have no unemployed workmen as our members; all our members are actual workers.

**D-3509.** I am asking you about the suggestion that the system of recruitment should be through a bureau run by a union?—I quite understand your point. Hundreds of people without any jobs come to us and ask us to afford them any facility by way of getting work. We felt that if we were in a position to do so it would tend to the company's good as well.

**D-3510.** You mean here in this particular city?—Yes.

**D-3511.** But on the question of employment generally, are you in favour of employment bureaux being run by unions?—I think the unions are better qualified people to run bureaux.

**D-3512.** Is it your contention that the bureau here is a failure because it is not run in conjunction with the union?—I should say it is one of the reasons.

**D-3513.** Does that employment bureau not consult the union in any way?—No, not at all.

**D-3514.** Dealing with the labour turn-over you say: "Leave is obtained for a certain fixed period and invariably overstay". It has been said to us by some workers' representatives that recognition of the principle of leave by employers would go a long way in obtaining a settled labour force. What solution have you got for the absence of discipline among workers to whom that concession is granted and who still on your own showing, invariably overstay their leave?—This is a common failing of the Indian worker. He will go on leave and overstay. This has been known all over the country.

**D-3515.** What solution have you for getting over that weakness of the worker which militates against any endeavour on the part of the employer to build up a stable labour force by recognizing the principle of leave?—If the worker overstays his leave even by 15 days it makes no difference to the employer because the employer is always in a position to ensure his work to be done.

**D-3516.** Do you seriously suggest that it makes no difference to the employer if a number of workers go on leave and invariably overstay their leave for 15 days?—Yes, it would not make much difference.

**D-3517.** Does it not mean that you would be compelling the employer to keep an extra labour force to allow for that eventuality?—Extra labour force does not mean extra expenditure, because the persons who overstay their leave are not paid for that period; they will be only paid for the period that is due to them.

**D-3518.** That is quite true, but still the extra labour force has to be there. Supposing it was not there?—By temporary employment that could be arranged for.

**D-3519.** You think that is a better arrangement than trying to discipline the workers and to make them realise the necessity for returning up to time?—It is a better solution and the only solution that is available at the present moment.

**D-3520.** You ask the employer to grant leave facilities even to the unskilled labourer but you do not suggest that the worker should be made to see that he has a moral obligation on his part not to overstay his leave?—He will overstay because he is wedded to his soil. There is no landless labourer who would look more to his job than to his land.

**D-3521.** Do you suggest that all the workers employed in this big city have their own land?—In India practically every man has a little piece of land.

**D-3522.** We have been repeatedly told in many places that as much as 60 per cent. of the workers in industrial cities are divorced from the land and are entirely depending upon their earnings in industry?—It is their experience; it is not ours.

**D-3523.** Dealing with the subject of welfare you said that welfare work should be run primarily by the workers. I think you know that in some States in America there are what are called 'mill villages' where all the workers employed in the mill live, and all welfare activities like housing, shopping facilities, schools, Churches and the like are run by the employer. There is a feeling on the part of the workers that everything—their human needs as well as their employment—comes from one source and in a crisis could be removed as easily as it is given. Is there any feeling here that the worker is unduly dependent on the employer as a result of living in a company town and obtaining everything from one source?—I do not know whether such a feeling exists or not, but it has been very strongly felt that for 3½ months in 1928 when the workers were out of jobs and several of them were practically starving, the Company did not even send out one wagon load of rations, or any milk, for the sustenance of the children of those workers. After the work started, the Company blossomed forth with its welfare work in the form of picnics and bioscope shows, and the workmen naturally felt that there was something fishy behind that.

**D-3524.** As far as living in a town, which is the possession of the employing company, is concerned, they have no objection to that?—In what way?

**D-3525.** In the way of living in a town where everything is the property of the company. Do they not wish to live independently of the company?—They would like to, but how could they?

**D-3526.** I am asking you whether there that feeling exists at all?—They would certainly like to live independently of the company if they could.

**D-3527.** Dealing with the employment of women you say: "As far as possible women should not be employed in factories where hard manual work has got to be done, and we are absolutely opposed to the employment of girls and adult women between the ages of 12 and 20." Are you referring here to the employment of women only in the steel works?—No. Our remark refers to all factories.

**D-3528.** Are you seriously contending that no woman up to the age of 20 should be in industrial employment in India?—Yes.

**D-3529.** You wish to adhere to that?—Yes.

**D-3530.** Dealing with the question of maternity benefits, is there any difficulty for the woman in obtaining benefits due to the absence of women doctors in hospitals here?—I have no knowledge of that.

**D-3531.** It is a part of the terms of obtaining maternity benefits that the women should be examined by a doctor?—I think very often



these people do not get themselves examined and applications for the benefit are not made until after the event.

**D-3532.** Are there any women members of your union?—Yes.

**D-3533.** How many of them are members?—1,200 to 1,500.

**D-3534.** Are they paying members or non-paying members?—They are paying members. They pay As. 4 weekly.

**D-3535.** Dealing with the question of crèches, I find that a number of women leave their babies in the Women's Rest House while on duty. Is there any actual crèche, run by the Company?—(Mr. Sharma): No, not to my knowledge.

**D-3536.** Is it your opinion that there is a need for a crèche?—Yes, for more than one crèche.

**D-3537.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You think they would be used?—Yes.

**D-3538.** *Miss Power*: You have said that the crèche should be run by the union, but what objection have you to its being run by the company provided a trained person is put in charge of it?—(Mr. Homi): I think the union is more likely to inspire confidence than the employer.

**D-3539.** You do not think that the trained woman can inspire confidence? How are the women likely to know whether the crèche is run by the union or by the Company?—The union can approach them frequently.

**D-3540.** Does the union propose to pay for the crèche?—If the union is in a financial position to do so it would pay, but if it is not in a position to pay then of course the burden should fall on the Company.

**D-3541.** You propose that the employer should pay for the crèche but that the union should run it?—Yes. Why not?

**D-3542.** *Mr. Joshi*: There are at present two unions in Jamshedpur, one is yours and the other is the Labour Association?—Yes.

**D-3543.** Do these two unions compete with each other for membership in the same class of people?—The Labour Federation has never competed, but there is a very keen rivalry on the part of the other Union to secure members by hook or by crook.

**D-3544.** Both of you are catering for the same class of people?—We cater only for the actual workmen, while the Labour Association is a conglomeration of foremen, clerical staff and others.

**D-3545.** Do you exclude clerks and foremen?—Yes.

**D-3546.** But the Labour Association have got some membership among the workers, is it not?—Yes.

**D-3547.** Is it desirable that there should be one union catering for one class of people in one place?—Yes.

**D-3548.** If it is desirable will you tell us whether you made any efforts to bring about an amalgamation of the two unions?—Yes. We tried to make that suggestion through the Company itself. We suggested to the other union to see its way in merging itself into the Labour Federation because so far as the membership of the actual workmen was concerned the Federation was by far the stronger of the two. We also suggested that for the clerical staff the Labour Association can form a separate union. But nothing came out of these suggestions.

**D-3549.** Were these suggestions of yours put on paper?—No; these suggestions were made by way of conversation.

**D-3550.** Can you tell us why these efforts did not succeed?—So far as we understand, their view point was that the Labour Federation should merge itself into the Labour Association.

**D-3551.** Leave aside the question of mere name?—That is very material.

**D-3552.** You will agree with me that a name in a big organization does not matter very much?—It matters quite a lot.

**D-3553.** Do you agree with me that the main thing that matters is who has got more influence with the men, not the name? Suppose these two unions unite and an election takes place, those who have got the largest influence will be elected as the officers of the Union. From that point of view there should not be a great insistence upon the name; no matter by what name you call the union, the men who have got the largest influence will be elected?—We agreed to that suggestion at a very early stage of the existence of the Labour Federation, but we were never told as to when that election would come in; we never knew that they would hold elections. It was proposed to us that we should take our members in a body to the Labour Association and hold an election to find out who comes in. We agreed to that. When we wanted to know when the election would be held we got no definite response. We therefore felt that it was only a trick and we refused to do anything with it from then.

**D-3554.** Suppose another effort is made?—(Mr. Sharma) we are quite prepared if proper guarantees are offered. A date should be fixed for election, and no outside influence should be used. The foremen have got their union, and the clerical staff should also have a separate union for themselves.

**D-3555.** You can discuss the terms later on. I quite realise that there will be some terms. But you are quite willing to discuss the question of amalgamation of the two unions?—(Mr. Homi) : Yes.

**D-3556.** In answering one of the questions you said that recognition should be given to the larger union. I am taking a hypothetical case. One union which is larger to-day may become smaller after a month and recognition will go on changing from month to month? I would like you to give a concrete case where it has happened.

**D-3557.** I told you that I am taking a hypothetical case?—We will have to wait until such a proposition takes place.

*Sir Victor Sassoon:* Did it not actually take place at Lahore?

*Mr. Joshi:* I will not go into details, but it is quite possible that such a difficulty may arise. *The witness:* I do not think such a difficulty would arise.

**D-3558.** Both the unions cater to the same class of people; why should you object to the two unions being recognized?—If it was only a question of two unions of workmen we would not have the least objection, and we would have settled up our differences, but in one union the foremen and the clerical staff of the company are members. They take an undue advantage of their position. They utilize their power vested in them by the Company for the purpose of carrying on their work; they use that power to the detriment of the workmen. In the Labour Association there are many Bengali foremen who are members. They exert undue powers; that is, by suspending, dismissing and by various other ways they compel these workmen to become members of the Labour Association and to get away from the Labour Federation. In spite of our protest to the company to take steps to put a stop to this, the Company has not taken any steps.

**D-3559.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* They use moral persuasion?—It is more than moral persuasion. They use their powers for the purpose of asking men to become members of the Labour Association.

**D-3560.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Could you speak from facts?—Do you say that the Company has been using its power to influence members to leave one association and join another association?—We have complained to the Company regarding the action of these various foremen and superintendents, but we have not heard anything from the Company. In the meantime this is going on merrily.

**D-3561.** *Mr. Joshi:* On the question of men overstaying their leave, do you think that if the leave is a leave on full pay they will not overstay?—I think they will, because the leave to which they are entitled is not adequate for them. At the time of giving their applications they do not put in a long period for the fear that the Company may not grant it; they just put in the requisite number of days to which they are entitled.

**D-3562.** Your point is that the leave on full pay is not adequate, but if adequate leave is given on full pay then there is no temptation for staying at home?—That is so.

**D-3563.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* What would you consider to be adequate leave?—One month's leave for every year's service.

**D-3564.** *Mr. Joshi:* With regard to sickness insurance and unemployment insurance it seems that you are in favour of some kind of arrangement by which these could be effected?—In fact, the Labour

Federation have been very anxious on that point. We wrote to several insurance companies whether they would undertake to write insurance on behalf of the Federation as a whole, so far as its membership is concerned, for sickness and unemployment, but we have received replies that they do not undertake such a form of insurance.

**D-3565.** May I take it, therefore, that your union will not be against the workmen contributing a small amount to a sickness insurance fund if the employer and the Government also contribute their share?—No. In fact, we have a scheme just in hand whereby we would ask the workmen to put in a certain amount of money themselves for sickness insurance.

**D-3566.** The same may be taken as true as regards provision for old age?—Yes.

**D-3567.** On the question of accidents, the management give us some figures. I find that during 1926 there were about 1,200 accidents due to misadventure, 341 accidents due primarily to injured person's own action and so on. I do not see that even a single accident was primarily due to neglect of the management. Do you consider that out of 1,600 accidents in not a single case the management was at fault?—I refuse to believe that.

**D-3568.** Can you say that there are some accidents over which the management can be held responsible?—In fact, for every accident that takes place inside the works the management is to be blamed.

**D-3569.** *Mr. Clow* : Dealing with the Trade Union Act you suggest that the Act should be so amended that an employer cannot refuse recognition to a registered trade union that contains 30 per cent. of his employees as members. What precisely do you mean by recognition? Suppose there was such a law what would you regard as constituting compliance with it?—There is at present a Trade Union Act which specifies certain things requisite for the purpose of registration. Registration by itself is not the end and aim of a trade union. The trade union's business is to render service to its members, and that it can only do when it has got very good relations with the employers. There is no compulsion on the employers in any way from the trade union after registration that the employers should accept it.

**D-3570.** Suppose there was such a law; what would in your opinion constitute compliance with it?—Opening of direct negotiations and relations with the trade union.

**D-3571.** Suppose I were an employer and there was this law in the statute book and I did not want to give recognition to your registered union, I would say: "I am perfectly willing to answer your letters but I will answer them all in the negative." You would not be any further on?—It would mean that the employer would be trying to nullify as far as possible the very spirit in which the Act was framed.

**D-3572.** But you cannot convict people for offences against the spirit of the law, they can only be convicted for offences against the letter?—Some machinery will have to be devised to meet such a contingency.

**D-3573.** What sort of questions are mainly discussed in the shop committees?—Dismissals, suspensions, blockage of promotion and so forth.

**D-3574.** Is the committee ever consulted before a man is dismissed?—No, it is consulted only after the event.

**D-3575.** In your memorandum you say that you know of cases where employers have afterwards been found absolutely unable to pay anything to their deceased workmen. Could you give us any cases?—There was a case at Ghatsila where a contractor was employed. The case as made by the applicant was that the company was primarily responsible for the accident and it should pay for compensation. The company said that they were not responsible but the contractor was. A decree was passed against the contractor. The contractor said that he was absolutely unable to pay, and he notified his willingness to take to insolvency proceedings.

**D-3576.** You know that the worker is entitled to sue the employer as well as the contractor. Why was he not advised to take proceedings against the employer?—The Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation said that the company was not responsible.

**D-3577.** Do you know the ground on which he said that?—He said that the contractor was doing the work which the company was not doing. All the materials were placed before me. In fact, I appeared for the applicant.

**D-3578.** *Mr. Joshi:* Did you make an appeal to the High Court?—The party was advised but it did not appeal. The party never appeared here; the party was in the Bombay Presidency, near Surat side. It was a case of a Bombay *khalasi* falling from a chimney where he was working. The Commissioner ruled out that since the work was being done by a contractor the company was not responsible.

**D-3579.** *Mr. Clow:* It was not part of the employer's work?—That was so.

**D-3580.** You refer to the solution of industrial disputes, and one of your suggestions is for opening up of temporary relief measures by way of roads, embankments, tanks, etc. Do you mean that the strikers should be given work by Government?—I think there is a mistake about it. This refers to unemployment and not to industrial disputes.

**D-3581.** You said that the company collects your trade union subscriptions for you. Do you think it is wise to have your subscriptions collected in that way?—I do not see any objection to it. I think it is done in the States.

**D-3582.** There is this objection to it that as soon as the company gets a dislike to your union it can cut off the supply of subscriptions?—In that case the workmen would find out what action should be taken, In fact, six months before, we were collecting our own subscriptions; of course, it was both a tiresome and a costly process. We then asked the company to collect subscriptions for us. It is only a question of facility.

**D-3583.** *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Dealing with trade unionism you say : " A healthy trade union is the best guarantee for an industry's stability and prosperity ..... " and you end by saying : " Workmen's combinations when well led, well organized and confined to labour alone have exerted a very healthy influence both on the well-being of workers and that of industry." I take it that you claim that your Federation fulfils these conditions?—I suppose so. That is its aim.

**D-3584.** What do you mean when you say " well led, well organized and *confined to labour alone* " ?—" Confined " means confined to labour politics as opposed to outside politics.

**D-3585.** You do not mean that you would confine your membership to labour alone?—Yes; but a labour union is not separated from its office bearers.

**D-3586.** You claim that your Federation fulfils the conditions set out in your memorandum and that your aim is to do your best both for the workers and for the industry?—Yes, certainly.

**D-3587.** In view of what you stated to other members that you disapproved of the settlement which Mr. Bose brought about with the company and that the relations of labour with the management is at present strained, may I ask whether you advised the workers that while you are negotiating for getting further concessions for them they should work efficiently and well so that it may enable you to persuade the company that as they were getting better and more efficient work they should be more considerate to the workers?—We have done that.

**D-3588.** What has been the result?—The result the company itself can show.

**D-3589.** The result as far as published reports indicate is that in November, December and January before the strike the production was larger and that during November, December and January of the present cold weather the production was lower. If you compare the wage bill for those three months, you will see that it has risen by about 20 per cent. And further a new plant costing about 1½ crores to 2 crores has been installed since January 1928. In spite of all these the production in the cold weather months of 1929-30 is less than what it was in 1927-28. If labour was more efficient, how do you account for these results?—Is it suggested that labour is the only factor that counts in production?

**D-3590.** I am giving you an opportunity of telling us your version?—Representing labour, we can assure you that labour is not the only factor that has brought down the production.

**D-3591.** Labour is one of the factors?—It may be one of the factors, but it is not the only factor.

**D-3592.** Your position is that labour is one of the factors but that it is not the only factor?—We still say that labour is not the party that has been responsible for reduction in production.

**D-3593.** As you are aware, the company is giving a general bonus of Rs. 1,25,000 if the production goes up to 50,000 tons. In addition to this there are various other bonus schemes. All these indicate that for efficient work the labour can earn very much more than what it is earning now. What effort has your Federation made in inducing labour to earn more money especially when these opportunities have been given by the employers?—When furnaces go down, how can labour help? When mills break down, labour cannot be blamed. The effort of the labourer is directed towards earning as much as he can, but that depends not on the labour but on the management.

**D-3594.** I can quite understand when you say that it depends upon the efficiency of the plant, but it cannot depend upon the management, because the management after providing these bonuses does not ask the labour not to work?—At the same time the management should not feel that the labour does not desire to earn more bonuses.

**D-3595.** But how is it that during 1927-28 when the wages were 20 per cent. less than what it was in 1928-29, when the plant was smaller having regard to the present extension, and when the management was the same, the production of 40,000 tons on which 1 lakh bonus was announced was reached while it has not reached that figure except in one month all this time?—That is a question that should be put to the management rather than to the union. We can only say that the labour has not fallen on its job.

**D-3596.** If the management were to say that it is due to the indifference of labour, what would be your answer?—If the management were to say that it is due to the indifference of labour, my retort would be what has brought that spirit of indifference amongst the workmen.

**D-3597.** Let us come to the point. I ask you whether it is not your duty as President of the Federation to whom 9,000 workmen look up to tell them "I shall do my best for you but you must work and earn more money which is within your power." Have you done that?—We have done that several times, but we have had no response from the management.

**D-3598.** Your position seems to be that you want that the management should do so many things for labour according to the list you have given which is numerous?—We are not asking the Company for its immediate adoption.

**D-3599.** The management has adopted various measures already and the principal one is that its wage bill has gone up by 20 per cent?—But still it has not satisfied the workmen.

**D-3600.** It means that the position of the workmen is: "We do not care whether the company makes any money or not, but you should keep on paying us more and more till we are satisfied irrespective of the amount of production that we can give." Is that the position of the labour?—It is not right for you to feel that way.

**D-3601.** I am asking you, because, as you know, this industry is a protected industry and that but for protection the industry would have gone to the wall?—You already know my views.

**D-3602.** I know your evidence before the Tariff Board. You admitted that numerically the number of workmen employed by Tata's company was extravagant and you insisted that that number should be reduced. When on the recommendation of the Tariff Board the Tata Steel Company tried to reduce the number of workmen you led the strike against it on the cause of victimization?—You know the reason very well; it is not a new one. That has been several times brought as an accusation against me.

**D-3603.** You might have told me the reason privately, but I want you to say that in public now?—The reason why I objected to the company reducing its workmen was the mode of its reduction. In one stroke of the pen the company said that so much should be reduced. I said that shall not be. They wanted to reduce 10,000 to 15,000 straight away.

**D-3604.** Are you quite sure of the figures?—That is the ground on which I then objected. We said that we were absolutely opposed to the reduction in the way in which the company proposed to reduce. We said that the company could, if it wanted reduction, do it by the slow process of absorbing all the vacancies by not filling them up; but the company would not listen to us. When they said that they must have reduction then and there, we naturally became obstinate and said that there should be no reduction.

**D-3605.** If your position is that what the company has done is not adequate from the point of view of labour I can understand it, but at the same time I think your position should be: "Let us take what has been given; we will ask for more; but in the meantime let us show more efficiency instead of deterioration in production that has been brought about." Do you expect that a protected industry would be able to work successfully by giving the labour all they want without response from labour for efficient work?—For this cause it is not in the ranks of labour that you should look for but in the ranks of the supervising staff. I might say that the labour has given its best to increase production.

**D-3606.** Do you mean to say that the supervising staff prevent labour from giving efficient work? I want to understand the other side of the picture?—It is not a question of preventing labour from exerting its best, but it is a question whether the experience, education and knowledge of your supervising staff is adequate to ensure sufficient tonnage.



**D-3607.** I want you to explain what you mean by the supervising staff being responsible for smaller production when labour was working hard enough to get better results?—It is for you to find out from the management as to why this is being done. (Mr. Sharma): In our memorandum on staff organization we have dilated on that question.

**D-3608.** I have seen that?—Beyond that we do not want to express any views. It is for the management to give their opinion.

**D-3609.** Is it your position that the supervising staff to-day is very much inferior to what it was in 1927-28?—(Mr. Homi): By action thou shalt judge.

**D-3610.** What is your position? If you think that the supervising staff has deteriorated so enormously in two years then I can understand your view point?—Are you referring to the figures of production in 1928? Can you give more details?

**D-3611.** In October 1929 production was 42,000 tons but in November, December and January production has gone down to 36,000 tons and so on. Why was it? It was due to the fact that in November and December there were so many breakages in the duplex plant.

**D-3612.** In 1927-28 there were only two duplex furnaces whereas in 1929-30 there were three furnaces.—Obviously production ought to be larger?—But how could there be greater production if none of these furnaces were working satisfactorily all the time. I remember very well in November and December of last year there were many breakdowns in the duplex plants.

**D-3613.** If your point is that the plant was defective and that it was responsible for this reduced production I can understand it. But have you evidence to show that? Ordinarily labour is entitled to its wages and bonus. If by lack of efficient management and defective plant labour is prevented from earning its due, is it not the duty of the Federation to examine the question?—But the management would say that we are treading on delicate ground of internal management. A few days ago our General Secretary saw the General Manager of the Company in connection with the proposed reduction of staff on account of lack of orders from Government for materials and asked him whether the retrenchment would affect the low paid men only or the officers also. He was told that it was the business of the Company and not his to say how the reduction should be done. Our General Secretary pointed out that on a previous occasion several Indian hands were sent away while at the same time a European covenanted man was appointed on Rs. 2,500 as a night superintendent of the duplex plant. The General Manager was in great temper and told Mr. Sharma to mind his business. These are vital questions affecting wages and bonus and they are entirely out of our jurisdiction.

➤ **D-3614.** Your position is this. You say that the workers have a right to work or stop work as they please and that they should not be compelled to work against their will. On the other hand you challenge

the right of the employer, once he has appointed a man, to send him out even though he may not have sufficient work for him?—No, I am not at all challenging the right of the employer to do that. Let him effect retrenchment by all means but what I want is this. Let him not do it all of a sudden and throw thousands of people out into the streets. Let him do it gradually. Let the retrenchment cover the superior staff also and not be confined to the lower establishment only. Let there be adequate notice given to the workmen who are to be sent away. We do not want to bind the employer in any way; we only want that everyone should be fairly treated.

**D-3615.** You want that the management should take the sanction of the Union in the matter of retrenching men?—No, if the methods are fair we do not want to be consulted necessarily. Suppose the management want to retrench, 1,500 to 2,000 men; they can say that such and such men will be sent a month hence and the remaining will be sent later on. Is there anything wrong in doing that? There is one advantage in consulting the union in this matter. Every time a retrenchment is made the persons who come under the axe almost all of them happen to be members of the union. Therefore there is a well founded impression that membership of the union would expose them to victimization.

**D-3616.** I do not subscribe to that view?—Anyhow the employers think that consultation with the union is beneath their dignity. If this is done a lot of misunderstanding will be avoided.

**D-3617.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : We have statistics from the Tata Iron and Steel Company which show that in 1927 they discharged 6,497 men and they had applications from 9,548 men. They actually employed 7,283 men. You say that these 6,497 should not have been removed all of a sudden but should be sent away gradually?—That is the point. I do not suppose that these 6,497 were reduced altogether. On an average about 400 to 500 people go away every month. There is a gradual process of elimination and nobody objects to that. We only object to this sudden discharge of a large number of men with a stroke of the pen as it were.

**D-3618.** *Mr. Cliff* : Did the Company approach the Union whenever they proposed to make a retrenchment in the staff?—We came on the scene only in 1928. Since we were recognized by the Company I do not think there was any drastic reduction of men. Only some temporary hands were sent away. Even there if the Company had told us that only some temporary hands were going to be sent away a lot of misapprehension might have been avoided, for the workers thought there was going to be a general reduction and were very restless.

**D-3619.** It has been suggested that the men resumed work and decided not to give the same amount of production as before in order that there might be no more reduction of staff. Is that true?—After the men resumed work in September 1928 our relations with the Company were

not all right. The Labour Federation was not recognized by the Company. Naturally we told the workmen not to work with all their heart for the company. This went on till March 1929 when we were recognized. We told the men to work hard and the advice we gave had had its effect. The General Manager told me personally that the men worked much better and that my advice had had its effect.

**D-3620.** With regard to the Golmuri Tinsplate works strike you entered into negotiations with the Company and agreed upon some terms which in your opinion was a settlement of the question. Can you explain to us what happened afterwards?—I should have to explain this matter in full, otherwise I would be giving a false impression of the part played by the several parties.

**D-3621.** My point is this. Looking through the records of the trade unions here in Jamshedpur leaders have come and gone and the men are left to do the best they can. In the strike which occurred at the Golmuri Tinsplate Company you apparently effected a settlement: the men struck and you resigned. But you continued your association with the strikers. Who decided to strike; did the committee of the union refuse to accept the terms of the settlement and call a strike? As a matter of fact it may be said that nobody accepted and nobody rejected the terms of the settlement. It was one Friday when myself the Vice-President and one of the Assistant Secretaries of the Federation saw the management and explained to them the seriousness of the situation created by certain dismissals and suspensions. The management said they would give a reply on Monday. We were satisfied with that and came out. There were about 100 to 200 men and we explained the matter to them and they were also satisfied. The next morning on Saturday I had a letter from the Vice-President who had accompanied me the previous day to the effect that I should see the management and get an assurance from them that they should collect subscriptions on behalf of the union and failing that the workers would go on strike. I refused to do any such thing. The Vice-President came to me at the court and I told him that I would have nothing to do with the union if they wanted to go back on the agreement of the night previous. On Saturday they did not work. They came to me three times on Saturday and twice on Sunday asking me somehow to go to the management and get this point settled. I said: give an opportunity to the management and let us see on Monday what they do with the persons who have been dismissed. I knew that the management were not averse to taking these men back. On Sunday night from indirect sources I came to know that the workers who went to work were prevented from going to work on account of picketing. Nobody consulted me about calling the men out. On Monday also the same thing happened. I sent a letter to the Vice-President telling him that I would not have anything to do with the strike. He kept that letter with him and left the people under the impression that Homi was with them. At meeting after meeting they were told that Homi would come and speak to them. When I did not go they were

told that I had some urgent business and that I would attend the next meeting and so on. This went on for 15 days. One day about 1,000 people came to my bungalow on the other side of the River and asked me why I was not with them. I explained to them the whole situation and they said they did not know anything about it till then. They asked me to go with them. There were 2,000 to 3,000 men to whom I explained the whole situation from the beginning to the end and said that the blame for this trouble rested on the shoulders of the Vice-President and members of the executive who were sitting on the front bench at the meeting. I told them that the strike was called against my definite advice to wait till Monday and see what the management did with the dismissed men and that I had no responsibility for the strike. On that very day I told the men to go back to work and they would have gone to work but these very men again interfered and kept them away.

**D-3622.** With regard to such settlements between the management and the union is it one man control or a committee control? When the management gave their terms we placed them before the committee composed of the very person who decided on the strike. They were parties to the settlement.

**D-3623.** I have here sent to me a copy of the issue of "The Capital" containing a letter purporting to have been written by you. Could you say whether this is written by you or not?—I have to look into the whole letter before I say anything about it. I have no idea. I shall look into it at leisure and answer any questions on it if necessary.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BIHAR AND ORISSA**  
**EIGHTY-SECOND MEETING**

**JAMSHEDPUR.**

**Saturday, 22nd February 1930.**

PRESENT :

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

SIR VICTOR SASSOON, BART.

SIR IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt.,  
K.C.S.I., C.I.B.

MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.B., I.C.S.

MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S.

MR. A. DIBDIN.

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*)

} *Joint Secretaries.*

**Mr. J. R. DAIN, C.I.E., I.C.S., Officer on Special Duty, Government of Bihar and Orissa, Revenue Department.**

**D-3624.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* You have sent us a memorandum on the labour disputes in Jamshedpur from 1920 to 1930, which has been prepared from the point of view of your own personal opinion?—Yes.

**D-3625.** I understand that you were for three years the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum district?—Yes. I was Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum from the 17th October 1926 to the 27th November 1929. During that time I served six months as acting Commissioner of the Division, from the 8th April 1929 to the 5th October 1929.

**D-3626.** Will you tell us about the constitution of a Notified Area?—There is a section in the Municipal Act which is designed to provide some primitive form of administration for an overgrown village which is then called a "Notified Area". That form of administration has been applied to Jamshedpur, because the Municipal Act, as it stands, is not wholly suitable. It practically means that there is a Committee

of people nominated by the Local Government and consisting, for the most part, of members of the various Companies here who also constitute their own Board of Works.

**D-3627.** I understand that originally the Board of Works consisted of 11 members, 6 representatives of Tatas, 3 representatives of other industrial concerns and 2 representatives of the general public?—Yes.

**D-3628.** I understand that the old Board of Works no longer exists and that a new Committee has taken its place. Will you explain the constitution?—The Board of Works was constituted by the Companies working here under a formal agreement between themselves. That Board administered the money which the Companies subscribed, but it had no legal powers. In order to give the governing body of the town some form of legal power, Government constituted a "Notified Area Committee" with the same personnel as the Board of Works. There were, therefore, these two bodies side by side, the Board of Works administering the money of the Companies and the Notified Area Committee consisting of the same personnel and exercising certain legal powers. The Board of Works' agreement has expired, and the Companies have substituted another arrangement by which each Company looks after its own area.

**D-3629.** Can you tell us the present constitution of the body which has succeeded the Board of Works?—The Notified Area Committee is composed of the same personnel as the old Board of Works.

**D-3630.** The old Board of Works no longer exists in its original form?—It only expired a short time ago. Meanwhile the Notified Area Committee, consisting of the same personnel, is lasting on.

**D-3631.** Can you tell us which Companies are managing their own areas?—I do not remember the exact details of the arrangement. You can get them from the General Manager of the Company.

**D-3632.** Does the Notified Area Committee hold meetings in the same way as a Municipal Board or a District Board?—Yes.

**D-3633.** Are copies of the minutes of those meetings, and of resolutions, communicated to the Government?—Yes, they come through the Deputy Commissioner to the Local Government.

**D-3634.** What is the extent of the supervision by the Local Government over the working of the Notified Area Committee?—In point of fact the actual supervision exercised over the Notified Area Committee here is not very large. The actual municipal work is financed and carried out by the companies. As a matter of fact during the three years I was Deputy Commissioner here I used to go through all the resolutions of the Committee in order to see that they were in accordance with the law, but I never attempted to examine their accounts.

**D-3635.** Have you ever intervened on the ground that the provisions for conservancy or water-supply or health generally were inadequate?—No.

**D-3636.** Will you explain why you found it necessary to create a new Civil Subdivision?—Singhbhum is a district, but it is not a normal district because it consists of two separate areas, with a feudatory state lying between. It is divided into two Subdivisions. The Subdivision on the west is entirely aboriginal country. On the east side there is the Dhalbhum subdivision with Jamshedpur in one corner. Up till 1923 there were no subdivisions in the district. In 1923, mainly to meet the needs of Jamshedpur, a subdivision for the Dhalbhum area was created with headquarters at Jamshedpur.

**D-3637.** I see in the subdivision there is a Subdivisional Officer with two Deputy Magistrates for criminal and revenue work, and a Munsif for civil work?—Yes.

**D-3638.** You refer to the Government officer on the spot being charged with the duty of maintaining law and order. This is an area containing about 100,000 inhabitants. It has sprung up very rapidly. I noticed that there are people in it who have been born in other Provinces. Do you find it difficult, from the civil or criminal point of view, to control a population of such a heterogenous character?—It is difficult. The way we try to do it is this: our police staff, from the top to the bottom is composed of picked men. It is insufficient in numbers (and the Deputy Commissioner is now making representations for an increase), but it is a very highly efficient staff. That is the only reason why we keep the crime figures here down to the normal; that is to say our crime figures do not exceed greatly the crime figures in other parts of the Province because of the high state of efficiency of the Police force. During the strike of 1929 the crime figures went up by leaps and bounds. That had nothing to do with the strike; it was because the police were so occupied with the strike that they could not look after the ordinary criminals. If the efficiency of the police here was reduced at all, the crime figures would go up at once. We rely for control on a highly efficient police force and further on an efficient Intelligence system, which obviously I cannot go into.

**D-3639.** I notice that you say that the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have intervened repeatedly in differences of opinion between employers and employees. Have you any definite idea as to when a Government officer ought to intervene?—When Government officers talk about "Government" they mean the Governor in Council. There is Government proper—the Governor in Council, on the one hand and Government officers on the other. I should put the position of the Government officer in this way: his first duty is to maintain law and order, and his second duty is to give any assistance he can towards bringing about a settlement of a dispute, as long as his intervention is acceptable to both parties. If he found either party resenting his interference he would consider it wise to step out. That is the attitude we have taken so far.

**D-3640.** Do the parties to a dispute ever ask Government to intervene in connection with the question of evictions from houses?—No

The employer knows that he has to get eviction through the ordinary civil courts here. The Railways are an exceptional case, because there is a clause in the Railway Act enabling the Magistrate to evict, and there have been cases where the Railway authorities have asked the Magistrate to evict, but here it is a matter of proceeding through the ordinary courts.

**D-3641.** Is your Subdivisional Officer an active Inspector under the Factories Act?—He is not at present. A few months ago the Chief Inspector of Factories asked me whether I would object to one of my three officers being made a Factory Inspector because our Factory inspection staff was inadequate. I replied that the officer in question had more work already than he could get through but that I was prepared to try the experiment for six months or a year. That is the position now.

**D-3642.** Do you know to what extent he has been functioning in that capacity?—No. The arrangement is too recent—

**D-3643.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Yesterday the Union Officials suggested that in cases where disputes were apprehended or had actually occurred, Government intervention should take place almost at once. I notice, when referring to the Tinsplate strike, you say in your memorandum that the men's leaders were definitely opposed to an enquiry, and hardly attempted to conceal their recognition of the fact that their case was not one to stand an impartial investigation?—Yes.

**D-3644.** I want to know whether you think it would be advisable or practicable or feasible that Government should interfere at a very early stage in disputes?—What I have put down in my memorandum are the reasons which weighed with me at the time when I advised Government not to intervene at Tinsplate. But there is another point of view, namely, that if we had intervened at an early stage we should have placed before the public an impartial review of the affair which would possibly have saved a lot of subsequent trouble and misunderstanding in the Council and in the Assembly and the like. I admit that there is a great deal to be said for that point of view.

**D-3645.** Let me take you one step further. You could not foresee that there was going to be all this political trouble. If it were to be laid down that every dispute would mean Government intervention, either in the form of a court of enquiry or something else, would not that be impracticable—because you might have thousands of disputes going on at the same time all over the country?—It would leave Government no discretion at all.

**D-3646.** It would mean intervention in every dispute, large or small (which would be a lengthy business) which might otherwise be settled quietly in a short time?—Yes.



**D-3647.** Therefore there is a good deal to be said for discretion being used in connection with the intervention of Government too soon in a dispute. Such intervention might not necessarily be a good thing?—I agree.

**D-3648.** You say that the cost of living has always been very high, but later on you point out that in the case of all except the ordinary unskilled workmen the pay is on a generous scale. Do you mean by that that the real wages of the unskilled workmen here will compare unfavourably with the real wages of unskilled workmen in other parts of the country, owing to the cost of living being high here?—I do not think that wages of unskilled labour here compare unfavourably with wages elsewhere. I think their wages in this place are a subsistence wage, but that having regard to the cost of living they are not above the subsistence wage. That is how it struck me during the strike.

**D-3649.** Would you say that the cost of living here is higher than it is in Calcutta?—I have no experience of Calcutta.

**D-3650.** Is anything being done by the Government to try to keep the cost of living down. You say that the reason of the cost being high is due to factors outside the Company's control?—I think it is due very largely to the isolation of the place.

**D-3651.** Does not the Company do a good deal in the direction of trying to keep down the cost of living?—It does a great deal, but the cost of living is very largely outside the Company's control.

**D-3652.** You are taking chiefly of food-stuffs?—Yes. What would bring the cost of living down would be the erection of one or two bridges over the rivers in order to allow more free movement of country produce.

**D-3653.** Whose duty is it to put bridges over rivers?—It is either the business of Government or of the local authorities.

**D-3654.** Is it the business of Government or of the local authorities?—The Government usually maintain the arterial roads of the country and the local authorities maintain the local roads.

**D-3655.** In this country it would be more or less the main road. It would really be opening up new country?—Yes, but the country on the other side of the river on the west is not in British India.

**D-3656.** If it had been, probably bridges would have been built?—It is possible.

**D-3657.** Do you consider that the surrounding agricultural districts could be encouraged to produce more than they are producing to-day, thus automatically providing a ready-made market. Do you think help in the way of manure and co-operative societies might make it unnecessary to bring food-stuffs from long distances?—A very large part of the food-stuff which is consumed here comes out of the Kolhan, the

other subdivision of this district. But I think on the whole Chota Nagpur is cultivated as far as it will stand and the measures proposed would not increase the output.

**D-3658.** I gather you feel that, in view of the amount which the Company is doing for its employees, there appears to be an undue measure of discontent?—Yes.

**D-3659.** And that that is not so much due to the general policy laid down by the Board of Directors as to the general lack of contact between the lower supervising staff and the men—the little piece of necessary machinery which does not appear to be sufficiently lubricated?—Yes, that seems to me to be so.

**D-3660.** It is not the big questions which are causing discontent; it is the little detailed questions which should be smoothed over?—That is one of the things that struck me during the strike. The company bring out here a supervising staff who are men highly skilled technically but are very ignorant of Indian conditions, languages, and so on, and they do not seem to be able to get into contact with the men.

**D-3661.** Can you give a constructive suggestion as to how the difficulty could be got over?—I think Messrs. Tata's present scheme of a welfare officer is possibly one solution.

**D-3662.** Would you have one welfare officer, or a welfare office staff?—I would have one welfare officer and let him learn by experience what is required.

**D-3663.** And his success, or lack of success, would be due to his personal qualifications for that particular post?—Yes, to a very great extent.

**D-3664.** Mr. Ahmed: I think this is the only place in India where so much strife has been going on for the last few years. I suppose this is due to the workers demand for a higher rate of wages than they have been receiving?—I rather doubt the premise that this is the only place in India where so much trouble has been going on for the last few years.

**D-3665.** I understood that among all the factories the Tata Iron and Steel Company had more trouble in the way of strikes than any other. All these strikes have been on account of a demand for higher wages, have they not?—Partly that, but mainly because a general adjustment of an agricultural people to industrial conditions is going on at present.

**D-3666.** Is it not a fact that the reason of the strikes always has been a demand for higher wages?—In every strike I have had to do with there has been a demand for a higher rate of wages, but it is not safe always to assume that the expressed demands are the real causes of the strike.

**D-3667.** Has there not been friction between the police and the people?—That view is entirely mistaken.

**D-3668.** There are two sides to the question?—In the strikes with which I have had anything to do, the relations between the police and the strikers have been exceptionally good. We have never had any friction.

**D-3669.** During the strikes which have happened from time to time during the last few years it has become necessary for Government, in order to keep peace and law and order, to take certain steps?—During the strikes I have had to disperse "unlawful assemblies".

**D-3670.** There have been some cases where firing has taken place?—There was one case here in 1922; no other.

**D-3671.** You remember there were many workers punished?—No, I do not remember. I can give you the exact number of cases that arose in 1928. During the whole five months strike of 1928, 58 cases arising out of the strike were instituted on reports of the police, and 29 on ordinary complaints. Of the police cases 22, involving 39 persons, ended in convictions, and in 5 cases, involving 24 persons, there was an acquittal. In many of the remaining cases information had been laid against persons unknown.

**D-3672.** In some of these cases the workers took to picketting, and committed some offences under the Indian Penal Code?—Yes. The picketting, on the whole, was orderly, but there were cases where offences were committed.

**D-3673.** Although picketting, which is allowed and which you say was orderly, workmen were prosecuted under sections 144 and 107 and 147 for rioting?—We prosecuted in one case in a place where we had forbidden picketting. The attitude I took was this: as long as the picketers were orderly we left them to their own devices, but where serious disorder occurred we closed that area to picketting. It was the most effective way of dealing with the situation, because these people realized that picketting was their most effective weapon; and the fear of having any area put out of bounds for picketting restrained them.

**D-3674.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*; Did you restrict the size of the pickets?—No it was out of the question.

**D-3675.** *Mr. Ahmed*: "Five or more persons" make an "unlawful assembly", and if there is a little rough handling it becomes a "riot" under section 147?—Technically many pickets were unlawful assemblies, but in such a situation one could not take a narrow technical view.

**D-3676.** Yesterday we heard that from 50 to 60 per cent. of the workers are indebted. What steps have the Government taken to remedy this?—Government does not take steps to remedy private indebtedness.

**D-3677.** Has the Government a co-operative society?—The Company has.

**D-3678.** In Bengal there are a number of inspectors called "Co-operative inspectors" who are deputed to the mill areas. Has not the Government of your province any of these inspectors?—The Government maintain a Registrar of Co-operative Societies and a staff of expert advisers, but, as far as I am aware, the Company have not sought to any great extent the advice of the Government Department.

**D-3679.** *Mr. Cliff.*—Your memorandum has the supreme merit of answering the questions of an enquiring mind. As far as I can see from it, the action which the Deputy Commissioner took was, in the first instance, directed to maintaining law and order, not simply by police measures but by offering his services, if requested by either party, to help towards a settlement of the dispute?—Yes.

**D-3680.** I notice that the Board of Directors of the Tata Company passed a special resolution not only regarding the preservation of law and order, but also regarding the help that had been given by the Deputy Commissioner in terminating the dispute—Yes.

*Sir Alexander Murray:* Did the workers do the same?—They did as a matter of fact.

**D-3681.** *Mr. Cliff:* Both parties expressed appreciation. The point is this. There has been considerable experience gained in Jamshedpur by the Government officers?—Yes.

**D-3682.** Have the Government any suggestions to make with regard to a policy for the future?—I am afraid they have not. Government's policy has been spelt out in their final memorandum, and it is limited to that. I am talking of Government *qua* Government.

**D-3683.** You say that the problem is one of adjusting an agricultural people to an industrial life. In this case there is an Indian Company, which must have a knowledge of the characteristics and traits of its own people, but I fail to find in the Company's memorandum any direct evidence that they have addressed themselves to what you say is the problem. I am concerned to know, therefore whether the Government have any recommendations to put to this Commission as to how that problem shall be dealt with?—I am afraid I can only repeat the same answer.

**D-3684.** I do not want to press you, but I want to see whether, in this adjustment of agricultural labour to industrial conditions, of which there is such a notable example in this place, the Government have conceived any recommendations which they can put to us?—The only action which they take at the present time is to pick their local officers. Government select their officers with a view to the peculiar conditions existing. Beyond that Government have no constructive suggestion to make, as far as I am aware.

**D-3685.** May I ask your own personal view?—I have thought out the point of a Labour Commissioner. His duty would be to maintain a Bureau of Labour Intelligence, and to act as a conciliator. There would be administrative and financial difficulties; but I will put those aside for the moment. I do not think we want in this Province a more co-ordinated and methodical study of labour matters. So far these are dealt with in different departments. There is the Department of Mines, subject to the Government of India. There is a Factory Inspector working under our Commerce Department. There is the Director of Industries under the Educational Department. If all this information could be co-ordinated and a systematic study of labour conditions made something on the lines of the Labour Bureau in Bombay, it would be valuable. We are markedly behind Bombay on this side of India in the matter of labour intelligence. It is however possible that a methodical study like that might be grafted on to the existing administration without the cost of putting a special man on duty. As for the Labour Commissioner as conciliator I have very grave doubts as to the value of a professional conciliator. I doubt whether he could do anything here which the Deputy Commissioner could not do.

**D-3686.** You have grave doubts whether a special officer would be more successful than the Deputy Commissioner?—Yes. He might have special knowledge, but he would be without the local knowledge.

**D-3687.** Would he be without it if he were resident here?—That had not occurred to me. I had thought of such an officer for the Province or for the two Provinces.

**D-3688.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Might he be suspected of taking sides if he were a professional conciliator?—I think he would very soon get labelled up.

**D-3689.** *Mr. Cliff:* Are you not in a very great difficulty with the constant change of Deputy Commissioners?—Deputy Commissioners in this district are kept at their posts as long as possible.

**D-3690.** Is that because of its peculiar labour character?—Very largely.

**D-3691.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* What do you think should be a fair average length of service?—Mr. J. E. Scott was here for nearly six years. Then Mr. Lewis did 18 months while he was on leave, and between Mr. Scott and myself Mr. Beever filled the vacancy for a short time, and then I did three years.

**D-3692.** You consider that in a place like this, where there are special difficulties, the Deputy Commissioner, the Subdivisional Officers and the police officers should stay for how long?—I should suggest a minimum of three years if possible.

**D-3693.** *Mr. Cliff:* Apart from Government, if you were asked to give advice both to the Union and to the Companies with regard to

matters arising out of their employment, what kind of advice would you give?—I did suggest to the General Manager of Tata's during the strike the appointment of a wholetime welfare officer. He was not impressed at the time, but since then he has appointed one.

**D-3694.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are there two officers—an Employment Bureau Officer and a Welfare Officer?—The Welfare Officer, as far as I know, is quite independent of the Employment Bureau.

**D-3695.** You would suggest they must be kept separate?—Yes.

**D-3696.** *Mr. Cliff*: What do you suggest should be the duties of the Welfare Officer?—My idea at the time was a general liaison between the men and the superior staff through the Welfare Officer.

**D-3697.** Between individual workers, or workers collectively?—Both. I think the Welfare Officer should study the needs of the men and bring them to the notice of the management, and communicate to the men the intentions of the management.

**D-3698.** That means leading to a better understanding by the employer of the men, and to a better understanding by the men of the employer?—That was my idea at the time.

**D-3699.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Would that take the place of the Works Committee?

*Mr. Cliff*: I did not understand that from the answer. I understood the answer was that the Welfare Officer might deal with individuals, and also deal with the men collectively in a department or over the whole. I do not think the Welfare Officer should either supersede or interfere with any of the other machinery for the settlement of disputes.

**D-3700.** *Col. Russell*: The union has stated that the Tata Company have prevented general medical practitioners from coming into the town to practise privately. Is that the case?—Certainly not. I know of no such case. The only difficulty might be in the private practitioner getting a house.

**D-3701.** In that way the Company might prevent a doctor who was desirous of setting up a private practice here from doing so?—I know of no case in which they have done that.

**D-3702.** *Miss Power*: What arrangement has the Company made to prevent the possibility of a far larger number of people flocking to Jamshedpur for work that can possibly be absorbed? I notice that when there is a strike the Company can always fill up the large number of vacancies, if they desire, from the flocks of fresh people who come. How do they regulate that in ordinary periods?—I think it is a natural regulation. These people come when there is work offering. A large number of men of the skilled and semi-skilled type work for 2 or 3 years, and then go back for a year or two to their homes. Thus there

is growing up gradually a sort of reserve of trained or semi-trained men, on whom the employer draws on these occasions. They come back when they hear that work is offering. They do not come here, when work is not offering.

**D-3703.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Would any part of this extra population be the trades people who have come here to satisfy the needs of the workers?—Yes, but it would not seem to account for the whole excess of the population over the number directly employed by the companies.

**D-3704.** *Miss Power* : Can you tell me anything about the company's employment bureau from your experience of it? On what principle does the firm select the people?—I have seen the employment bureau working, but I am afraid I do not know on what principle they make their selection.

**D-3705.** From the point of view of the workers is it regarded as satisfactory? We had the opinion of the Union that they regarded it as unsatisfactory. We do not know what the view of the workers is.—I think myself that the complaint of the union against the bureau is due largely to this that the Labour Federation would like to recruit for the works through the Federation so that they may recruit to the Federation at the same time as they recruit for the works.

**D-3706.** *Mr. Joshi* : Generally speaking with regard to the policy of the creation of an industrial town owned by a Company, would it not be better if Government undertook the work of developing the town with the assistance of the Company instead of leaving the whole thing entirely in the hands of the Company?—There is a great deal to be said on both sides. We have plenty of experience of municipal bodies in India and we fear that the first result of taking this place out of the hands of the Steel Company would be a very serious fall in the standard of efficiency of the municipal services. With a big town like this containing 100,000 inhabitants we cannot afford to take the risk of this.

**D-3707.** But Government might pass a Town Planning Act also at the same time and make some compulsory provisions regarding sanitation and other municipal services?—I do not think any form of municipal government will be possible which does not recognize the fact that the whole thing is the property of Tata Iron and Steel Company.

**D-3708.** It might be handed over as a loan to a statutory body?—It would cost about Rs. 13,00,000 a year to run the municipal services and provide for depreciation and sinking fund. It is financially almost out of the question.

**D-3709.** The Company is spending the money at present on the municipal services. Let us buy out the municipal services and not the whole property?—Mr. Temple the Chief Administrator of the town and myself drew up imaginary budget for Jamshedpur on the assumption

that we handed over the town to a municipality and bought out the municipal services. I have the budget here and this shows the financial difficulties of the problem.

**D-3710.** If it is possible for the Company why is it not possible for a statutory body. It is a question of cost and the people will have to pay the necessary taxes?—You cannot ask the general taxpayer to pay for Jamshedpur. The money to run Jamshedpur has got to come from this area, that is to say by taxing the people and the company. If we taxed the people then the Iron and Steel Company would have to raise their wages. However one looks at it, the money will still come from the Steel Company.

**D-3711.** Even then from the point of view of the Company there is no difference for them. They pay for the municipal services either in the shape of increase in wages or directly as at present. When the Company employs such a large number of men and becomes responsible for the civic amenities of 100,000 people it ceases to be a purely private concern. Government has necessarily to intervene as the British Government did in the case of the East India Company.

**D-3712.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Mr. Joshi's question may be divided into two parts. He wants to know whether in 1907 when the works were started Government could not have anticipated the rise of a big town like this and created a municipality which would have functioned *pari pasu* with the rise and growth of this town?—I cannot imagine how a representative body like a municipality could have been created in advance and entrusted with the duty of spending the money of the Company on the municipal services.

**D-3713.** The second part of Mr. Joshi's question is at what stage of the development of this big industrial town during the last 20 years could Government have intervened and set up a municipal body without all the complications to which you have referred?—At no stage would the conditions of the problem have been materially different from the problem at present. Messrs. Tatas put a huge sum of money into this concern all at once and acquired an overwhelming interest in it. I do not think it would be possible for a statutory body at any time to have taken over the town unless it is a body with sufficient credit in the country to raise the money required to buy out the Iron and Steel Company.

**D-3714.** *Mr. Joshi:* I am not suggesting any independent body raising the money. The Company would be compelled to finance the scheme of that kind and the statutory body that will be created will pay interest to the Company on the money they invest. I also realize that the wages of the workers will have to be raised if they are to be taxed for financing the municipal services. But from the point of view of the company there is no difference whatever because what they pay directly for the municipal services at present they will be paying indirectly in the shape of increased wages?—The Company



would not only have to pay increased wages but also rates and taxes on their property such as machinery and buildings.

**D-3715.** On the question of general policy would it not be better if Government undertook the duty of housing and other municipal services in such a big industrial town like this?—I do not think it would be practicable for Government to undertake this.

**D-3716.** What is the difficulty? Did not Government anticipate that this was going to be a big town?—I gather that they did.

**D-3717.** Could not Government have undertaken the development of the town with the assistance of the Company and left the development of the works alone to the Company? Would there have been opposition from the Company?—There is no question of opposition from the Company. The Company would be glad to be rid of the bother of administering the affairs of the town. But it would not have been practicable to create a statutory body in anticipation of the development of the town.

**D-3718.** Did not the Government of Bihar and Orissa help the Company in acquiring lands for their works?—To this extent that they used the Land Acquisition Act.

**D-3719.** When they used the Land Acquisition Act, suppose they had told the Company that lands acquired for housing should be made available for development either by Government or by private individuals?—When the land was acquired Government entered into agreements with the Company providing for certain things for the protection of the public. There were two agreements: the first provided that certain existing roads should remain rights of way and the second agreement gave Government certain powers to require the Company to give rights of way over the property. There were no conditions of the nature suggested.

**D-3720.** Would there be any difficulty if Government now raised a loan, resumed the land under the Land Acquisition Act and handed it over to a statutory body for administration and development?—There is no doubt that it would be legally possible to create by statute a body that could raise the money, buy out the Company and run the municipal services.

**D-3721.** From the financial point of view it would make no difference to the Company as they would only have to raise the wages to the extent to which they are paying for the municipal services now?—I do not think it would make much difference financially to the Company because they find the money in one way now and they would have to find it in another way afterwards. But if this statutory body failed to carry out its duties the Company would have to step in and maintain the municipal services, and at the same time continue to pay its taxes.

**D-3722.** If it is a statutory body Government can intervene?—Government's power of interference with local bodies is strictly limited.

**D-3723.** But you pass a special Act?—We might draft a special Act containing safeguards and introduced it in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Council might remove those safeguards as amounting to undue interference with the local authorities.

**D-3724.** In your memorandum you have referred to Mr. Sawday, an employee of the Company, who in his capacity as honorary magistrate ordered firing on the workers. Here is an employee of the Company who is empowered to order firing on other employees. Has there been any change of policy on the part of Government in this respect?—We have not had any employees of the Company as honorary magistrates for many years, and it is unlikely, that Government will appoint any more honorary magistrates from among the employees of the Company.

**D-3725.** *Mr. Clow* : You are referring to the contact or lack of contact between the management and the workers. What are the ordinary steps taken by the management to come in contact with the workers? Suppose they want to announce a contemplated change of policy, how does it reach the rank and file?—It reaches for the most part through written notices which are circulated. All the announcements of the Company during the strike went out in the form of written notices in two or three languages.

**D-3726.** How many of the superior officers of the Company would be able to carry on an ordinary reasonable conversation with one of the workers?—Very few superintendents can do that.

**D-3727.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : I understand that this Company has more Indian speaking officers than most companies of the same size?—Yes

**D-3728.** *Mr. Clow* : I am talking of officers who exercise real control in the works?—I have seen very few who are capable of making themselves understood in any Indian language.

**D-3729.** Is there any general impression in the mind of labour that Government and the Assembly will stand by the Company in the matter of protection? Has that idea had any influence in inducing labour to put forward demands which they would not put forward to an ordinary unprotected employer? Do they feel that there is another supply of money available if necessary?—I should doubt whether the feeling that Government is to a certain extent behind the Company has influenced workers in putting forward their demands. But we have noticed these strikes have occurred at times when the Company have made large profits and when labour saw that money was available for increase of wages.

**D-3730.** *Mr. Cliff* put to you the idea of having a personnel officer. Do you think it would be feasible to have a personnel officer or a body

who would be able to go into personnel cases and make a pronouncement on them which the management may accept or reject? I am thinking of a body which in relation to the Company would stand in the same position as the Public Service Commission does to the Government of India?—The Public Service Commission is appointed by Government.

**D-3731.** It is appointed by Government, but it is independent of Government?—It would mean undue interference in matters of discipline, if the personnel officer was a person not in the service of the company.

**D-3732.** I am not contemplating any authority except the authority of stating their opinion?—Even so I think it would amount to too much interference.

**D-3733.** You recognize the tremendous importance which the average Indian workman attaches to getting a hearing. In 99 out of 100 cases provided he has had a chance of saying what he has got to say in his defence he is willing to accept the decision just or unjust?—Yes, that is so.

**D-3734.** Can you suggest any means of securing that for the worker?—These works committees and Board A and Board B to which reference is made in the memorandum of the Company began their work after I left this place. If they have worked as they were intended to work I think they provide a suitable machinery by which every man who has a grievance can get a hearing.

**D-3735.** But Mr. Homi stated to us the other day that in the case of dismissals, for instance, the works committee was only consulted after the man was actually dismissed when it would be obviously more difficult for the Company to reverse its decision?—It might possibly be arranged that the works committee should be consulted beforehand. It would probably be an improvement.

**D-3736.** *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In your memorandum you say : "The effect of this notice was to force the pace. Men rejoined in fairly large numbers but to counteract this the picketing was intensified and every road in the town was filled daily with large demonstrating crowds. Instances of lawlessness and violence became more frequent and intimidation of workers in their villages became so serious that strong pickets of police, finding night patrols, had to be established in several places." That means that a large number of men were willing to work and the minority prevented them from working by intimidation and other forcible means. Is that not so?—It was not a case of a minority coercing the majority; the strikers were in a majority.

**D-3737.** You say that instances of lawlessness and violence became so frequent and intimidation in the villages and the *bustis* became so serious that strong pickets had to be posted in several places. That is to say there was one party willing to go to work and there was another party which was not willing to allow them to go to work

and adopted forcible means to achieve its object?—That is so. We put strong pickets in these villages and the *bustis* and sent out patrols of three or four men at night. That was sufficient to stop intimidation.

**D-3738.** You had special armed police on duty during the strike?—Yes.

**D-3739.** And it was with the help of this special police that you were able to give some protection to the people who wanted to work?—Yes.

**D-3740.** Is it possible for Government to provide such additional police in all industrial centres for the protection of people who are willing to work in times of strikes?—Additional police is not necessary in normal times. During abnormal times the police can be reinforced to the extent required.

**D-3741.** What was the extent of lawlessness and violence which took place during the last strike?—Apart from disorderly behaviour by crowds, there were cases of beating up individuals and there was one case of stabbing. In Sonari two or three strikers attempted to rape the wife of a worker.

**D-3742.** Have you any suggestion to make to ensure that such lawlessness and intimidation of workers will not occur?—I think the measures we took in 1928 met the case and we should do the same thing again.

**D-3743.** That means you would allow some form of lawlessness to proceed and then you would go and act. Let me draw your attention to what happened during the Golmuri strike with regard to which also you use equally strong expression. In your memorandum you say : "Picketing was intense and the Company recruited a body of *Pathans* as escorts for their workers and as counter-pickers. Moreover the Company had to provide temporary tin sheds to house their men since the strikers were in actual occupation of most of their quarters." Having regard to this fact have you any suggestion to make to prevent this kind of intimidation and lawlessness and enable willing workers to work without molestation?—We can police the place sufficiently. What we cannot help is the timidity of the people. We give them sufficient security but we cannot help it if all same people are too timid to go to work.

**D-3744.** But there is intimidation in the *bustis* and the villages?—It is difficult to stop every case of private intimidation. We can stop it to a large extent by posting pickets and sending out patrols but it is not possible to stop it altogether.

**D-3745.** Your position is that it is impossible under the present state of the law to prevent this intimidation being carried to the *bustis* and the villages?—It is possible to give a very high degree of security but it is not possible to guarantee absolutely that there will be no intimidation at all.

**D-3746.** In your memorandum you say that: "The struggle culminated on the 21st February when a party of supporters of the Federation raided and wrecked the Labour Association's Office. Mr. Homi at the mass meeting failed to condemn this outrage and in fact spoke of it as the natural outcome of the Company's policy." Did the Federation take the law into its own hands?—The Federation committed a lawless act. We prosecuted a certain number of people, I think about four. We failed to prosecute more because of the difficulty of getting identification evidence.

**D-3747.** What was the result of the prosecution?—I think they were all convicted. I cannot remember exactly.

**D-3748.** In your memorandum dealing with the Tinsplate strike you say: "It was the sudden and unforeseen ending that upset the men, and there is no doubt that from this point onward there was a party in the works who believed that a strike was a panacea for all evils and that Tinsplate too must have a union and a strike." Here is a case where men have no grievance but have gone on strike to better their conditions. Would you suggest any machinery which could come on the scene when such a state of feeling exists in the minds of the workers?—There was a state of feeling then which would have rendered any attempt at settlement useless. I can think of no machinery which could be employed to avoid a strike in such circumstances in which the Tinsplate Company were placed. There was nothing that could have been done to prevent a strike that was not done by the Company.

**D-3749.** Then industry is completely at the mercy of the men who would go on strike in spite of the fact that the management, as you have stated in your memorandum, might go to extravagant and almost fantastic lengths in an endeavour to conciliate the men. You think there is no remedy to meet the situation?—In a case like this we have to allow the workers to suffer the consequences of their own foolish action. They will gain experience.

**D-3750.** Would not the experience be gained at a heavy cost to the industry as well as to the workers?—It is true that in the case of the tinsplate strike they bought their experience very dearly, but I cannot think of any machinery which could have been devised which would have prevented the tinsplate strike. It was a case of strike fever, not a rational act on the part of the men.

**D-3751.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* In your memorandum you discuss the case for and against Government intervention in a trade dispute and say that Government should intervene if there was an element of chance that the two parties would come to a friendly settlement. Section 3 of the Trade Disputes Act says that provided the two parties to a dispute agree Government may refer the question to a Court of Enquiry or a Board of Conciliation. Here is a case where both the parties to the dispute do not agree to Government intervention. In such a case what is your view as to the relative

merits of a Court of Enquiry or a Board of Conciliation?—In such a case it would probably be most convenient to have a Court of Enquiry which may clear the issues and leave the ground open for subsequent conciliation. As far as my experience of strikes goes the issues are never sufficiently clear to be placed at once before a Conciliation Board.

**D-3752.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I am not going to take you into the past; I am going to take you into the present. At the present time I am told that it is not possible for an employee who is not a member of the particular Union called the Labour Federation to go out at nights without being molested. I do not know whether it is exaggerated. We have here a statement from a member of the Federation who calls himself a member of the managing committee of the Federation. He says :

“ So far as Jamshedpur is concerned the labour movement has come to such a stage.....that the workers have to choose between “ *goondaism* ” and subserviency. Free expression of individual opinion and community of thought have been rendered almost impossible. Convictions have come to be driven home through the knob of the *lathi* or the point of the knife, through broken heads and shattered limbs.”

Allowing for exaggeration and colouring, if there is any basis for this statement have you not got the seeds of very serious trouble in the near future?—The labour leaders throughout the strike of 1928, whatever may be the merits of the dispute, showed a strong sense of responsibility and moderation in their methods. Recently for the last few months there has been a growing indiscipline and lawlessness amongst this class and I think that undoubtedly a very dangerous situation is developing and must be checked.

**D-3753.** How do you suggest that an influence of this kind which is not legitimate can be checked. If it is not checked I am afraid it will lead to very serious disturbances?—At present I am no longer the Deputy Commissioner here. The Deputy Commissioner and the Police are fully alive to the situation and they are taking steps to meet the danger.

**D-3754.** *Mr. Cliff*: That is to maintain order amongst the citizens of Jamshedpur?—Yes, it has nothing to do with the merits of labour disputes.

**D-3755.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Arising out of the questions put by Mr. Joshi, suppose the Government takes over a Railway Company it is paid for out of the funds of the State, the funds of all India?—Yes.

**D-3756.** It may be credit, but it is the credit of the whole of India?—Yes.

**D-3757.** Therefore if the Government of India took over this town the money would have to come out of the general taxpayer of India as a whole?—Yes.

**D-3758.** But it does appear to me there is a point in Mr. Joshi's suggestion. You are dealing with a very large community like this. He probably feels that the citizens would not have sufficient freedom if the town was entirely run by the Company. Would it be possible, not necessarily by statutory authority but by arrangement with the Board, to have on this Committee that is running the town one or two representatives of Government who would bring in an outside influence as it were and who would assure the public that that body was not acting in any way inimical to the interests of the community as a whole?—I see no great difficulty and it would be a good thing if it was done.

**D-3759.** *Mr. Ahmed:* With regard to recruitment are not any number of unskilled workers available except during strike times?—Outside the cultivation seasons it is possible to get any number of unskilled workers. They may not all be available at Jamshedpur, but directly the work was offering the men would come from outside.

**D-3760.** What will be the cost of living here of a family consisting of a man with his wife and two children?—That depends of course on the standard of life of the people. We have not as full information as we ought to have about the actual cost of living.

**D-3761.** Have you any idea of the extent of indebtedness of the workers here? Will it be that 50 to 80 per cent. of them are indebted?—I do not know. I have no idea of the exact extent of indebtedness.

**D-3762.** *Mr. Cliff:* Can you supply us with a copy of the agreement between the Government and the Tata Company, when they first came, with regard to the purchase of land?—Yes; it is a public document published in the Gazette.

**D-3763.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* There are two agreements. Will you send a copy of each of these agreements?—Yes.

**D-3764.** *Mr. Cliff:* Will you also supply us with a copy of the agreement for the board of works about which you referred a moment ago?—Yes. There are the two land acquisition agreement made with Government and the private agreement between the companies themselves.

**D-3765.** You can send us a copy of each of these agreements?—Yes.

**D-3766.** As I understand it, the Government recognized that there was a problem in the year 1919. Was that about two years after the works started?—In 1907 they started building the works here.

**D-3767.** There was a problem recognized in 1919 and the report of the committee was not given effect to partly for financial reasons. You have reached another stage in this development. Have the Government any policy at the moment with regard to the municipal government at Jamshedpur?—The question has been raised again within the last year or two; it has been raised, as a matter of fact, by

the Company. My position has been that I have asked to have the thing put off until labour is more settled. I did not want this question of municipal government being ventilated while labour unrest was going on.

**D-3768.** May I know whether tentative negotiations with regard to taking over the services have taken place?—There have been informal discussions, but I can hardly say that they have gone so far as actual negotiations for taking over the services.

**D-3769.** Is it that there is any difference of opinion in principle, or is it a question of terms?—It is really a question of the financial difficulties of the problem; it is not a question of difference of opinion as regards the principle.

**D-3770.** So it is really a question of the difficulty of financing any proposal?—It is the difficulty of financing any proposal coupled with the fact that the existing municipal law is not applicable, and to create a representative body we need a special Act which would have to go through the Legislative Council.

**D-3771.** You answered Sir Victor Sassoon after consulting the Deputy Commissioner. I take it that it is not your position or the position of the Government that all that needs to be done at Jamshedpur has been done, but there is much more to be done than that?—That is so.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. J. C. K. PETERSON, Mr. C. A. ALEXANDER, representing the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd.**

**D-3772.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: What experience have you gentlemen had?—(Mr. Peterson) I have been a Director of the Agents firm since 1919 and was in the Indian Civil Service from 1899 to 1919. In Government service as Controller of Munitions, Bengal. I had some acquaintance with the Steel Company. (Mr. Alexander) I have had 26 years' practical experience. I rose to Works Manager before leaving America; I came out here as Works Manager, or General Superintendent as it is called, I have been General Manager for the last five years.

**D-3773.** Will you let us know the number of unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and supervisory workers excluding clerks, the number of women employed by you directly, the number of contractors women, and what they are employed on; the number of additional labour for which Tatas are responsible dividing the number between contractors and those directly employed?—Yes, we will supply you figures.

**D-3774.** How many men are on duty in the Employment Bureau?—One Superintendent and 2 or 3 clerks.

**D-3775.** Do you think one officer is able efficiently to handle the recruitment of the large numbers of labour for the different shops?—At



times the head clerk acts for him but he ultimately passes every man personally.

**D-3776.** The labour has to be card-indexed?—He does not do that, although he is responsible for it; the office staff take care of all the card indexing.

**D-3777.** It would appear that in three or four years practically the whole of your labour is turned-over?—No, because it is only a certain part of the labour which moves about.

**D-3778.** But that part in one year comes to as much as 36 per cent. of your total labour force. Have you ever looked at the matter from this point of view that one officer, however able he may be, cannot efficiently handle a turn-over of that description?—No, I cannot say I have. He has seen these men so often that he very often goes out and knows the man he wants. He talks to a large number of them daily. Old employees returning do not have to be interviewed and a large percentage of them are old employees re-engaged.

**D-3779.** Is an enquiry made into discharges?—No man can now be discharged without the sanction of the General Superintendent, and foremen and members of the higher staff must go before the General Manager before they are dismissed. A foreman can suspend a man but cannot discharge him; the discharge rests with the General Superintendent after he has heard all the facts of the case. We have introduced this system during the past 12 to 18 months. If a man takes leave and nothing is heard of him for 30 days he is automatically taken off the books. In that way many men leave our employment without being discharged.

**D-3780.** Do you make a distinction between discharges and dismissals, such as there is on the Railways?—No.

**D-3781.** Will you let us have a chart showing the personnel of your organization, both administrative and departmental, showing the numbers of the different officers going down to heads of sections, so that we can have before us a picture of the organization?—Yes.

**D-3782.** Will you give us a statement for the last five years of the number of your covenanted imported employees?—Yes, our maximum was 229 in 1924; to-day we have 128.

**D-3783.** I see you have departmental workmen's committees, a departmental welfare committee, a labour advisory board, a conciliation committee, and now you have works committees; could you give us the history of these different committees and tell us why they failed?—Yes.

**D-3784.** Will you give us a statement as to people employed under your contractors, how many are men and how many women and what are their hours and wages?—Yes. They work the regular factory hours, 9 or 8 hours a day shift work. They do excavation on a measurement basis and loading and unloading of raw materials is done by tonnage.

**D-3785.** You pay the contractor in that way?—Yes.

**D-3786.** How does he pay his employees?—They are all paid a daily rate; the men will make from annas 9 to annas 11 a day, while the women will make from annas 8 to annas 10, an anna less than the men.

**D-3787.** Then it appears that your contractors pay their women rather better than you pay your women?—They do. They do it by giving them a contract; we used to do the same thing. If there are a certain number of wagons of material to be loaded or unloaded they will put a certain number of people on a wagon. If they finish the job in 5 hours they get their day's wages and go home.

**D-3788.** How many employees have you had to evict from the houses through the Courts and how long did it take you to evict them?—I will give those figures.

**D-3789.** With regard to welfare, what is your annual expenditure on the administration of the town?—(Mr. Peterson) There is a revenue derived from the town; the balance of expenditure of the Steel Company would be about 5 lakhs a year. We get rent for our own quarters. I will send you the town budget.

**D-3790.** What is the total amount of your expenditure under the head of Welfare activities?—That will be in the budget. In addition we have a great deal of expenditure for hospitals, medical provision and provision of amenities to the workmen, water and so on.

**D-3791.** Will you let us have copies of the accounts and constitution of one or two co-operative credit societies?—Yes.

**D-3792.** Is it customary for one man to be in four or five credit societies?—I should think it is very unusual.

**D-3793.** Will you supply us with a statement as to how many men there are in more than one co-operative credit society and will you give us the reasons why?—Yes. The reason is because they want to borrow money. It is not a matter for us; it is a matter for the society. We have nothing to do with the credit societies.

**D-3794.** Do you not advance that money?—No, these are all Government co-operative credit societies.

**D-3795.** You say the Steel Company encourages the growth of co-operative societies. How do you do that?—Our people do the clerical work; we keep the accounts for them and deduct the subscription for them.

**D-3796.** Will you let us have a copy of the accounts of the Provident Fund?—Yes.

**D-3797.** What is the position with regard to the pension scheme which is being considered?—Until we are satisfied we have worked out a reasonable scheme and can estimate what the financial burden on the

Company is going to be we prefer to deal with individual cases.—No question of a pension will arise for another 5 or 7 years because the works have not been in existence long enough. Very few of our employees have put in 15 years' service. We have not yet decided the number of years that should qualify for pension. If we make it 25 years it will probably be 10 years before any one will qualify.

**D-3798.** You say that bonus has been granted to all employees drawing less than Rs. 15 a month. Will you tell us how many employees there are drawing less than Rs. 15 a month and how many drawing less than Rs. 20 a month?—Yes.

**D-3799.** Will you supply us with information as to the extent to which use has been made of the provisions of exemptions of hours of work?—Yes.

**D-3800.** Will you give us details as to the wages paid to particular types of workers in different places?—You cannot compare the wages paid here with wages paid anywhere else, because the same industry does not exist anywhere else. We will give you a list of the entire rates of pay throughout the plant.

**D-3801.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Will you give the average amounts earned under the rates?—No.

*Sir Victor Sassoon*: Then you will have to give us more or less average earnings of each class.

**D-3802.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: What now takes the place of fining which you have abolished?—(Mr. Alexander): Suspension.

**D-3803.** You do not put a man back a grade?—No, that is very seldom done. I started abolishing fines several years ago and now we have practically eliminated them.

**D-3804.** Have you thought of any system of giving marks and taking away marks?—No.

**D-3805.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is the system of suspension as satisfactory as the system of fines?—Yes, more so because the men do not object to it so much.

**D-3806.** But do they improve?—No, the causes are still there, but I felt that if a man had earned his wage we had no right to take it away from him. That is the reason I stopped it.

**D-3807.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is the extent of your unclaimed wages?—(Mr. Peterson) we will give you the figures.

**D-3808.** Can you let us have a copy of the workmen's pension fund showing what payments you make?—We have no fund at present. We can give you the individual payments for each year.

**D-3809.** And the credits to that fund, showing what have been your back wages unclaimed?—Yes, we can show you that; it is not a great amount.

**D-3810.** Will you let us have a copy of the statement you gave to the Government of Bihar and Orissa showing how the efficiency of the workers has improved since 1923-24?—Yes. This must have been one of the statements submitted to the Tariff Board and will be in the Tariff Board's report.

**D-3811.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Will you also let us have the percentage of men compared to the number of men who would be used for the same work under similar conditions in the West?—We cannot do that department by department; we can do it for the works as a whole. The tonnage has increased with practically the same number of men so that the number of tons per man is a little higher. The proportion of men we employ as compared with the employees for similar works in a Western country is 5 to 1.

**D-3812.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* The Tinplate Company give the proportion as 3 to 1?—If we take one department it would be less than 5 to 1, but in large works it is 5 to 1.

**D-3813.** How have your wages per man risen in recent years?—It is hard to give that unless we take it over the works as a whole. In the case of an individual man it is confused by promotions. This statement will show you what the increase in wages has been (handing in a statement). It has increased by Rs. 10 to Rs. 11 per head.

**D-3814.** This is affected by improved plant being put in?—The actual wages will not be affected.

**D-3815.** When you say 50 per cent. of the employees are members of the two trade unions, how do you get that figure?—That is the number from whose wages we deduct subscriptions.

**D-3816.** Will you give us the number of members in each union?—Yes.

**D-3817.** You had recourse to civil law in connection with trade disputes?—(Mr. Peterson): We brought a suit and applied for injunction, but it was subsequently settled.

**D-3818.** *Mr. Clow:* Did you get a temporary injunction?—Yes.

**D-3819.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* It came out yesterday in evidence that the output from October to January in 1929-30 was lower than the output in the corresponding months of 1928-29, in spite of the fact that you had put in more modern plant; is that so?—(Mr. Alexander): Yes.

**D-3820.** One of the defences was that that plant was not in a fit condition to work properly and that you had accidents with it; is that also true?—Yes.

**D-3821.** Then you must make a reduction in respect of the months when it was not working properly?—That would be largely hypothetical; the new plant has not yet reached its proper efficiency.

**D-3822.** Could you give us some rough idea as to what percentage of the difference in production was due to matters outside the power of the workmen?—I could not give you those figures off-hand.

**D-3823.** Would you say that your Employment Bureau was a success or not?—It depends on what standard you adopt. I consider it is more successful than the old system.

**D-3824.** Do the objections to the Employment Bureau come from the labour or from foremen to whom this labour was supplied?—Yes, the foremen do not like it because they used to employ the men.

**D-3825.** What has happened with regard to the labour?—I think they are better off.

**D-3826.** Would you say a man would be better off if he was put under a foreman who did not like him?—If the foreman does not like him he very likely goes back to the Employment Bureau and is not put on.

**D-3827.** What steps have you taken to see that the foreman is not allowed to have his own way?—Whenever we catch him doing things that he should not do he is brought to task about it.

**D-3828.** If a foreman is allowed to send men back until he gets the man he may privately wish to engage, your Employment Bureau is not going to remove the grievances of the men?—No, I do not say it has; it is not perfect by any means. If we get complaints we investigate them.

**D-3829.** If a foreman is found to be turning back a larger percentage of men than you would normally expect, how do you deal with him?—He would be taken to task about it.

**D-3830.** We have been told that the *bustis* are very badly treated as regards the supply of water; do you agree with that statement?—Yes. We are trying to improve things as money is available to do it by laying additional mains and increasing the size of the water-works; we are doing that to-day.

**D-3831.** You appear to have a supply equal to 40 gallons per head?—Yes; a lot of it is wasted. If it were not wasted we should have ample for everybody. I should like to see everybody have more water but it is a question of finance.

**D-3832.** You feel that it is your duty to supply water to these *bustis*?—Certainly.

**D-3833.** Do you help any co-operative credit society by making a loan to it?—No.

**D-3834.** Are the sports held among the better class of your workmen?—They are open to everybody, but the coolies do not come forward. Football is the most general sport.

**D-3835.** What is the lowest class of worker that takes advantage of the facilities given?—The *khalasi* type.

**D-3836.** Have you crèches in your works?—Yes. We do not call them crèches. We have one rest-house at the coke oven; that is all.

**D-3837.** You have no crèches where women can leave their children?—Only this place.

**D-3838.** Do you propose to institute crèches?—Yes.

**D-3839.** They are not very expensive and it would not take very long to set them up?—No. We have investigated the matter and there are certain practical difficulties. The works are so large and the women do not want to leave their babies at the gate and go half a mile to their work.

**D-3840.** Could you have a number of small crèches inside your gates?—We are trying to find out where the largest number of women are and set up two or three at such a place in the near future.

**D-3841.** Where they would be in a position to come out and have a look at their children?—Yes.

**D-3842.** You consider it advisable to have minimum wage legislation?—Yes.

**D-3843.** Would you say that every industry should have a minimum wage fixed according to its capacity to pay?—Yes, that is my personal opinion; I should like to see a minimum wage and a good living wage for even the coolies, much higher than it is now. What prevents us paying a higher wage is lack of profits.

**D-3844.** Would you say that the minimum wage should be laid down according to the profits of a particular firm?—I personally would like to see a higher wage paid, but in return for that we should have to get more work; the outturn per man must be greater; the ratio of 5 to 1 of which I have spoken would have to be decreased. We cannot give more wages unless we get more work.

**D-3845.** Would you expect the Government to decide what the minimum wage should be in your works and in engineering works in other places?—Thorough investigation will be necessary.

**D-3846.** Would it be based on capacity to pay?—Yes, and ability to increase their efficiency.

**D-3847.** A multitude of Boards all round the country would be needed?—Yes; I should think it would be a very difficult thing for this country.

**D-3848.** Do you look on it as a practical proposition by statutory enactment?—I could not say.

**D-3849.** Are these views your personal views?—Yes.

**D-3850.** What are the views of the Company?—I do not know.

**D-3851.** *Mr. Ahmed:* I understand you are in favour of a living wage being paid by all industries?—Yes, I agree with that.

**D-3852.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Is that the firm's view?—Yes.

**D-3853.** *Mr. Ahmed:* You tell us that the Jamshedpur Labour Association has a strength which is equal to 50 per cent. of the working population here?—No, that includes the Federation and the Association.

**D-3854.** What number would that 50 per cent. represent?—About 13,000. We have 26,000 employees.

**D-3855.** The Federation told us they had 12,000 members?—I do not know what number of members they claim; we only know the numbers from whose wages we deduct the subscription.

**D-3856.** What has happened to the Jamshedpur Labour Association?—It is still in existence.

**D-3857.** With regard to number of members which is the larger union?—In numbers the Federation is larger.

**D-3858.** How long has it been larger?—Several months now.

**D-3859.** You say that until labour as a whole is literate it will not be possible to establish a Public Employment Agency, maintained by the Government. What difficulty will there be? You will be supplied with your labour without any trouble or restriction and you will pay the fixed rates?—I think we have said that we do not consider we need it.

**D-3860.** What does it matter to you if you get your work done?—If we get equally good men it does not make any difference to us.

**D-3861.** Do you appreciate that it is impossible for a worker to support himself, his wife and two children on As. 11 to As. 14 per day?—It certainly prevents the raising of the standard of living; I agree with that.

**D-3862.** I suppose you agree that it is necessary that a man working in your industry should be given sufficient to live on?—Certainly.

**D-3863.** *Mr. Cliff:* You have stated in your memorandum that you prefer to give verbal evidence in relation to certain questions?—Yes, that is because it would have been such a long story.

**D-3864.** We have had a good deal of evidence that the Indian worker is conservative in his habits and prejudices. I understand this Company is an Indian Company?—Yes.

**D-3865.** What amount of money has been spent by your Company in seeking to obtain a better understanding of your work-people?—Do you mean specifically or with regard to welfare questions?

**D-3866.** I am leaving on one side housing, and medical facilities, and am referring to any matters arising out of the worker's daily employment. What amount of money has your Company spent in seeking to obtain an understanding of the workers' point of view?—I am afraid I do not fully understand the question. The Company pays good wages. It endeavours to provide the workmen with a reasonable house and reasonable living facilities.

**D-3867.** It appears that the advent of your Company in this district has created a problem for statesmen?—Yes, I think it has. This Company has not suddenly sprung into existence. It has been in existence since 1907. A great number of the men who came originally have been trained gradually and have been promoted. Men who when they came here originally were paid Re. 1 a day are now receiving Rs. 600 to Rs. 700 a month. The men who were at first employed constituted a small nucleus; they were trained by men coming out from other countries and have in turn trained others. The town has gradually been built up and facilities have been increased. Men have been sent abroad to be trained and have come back to teach their own people. It is a growing organism. It is not a matter of setting aside a definite sum of money to be spent on a particular purpose. For instance, the lay-out of the town was done in the most elaborate fashion about 1917.

**D-3868.** I am considering the man at his work in the works?—The man in the works is trained by foremen and superintendents, by the people responsible for getting the results.

**D-3869.** When the strike occurred in 1920, were the Company able to appreciate the men's point of view?—That is one of our great difficulties.

**D-3870.** At that time there had been an obvious increase in the cost of living; what steps was your Company taking to understand the position of the men?—I do not know what was done in 1920 because I was not here, but at present we keep an elaborate range of statistics which is watched carefully in relation to wages, the cost of living and all that kind of thing. If we thought wages were too low we should raise them; at present we think they are too high.

**D-3871.** I take it that those statistics have been obtained since you had this trouble?—Those statistics were prepared in the most elaborate form and were submitted to a most elaborate enquiry by the Tariff Board for a period of 4 to 5 years; they have been published. The new plant has really only existed since 1923 or 1924. In 1920 there was the old plant which was a very small affair.

**D-3872.** What machinery has been evolved to afford on the one hand to the Company an opportunity of considering the point of view of the men and, on the other hand, to the work-people an opportunity of collectively making representations to their employers on matters arising out of their employment?—We have been one of the first Companies and one of the first organizations in India I think to



encourage, as far as we possibly could, the organization of the workmen, but our difficulty has always been that we cannot obtain what you might describe as a stable trade union really representing the workmen. The trade unions are perpetually changing : a union will form and then it will split. A leader appears and then in a few months he disappears. A settlement is made but it is no sooner made than it is rejected and the leader is thrown over. That has always been our difficulty. We are always prepared to recognize any body of workmen who come before us represented by any particular person.

**D-3873.** There appears to have been very considerable difficulty in getting your Company to recognize people who are capable of speaking on behalf of the work-people?—Will you mention a case?

**D-3874.** The Labour Association sent a list of demands to your Company in 1924, but apparently your Company were not prepared to recognize the Association?—That was so at the time.

**D-3875.** As far as I understand it was the first attempt on the part of your employees to combine?—Yes.

**D-3876.** Why did your Company refuse to recognize that trade union?—Because the President, the Secretary and all the office bearers were not workmen. At that time the Company made it a condition that it was prepared to recognize any combinations of its labourers provided they were its labourers.

**D-3877.** Was it a condition of recognition of any combination of your work-people that they should not have aid from outsiders?—That their principal officers should not be outsiders. That was the opinion of the Company at the time. That was before these Acts were brought in. It was the prevailing opinion in India at the time. It was not a question of their having aid from outside; it was a question of their principal officers and the whole of the executive being outsiders.

**D-3878.** We have been told in a document which has been presented to us that an outsider's view was that it appeared that what the Company actually wanted was a labour association which would practically surrender the right to strike and would be controlled by the management?—I do not know who made that statement, and unless you can tell me who it is I can hardly challenge it.

**D-3879.** Is it correct?—Certainly not. We have always desired to have a really strong trade union which can control the labour but we have never been able to secure one.

**D-3880.** That is the opinion of a competent observer who was here?—You must be the judge of his competence; as I do not know who he is I cannot say.

**D-3881.** In that year when you were dealing with the strike I see the Company wrote to the Deputy Commissioner that they proposed to issue a notice forbidding the holding of public meetings on all its land, except a portion at the south of the town, and it says " But

we are withholding the notice until the 18th instant in order to give Government officers an opportunity to make such dispositions as they deem necessary to deal with any breach of the peace that might arise in consequence." That letter is dated 1922. Do you defend the attitude that you will not allow meetings to be held in this town?—We have not said that we prohibit public meetings in this town; in fact we have set aside an open space for that purpose. Without a copy of the letter it is very difficult for me to answer the question.

**D-3882.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is it or is it not the case that in 1922 the Tata Iron and Steel Company said to a local officer of the Government that they were not prepared to allow meetings to be held at a particular place?—I think very possibly. It depends on the place. They were in the habit of holding public meetings anywhere. They hold meetings almost every night on the Maidan; we make no objection; we have never made any objection. But if they think they are entitled to hold a public meeting on any piece of our land we should object.

**D-3883.** *Mr. Cliff* : I am concerned with what the Company wrote to a Government officer?—Is the letter signed by the Company?

**D-3884.** The General Manager wrote to the Deputy Commissioner, and Mr. Lewis, who was the Commissioner, at once went to see the General Manager. I suppose you have a record of that letter on your files and if you prefer to make an observation in writing that will satisfy me.

*Sir Alexander Murray* : You had better do that.

**D-3885.** *Mr. Cliff* : During the last strike with whom were your Company prepared to negotiate, as representatives of the men?—The recognized union, namely the Labour Association which was the only existing labour union when the strike broke out. The other labour union was not formed until a month or six weeks after the strike, and it was not registered for 3 or 4 months after the strike.

**D-3886.** What led you to change your policy and recognize the Labour Federation?—The registration under the Act.

**D-3887.** Then does your Company deem it right to negotiate a settlement with a new President of the old Association just appointed? I find from the record that a certain gentleman came here, got himself appointed as President of an Association, and you negotiated with him?—Our difficulty is : what can we do? We agree to recognize a union. If it represents to us that it has elected a new President we must deal with that President. If another body is formed and gets itself registered under the Act we must deal with that new body.

**D-3888.** Within a period of a few months you started dealing with another body?—We cannot refuse to recognize a body which is registered by Government.

**D-3888.** That seems to be the common view of the law, but we cannot find that in the Act?—It is not the law that a trade union must register, but the position practically comes to this that if a body is registered and recognized by Government as a registered union it is practically impossible for the employer to refuse to recognize it; if he does he puts himself out of court at once in any enquiry by Government.

**D-3890.** Then your attitude is that if an organization is registered under the Trade Union Act you are prepared to recognize it?—I will recognize any registered trade union; if 20 unions were registered I would recognize 20.

**D-3891.** *Miss Power*: Under your Maternity scheme it is necessary that women should be examined by a doctor. Is there a woman doctor?—(Mr. Alexander): Yes.

**D-3892.** Then they are not required to go to a man doctor?—No.

**D-3893.** You say the medical facilities are utilized by women in increasing numbers. When you speak of "women", I suppose you really mean "visits"?—Visits; these are the hospital cases.

**D-3894.** Is there only one woman doctor to whom these people can go?—Yes, there is just one at the hospital.

**D-3895.** Do you propose to employ any more women doctors?—Yes, we will as time goes on and we can afford it. I should like to see the hospital staff materially increased.

**D-3896.** Do you feel there is a specific need for more women doctors?—Yes.

**D-3897.** You propose to inaugurate crèches at different places; do you intend them merely for nursing children or are they intended also for what may be called the toddlers?—I do not know whether we could have courtyards around the crèches or not to prevent children getting into dangerous places; we were only thinking of children in arms.

**D-3898.** The woman in charge of the rest house told me this morning that until this new rule prohibiting children from coming inside the gate was made she used to look after about 70 children, most of these children who had reached the walking stage, but that now such children are turned back at the gate?—We have done that since the passing of the Factory Act.

**D-3899.** Do you not think there is room for a nursery school for these children?—Yes, I think so.

**D-3900.** Would that be a very expensive proposition?—Not in itself, but the difficulty is that there are so many of these little things.

**D-3901.** In a nursery school of that kind there is not the same difficulty as with regard to a crèche where a woman if she is nursing

a child has to visit it at repeated intervals?—Quite; I would like to do a lot more on these lines than we are doing.

**D-3902.** You say that the employment of women in the Steel Factory is undesirable, and you desire to eliminate them?—That has been my desire for several years, but I have not been able to accomplish it.

**D-3903.** Are you referring merely to the women within the works, and not to the coolie labour carrying coke outside the works?—I am referring to that also; I would like to see not a woman inside the works or works compound.

**D-3904.** What is your attitude towards women employed by contractors?—I would like to get rid of them too. But it is impossible until coolies will carry baskets on their heads as the women do.

**D-3905.** I take it this is merely a personal expression of opinion and not something which can be regarded as practical politics?—Yes.

**D-3906.** Is there any reason why the women employed by the contractors should be paid higher rates than those women employed by the Company?—That is because they do it on piece-work; the contractors get more work out of their labour and can therefore afford to pay them more.

**D-3907.** To-day we saw 2 women pushing trucks of coal; they were employed by the contractors. We tested the work and found it was extremely heavy work for two women to do?—That is contractors' labour.

**D-3908.** Do you exercise any supervision over the work that the contractors require their labour to do?—No, except that we insist that they comply with the Factories Act and we try to see that they treat their employees fairly.

**D-3909.** Otherwise you do not concern yourself with whether or not these women are employed on work which is too heavy for them?—No.

**D-3910.** What percentage of the children of school-going age of the workshop people actually attend any school of the Company?—I could not tell you but I can get you statistics.

**D-3911.** Will you give us statistics differentiating between the children of the clerical, the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers?—Yes, we could take a census of the schools.

**D-3912.** There appears to be very little facility for adult education in Jamshedpur. Is there any demand for it among the workers?—Yes, and it is growing; the older the place gets the more demand there will be.

**D-3913.** Who provides such facilities as exist for night schools?—The Steel Company and Government.

**D-3914.** How many such schools have you?—They are all listed in our memorandum.

**D-3915.** Are those night schools for adults?—Yes.

**D-3916.** How long has the policy existed of superseding fining by suspension?—I started it about five years ago.

**D-3917.** For how long are people suspended?—They are supposed to be suspended according to the gravity of the offence. Sometimes they are suspended for different lengths of time for the same offence; that is one of the practical difficulties; one foreman will suspend a man for a longer period than another foreman would suspend for the same offence.

**D-3918.** You have no rules which the foremen have to abide by?—No, but we are trying to get them.

**D-3919.** We have had a great deal of evidence which implies that the workers very much prefer fines to suspensions. Do your workmen prefer suspension to fining?—I really could not say.

**D-3920.** They do not regard suspension as being more arbitrary than fining?—I could not say.

**D-3921.** You did not consult them when you made the change?—No; I thought fining was not right and I stopped it.

**D-3922.** Have you attempted to educate the workers with regard to the practice of overstaying leave?—We have been trying to make conditions better ever since the plant started, but it is a very slow process.

**D-3923.** Do they properly understand this question of losing what the Union calls "accrued privileges"?—I do not think they understand it, and sometimes I think our foremen do not endeavour to explain it to them; the fault is on both sides. I think on their side it is largely due to illiteracy, and on our side I blame our foremen in many cases for not properly explaining things to the workmen.

**D-3924.** What is the attitude of the other Unions which you have recognized towards Shop Committees?—We have not had any expression of opinion from them.

**D-3925.** What percentage of the cases with which those Shop Committees deal come up to these higher committees of which you speak?—We can give you the figures; we can take every case that has been dealt with by the Shop Committees and give you a report. From my personal knowledge I should say from 20 to 30 per cent. of the cases brought before the Shop Committees are rejected by the Shop

Committees themselves. These Shop Committees are a relatively new thing; we started them three to four months before we recognized the Labour Federation. We were dealing with them at the time they were more energetic than the other body and we agreed to let them nominate four members.

**D-3926.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Could you analyse for us the types of complaints that have been submitted?—Yes.

**D-3927.** *Miss Power:* Has the system of educating foremen to which you refer grown up since the 1928 strike?—We are trying to get a better grade of foremen and make them understand their responsibilities.

**D-3928.** Have you given them any definite form of education?—No we have not started that. There are no schools or anything of that kind.

**D-3929.** Do you consider a scheme would be possible such as they have at Bournville and some of the bigger works in America of systematically training foremen in the handling of the staff?—For the last 6 months we have been getting information on the subject; when we shall make a start I cannot say. I know it has had results in some of the factories in America.

**D-3930.** What do you propose to do if you find that far more labour comes into Jamshedpur than can be absorbed by you in the ordinary way?—When the supply of labour exceeds the demand the position is the same here as in other industrial centres.

**D-3931.** But there is only one form of employment here. What would happen if far more people flocked here than you could absorb?—That is so at the present moment.

**D-3932.** Have you any idea how many people there are in Jamshedpur at the moment with no work and no prospect of work?—I should say 5,000 to 7,000, and possibly more.

**D-3933.** How do these people live?—They live here, there and everywhere with other people who have houses.

**D-3934.** That is one of the reasons of the subletting and overcrowding?—Yes.

**D-3935.** Have you any proposal for regulating the influx of people according to the demands of the industry?—(Mr. Peterson). We have no power to restrict them. That is a matter for Government. We cannot turn them out.

**D-3936.** Are they told what is the approximate number of people the industry can absorb at any time?—We are not in touch with them and we have no machinery to deal with them.

**D-3937.** Do they not register for employment?—No; it would be useless; their friends tell them there is no chance for employment.

**D-3938.** Do they sit about in the *bustis* doing nothing?—I should imagine so.

**D-3939.** If you improve your public service organizations will not your turn-over of labour will become smaller?—Yes.

**D-3940.** If these people who cannot get work continue to increase what is to be done?—I do not know.

**D-3941.** *Mr. Joshi*: Is it better to improve conditions after you learn through a strike that the conditions require improvement or should you improve conditions before the men go on strike?—(Mr. Alexander) Before.

**D-3942.** In all the three strikes you have had I find from the records that the men got something?—They got something as the result of the first strike, but I do not think they got anything in the second strike.

**D-3943.** In the first strike they got 45 per cent. increase of wages; in the second strike you simply promised to consider their grievances and a committee was appointed?—That is right, a conciliation committee.

**D-3944.** Do you not think you are indirectly encouraging strikes if you do not improve conditions until a strike takes place?—(Mr. Peterson). You are assuming that the only cause of a strike is that the conditions are bad, but a strike is very often caused by other things. Sometimes the conditions are improved and a strike follows as a result.

**D-3945.** That may be because the conditions have not been sufficiently improved. If as the result of a strike you give increased wages, it means that you are either unfair to your shareholders or the strike was due to economic causes?—That does not follow; it may be that we must give increased wages, that in order to avoid the ruin of the industry we must give way temporarily.

**D-3946.** Does that mean that you make promises temporarily and as soon as you are strong enough you withdraw those promises?—No. In the steel industry you have to regard the cost of labour per ton of steel. If the cost goes above a certain figure you cannot compete, and it is no use people striking for increased wages because the entire industry will cease to function and there will be no wages for anybody. Wages must have relation to competition.

**D-3947.** I presume you do not do injustice to your shareholders in order to settle a strike?—That is a hypothetical question.

**D-3948.** You said you did not recognize the Federation because it was not registered. When did you make that rule?—That is the present policy of the Company; there is no rule about it. Any registered Union will be recognized. As far as we know there is no unregistered union in existence in Jamshedpur at present.

**D-3949.** You say " We do not think unemployment insurance can be applied to the particular branch of employment " ?—That is a printing error ; it should be " to any particular branch of employment ". Our point was that if you have unemployment insurance it must be general for the whole country.

**D-3950.** In Great Britain a scheme was formulated and put into practice for particular industries and not to the whole of industry?—I think it would be putting a very unfair burden on a particular industry. The trouble is that here a man might belong to several different industries ; he may be an agricultural worker and a steel worker at the same time. Other countries have not the same conditions. A man may go back to his village and work there and then return after six months ; we could not undertake the responsibility for insurance while he was in the village. I am not now speaking from the Company's point of view but from the point of view of the country generally. It seems to me that it will impose an impossible burden on the taxpayer if you had unemployment insurance covering all persons employed in industry in India.

**D-3951.** The expenditure would be met by contributions from the workers, the employers and Government?—We do not think it is a practical proposition ; we do not see how a record could be kept of the men or how you could ensure that a man was really unemployed and not working in some other name somewhere else.

**D-3952.** Under the head " Disease " you say : " We occasionally have to treat cases of asthma resulting from gas poisoning, etc., but these are not frequent." Has the attention of the Factory Inspector or of Government been drawn to the fact that asthma is a sort of industrial disease?—(Mr. Alexander). I cannot say positively.

**D-3953.** Did you give compensation to these people who suffered from asthma resulting from gas poisoning?—No ; they would still be in employment I take it.

**D-3954.** It was not serious?—I do not think so.

**D-3955.** You do not know whether asthma is declared to be an industrial disease under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—I do not think it is more prevalent in this plant than in other plants ; with regard to gas our plant is no different from plants of a similar character.

**D-3956.** If gas poisoning causes asthma, asthma will become an industrial disease of those plants where gas poisoning is likely?—Yes, regardless of what country it is in.

**D-3957.** Referring to what you say with regard to the " desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement ", do the same difficulties exist with regard to provision for old age and the provident fund?—(Mr. Peterson). Not with regard to this particular



plant; we have a provident fund which is a good deal more liberal than the usual provident fund.

**D-3958.** You would not object to Government passing an Act giving some protection with regard to old age?—It is rather difficult to answer questions of that kind until I see the Act. We would have no objection to any reasonable proposals of that kind. Our experience of most of these Acts is that our own rules are more liberal than the Acts. We would have no objection to the principle; we enunciated it ourselves.

**D-3959.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: How would you apply it to the 7,000 discharges and resignations?—That would be a difficulty; but the whole object of this provision for old age pensions and so on is to get the labour more settled.

**D-3960.** You would make a certain length of continuous service a condition precedent?—Yes.

**D-3961.** *Mr. Joshi*: From what you say in your memorandum as to the causes of accidents, it would appear that the Company are perfect and never make any mistakes?—That is the classification of the Factory Inspector.

**D-3962.** How does he classify them?—(Mr. Alexander). Accidents are dealt with by the departmental safety committee, and all serious accidents are handled by a central safety committee who classify the accidents under these various heads. A copy of that is sent to the Factory Inspector; if he disagrees with the classification, he challenges it.

**D-3963.** Could it be dealt with by the Shop Committees—No, not at present, because our Shop Committees are not capable of dealing with it; all sorts of evidence has to be taken and it is a big problem; that is why we purposely put on these committees men of intelligence.

**D-3964.** *Mr. Clow*: Does "neglect of the management" mean neglect by you personally?—No, it means failure of the Steel Company to provide safeguards and things like that; for instance, belting not being covered.

**D-3965.** The figures for 1926 include that very serious accident when a ladle of steel fell?—That was improper maintenance of the crane.

**D-3966.** You would not call that neglect of the management?—(Mr. Peterson): The Company is responsible for employing a person who is negligent, but in such a case the accident would be regarded as being due to the negligence of that employee and would not be due to anything being wrong with the machinery; it would not, therefore, be "neglect of the management".

**D-3967.** You have stated that you had 128 convenanted officers?—  
Yes.

**D-3968.** How many of those officers would be capable of carrying on a conversation with reasonable fluency in any Indian language, for

instance, if a man wanted to explain his grievance?—(Mr. Alexander): A very small proportion, certainly not over 40 per cent., of that.

✓ **D-3969.** Do you not think it would be desirable that officers coming from America or Europe should be either encouraged or compelled to learn the language of the workmen?—I have encouraged them but they do not take advantage of the encouragement. We started several years ago paying Rs. 500 to a man who learned to speak so as to pass the colloquial test and Rs. 1,000 if he was able to read and write, but up to date I do not suppose more than half a dozen have done so. The alternative is compulsion which we have not tried yet; we are afraid that the ordinary steel worker, who can hardly read and write his own language, would be quite averse to taking on a contract which would compel him to learn another language. (Mr. Peterson): We have inserted a clause in the contract now that when a contract is renewed the employee may have to submit himself to an examination in the language.

**D-3970.** What class of men are the foremen and what is the pay?—Under-foremen get anything from Rs. 2 a day up to several hundred rupees a month.

**D-3971.** How many of those are Europeans and non-Indians?—(Mr. Alexander): I think we have about 500 foremen but I cannot say how many are Europeans; the majority of our covenanted hands are either heads of departments or workmen; I do not suppose more than 15 to 20 per cent. are foremen.

**D-3972.** In a report sent by you to the local Government there is a reference to lack of confidence on the part of the workmen in the integrity of the foremen. Do you think it is advisable that the foremen should have the power to suspend the men?—We have to give them a certain latitude in order that they may run the job; otherwise the men would run it.

**D-3973.** When a case of dismissal comes to the General Superintendent, has he before him any explanation from the man's side?—No, not usually; he takes the version of the foreman or the Superintendent; he does not get the man's view-point before he is discharged.

**D-3974.** Do you not think that is rather unreasonable; naturally the man who wants to get rid of him is not likely to present an entirely unprejudiced case?—We try to get a system which is not different from that of Western countries; there a foreman has power to dismiss a man and it does not rest with the General Superintendent or General Manager; we have gone far beyond what is the practice in England or Europe.

**D-3975.** But there the authority dismissing a man has at least heard what the man has to say, while here the General Superintendent has the power to dismiss, but has not the man's statement of the case?—That is true

**D-3976.** Would it be at all possible, consistently with discipline, to have a board or an officer, as far as possible independent of the General Manager, who would investigate cases of proposed dismissal and report on them?—We tried that; we had a welfare officer whom we called a labour organizer; but the men had no confidence in him; he was regarded as being just a Company man and it was a failure.

**D-3977.** Suppose there were an independent man, with of course purely advisory functions, who would be able to present an independent version of the case?—We have tried that too. We have tried almost everything; up to date every machinery we have tried for dealing with labour has been a failure; we are still trying.

**D-3978.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Have you always had the right type of foreman? The union tell us they object to the type?—Not only does labour object, but I object sometimes; but we have to consider what type of man is available.

**D-3979.** You have lost lakhs of rupees, or perhaps even a crore of rupees, owing to labour troubles; do you not think a thousand or two a month would be well spent if you could get the right type of officer who would be above suspicion and would earn the respect of all parties?—He cannot earn the respect of the ordinary labour, because they at once regard him as a Company *dalal*, though he may be the most honest man alive and sympathetic to the workmen; they do not believe in him.

**D-3980.** Do you not think you might get a type of man who would be regarded by labour as being, as we have been told elsewhere, their father and mother?—You might; I will not say it is impossible, but we have not been able to get it yet.

**D-3981.** *Mr. Clow:* With regard to "Hours worked per week and per day" you say: "In the 'Continuous Process' departments these men work 7 days in one week and 6 days in the next alternatively". How do you arrange that?—By means of extra staff.

**D-3982.** By a system of rotation?—Yes.

**D-3983.** Would it not be possible to give them one day a week?—We comply with the Factories Act: we used not to give them any time unless they took it. We are more or less following the practice in other countries. Our covenanted hands on the blast furnace work every day in the year; every fortnight they have what they call a long shift off work. The European staff are working the same as the Indian staff.

**D-3984.** Would it not be possible to give them 24 hours off every week?—More staff would be required to do it.

**D-3985.** Is it not a reasonable claim?—Yes; I do not like to see any man working more than 6 days a week, though I have to work 7 myself.

**D-3986.** Do you not think a man does better work if he does 6 days a week instead of 7?—Yes, I think so.

**D-3987.** With regard to the provision of quarters for your employees, there does not seem to be very much being done?—(Mr. Peterson): There is a good deal. (Mr. Alexander): Some of our stable men take advantage of the loans, but those that come and go do not.

**D-3988.** How do the rents that you charge your employees for houses compare with the economic rent?—(Mr. Peterson): They are considerable less than the economic rent; they represent a return of 3 per cent. on the capital.

**D-3989.** In your memorandum it is suggested that piece-work is work suitable for contractors. Elsewhere employers have told us they give work to contractors because of the difficulty of calculating the wages?—(Mr. Alexander): You probably refer to railways and engineering shops where there is a lot of repetition work; in much of our work there is no repetition work.

**D-3990.** You say "this work concerns the loading and unloading of wagons principally, which can be done on a piece-work basis and is most suitable in consequence for working on a contract system". Would you delete the words "in consequence"?—Yes.

**D-3991.** What you say with regard to migration of workers, appears to be an argument in favour of building up a permanent labour force?—I should not like to accommodate all the families of my domestic servants in my compound.

**D-3992.** *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: I understand the Company has no objection to public meetings being held?—(Mr. Peterson): Not in the place set apart for them.

**D-3993.** And a large number of public meetings have been held by the people?—Yes, they hold one or two a week very often.

**D-3994.** And adequate facilities exist for the holding of meetings? Yes; we have no complaints about it.

**D-3995.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: What are the duties of the welfare officer?—He sees to the provision of sports, free cinemas, playgrounds for children and so on.

**D-3996.** Inside the works you have the employment officer?—He looks after nothing inside the works except in the employment bureau; that is, before the man commences to work. Before the last strike we had a labour officer and his assistants inside the works; the men complained and it was one of the causes of the strike, so we abolished it.

**D-3997.** Yesterday a man complained to us that though he had been with you a number of years and had a family, he had not been provided with a house?—He must go to the town office.

**D-3998.** Apparently he must go to the town office by himself; he has no one from his department to go with him?—(Mr. Alexander): The theory is that if a man is unjustly treated he can take it up with his foreman; if his foreman is the right type of man he will take the matter up with the Superintendent, who should recommend that the town office should give this man a quarter if possible. But each man must be dealt with in order according to his length of service, pay and other things which are all card-indexed. I am the only person who can alter the order.

**D-3999.** But apparently there is nobody to look after the interests of that man and he is left with a grievance?—We are trying to get it known through the works that men of this type, however lowly they may be, can come to my Personal Assistant who will take up the matter with the Town Department.

**D-4000.** How many such applications has your Personal Assistant had?—We can give you those figures.

**D-4004.** The grievance of another man was that two unions were being recognized?—Each union asks us to withdraw recognition from the other.

**D-4005.** Another man's grievance was that he did not like this bonus system under which money was allocated among them; he would prefer incremental increases?—During the last strike the argument was that a general increment should have been given to the men, whereas the settlement which we at that time accepted and on which labour returned, was that the rates of wages should be revised throughout. Subsequently the new Federation raised the question that a percentage increase on the existing rate should have been given. That is a question which has been raised for the last 12 months. There was a settlement effected under which the men returned to work; within 4 weeks this new union came into existence and immediately challenged the settlement; they have repeatedly threatened us with labour trouble if we do not consent to revise it.

**D-4006.** They put a different interpretation on the settlement than you?—No; they said the settlement was wrong and ought not to have been accepted by the men.

**D-4007.** In the 12 months from April 1927 to April 1928 there were five strikes in Tata's works?—They were partial strikes. I think that was the result of a deliberate policy; the people who were at variance with the Company at that time endeavoured to shut down the key departments so that as small a number of men as possible would be on strike while work generally would be prevented and so we should have to pay the men who remained in. That was said by their leaders at their meetings; that was the reason of the partial strikes.

**D-4008.** What are your views as to the type of organization that should be set up by the workmen?—I should like to see a labour union

organized in exactly the same way as a labour union is organized in England, that is to say, a union which can control its followers. But I do not think our workmen are sufficiently educated for that, and I do not think they will be for another 15 or 20 years. I do not think the present discontent arises entirely in Jamshedpur; I think it is due to the political condition of India generally. I think the present discontent will gradually die down. This place is a microcosm of India; the people here have come from every part of India; they bring the new political ideas and thoughts with them. While India generally is in a state of political agitation you will find labour here agitated.

**D-4009.** For the moment I am prepared to concede that you have done everything that can be expected of you.—I do not think so; I think there is a good deal we might do.

**D-4010.** What do you think the other side might do to put an end to strikes?—What we really want the men to do at present is to work; they are not working. For some reason or other they are inspired with the spirit of carelessness; they are damaging the plant repeatedly; they are damaging the tracks and wagons; they are doing a great deal of harm to the plant and they are not working; the industry cannot obtain the profit it ought to obtain out of which it ought to be able to improve the condition of the workmen.

**D-4011.** Can you recommend anything to the union with regard to its membership or its methods that will enable it to speak authoritatively?—I can make recommendations but the union would not respect the recommendations. I think one of the great difficulties with regard to our unions is that their accounts are not published; no one knows how the money is spent; their officers are never properly elected. In the case of both our unions proper elections are not held. It seems to me that that lies at the bottom of the trouble, that the union is not a continuing, properly organized body. It is more or less what you might describe as a sort of club which every six months or so gets dissatisfied with its committee and turns it out.

**D-4012.** And you think this process must go on indefinitely?—It looks as if it must; it has gone on for 6 or 7 years here; every fresh leader who has appeared has ultimately been thrown over by the men.

**D-4013.** You have said you would recognize 20 unions. Would you collect the subscriptions of 20 unions?—That is a difficult question, but that does not necessarily follow from recognition.

**D-4014.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* What is recognition?—It simply means that the Company will deal with the office-bearers as representing the members of their union. I think the Act requires amendment in one respect; at present the Act provides for the registration of a union but makes no provision to enable anybody to apply for the cancellation of the registration of the union on the ground that the union is unnecessary, is improperly managed, or anything of that kind.

**D-4015.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : The registration or non-registration of a union makes no difference if they want to make trouble?—No, but it would affect the attitude of the Government towards it.

**D-4016.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Why collect for any Union?—About 4 or 5 years ago we came to an agreement with the Labour Union to deduct subscriptions, and when the other Union came along and asked us to do the same, we did not feel that we could refuse.

**D-4017.** Why not refuse in both cases?—That is a possible policy.

**D-4018.** I take it that when you say you want a minimum statutory wage, you are considering those of your employees who are getting the lowest wage?—(Mr. Alexander) : Yes.

**D-4019.** You would like to raise that wage, but your only reason for not doing so is that you have not the available funds?—That is not the only reason. Let us pay the same, or slightly more wages, but let the men give us more in return.

**D-4020.** Taking your lowest paid classes of workmen, how would you expect them to give you more in return for a higher wage?—I think it is physically impossible for them to do so, but at the same time I would like to see them give more work in return.

**D-4021.** Is not that unfair?—My idea is that as the coolie gets better wages he can raise his standard of living and improve his physique.

**D-4022.** How is he to get a better wage?—As time goes on. His wages have doubled since I have been here.

**D-4023.** Your point is that you would like to see him get a higher wage for more work than he is now doing, which you look upon as his capacity. Therefore I come back to my point that the reason you do not raise his wages is that you cannot afford to do so?—Yes.

**D-4024.** I have in my hands the evidence of an independent authority, who says that, taken on the whole, wages in your concern are adequate and generous, but that they are unequal. He maintains that the pay of your skilled workmen is on a very generous scale, but compared with what is regarded as a normal standard, the excess of pay over normal standard decreases from the top to the bottom until you only come to your normal standard at the bottom?—(Mr. Peterson) : We have recognized that, and we are endeavouring to correct it. (Mr. Alexander) : May I refer to the bonus scheme. If you take the first column you will see that we take 40,000 as 100 per cent. The low paid people earn 8 to 10 annas. Now look at the bottom. For 100 per cent. they get from 21 to 26 per cent. rise if they get to the 40,000. Now go over to the right hand side. You will see that the people getting from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 only get 2 to 3 per cent. rise.

✓ **D-4025.** *Mr. Joshi:* When you are making a reduction in your staff do you deal with all your staff equally, or do you only reduce the number of workers and leave the supervisory staff untouched?—If we are having a permanent reduction we deal with all the staff. If it is a temporary reduction we cannot possibly send men back to their homes in Europe or America and then bring them out again when they are required.

**D-4026.** Your last reduction was a permanent one, and you announced the reduction of so many workers. Did you announce the reduction of a proportionate number of the supervisory staff?—We did not announce any reduction at all. (*Mr. Peterson*): The Tariff Board, when they investigated the industry, came to the conclusion that it employed too many men. It pressed us to reduce the number of men by from 3,000 to 4,000. It incorporated that in its Report, and stated that we had said that we would do our best to do so. That was the only announcement ever made. We endeavoured to fulfil our promise, and as soon as we endeavoured to do so the strike broke out.

✓ **D-4027.** When you tried to reduce the number of workers, did you at the same time think of reducing the number of the supervisory staff?—(*Mr. Alexander*): Yes. As contracts expired we did not renew them. They did not expire at the time of the strike.

**D-4028.** Do you think that one of the causes of discontent may be the fact that when such reductions take place the workers know that there is going to be a reduction amongst themselves but that the supervisory staff is not going to be reduced at all?—They would not understand what I have just told you.

✓ **D-4029.** Are all your foremen on contract?—About 25 per cent. of our covenanted hands are foremen. The rest are either heads of departments or workmen.

**D-4030.** Leaving aside covenanted men, has there been any reduction in the case of foremen?—I cannot say.

**D-4031.** With regard to the possibility of a reduction in maximum hours, you state "We do not advocate such a reduction". Have you any objection to a reduction of hours?—We would need more men to do the work if we reduced the hours.

**D-4032.** How many men are working 8 hours and how many men are working 12 hours?—As a standard, we have no one working 12 hours.

**D-4033.** What are the weekly hours?—56 in the case of 8-hour people and 60 hours in the case of 10-hour people.

**D-4034.** Is 60-hours work in your factory easy work?—Some parts of it is.



**D-4035.** In your industry do not the conditions make the workmen get exhausted after 60-hours work?—They do not usually work hard enough or long enough at a stretch to get exhausted.

**D-4036.** If you reduced the hours would you not get more intensive work from the workmen?—I do not think so, not with the present type of man.

**D-4037.** What do you mean by that?—I mean that our men are illiterate and irresponsible. They would loaf just as much if we had a 6-hour working day.

**D-4038.** You state that the average rate of wages paid per head per month to direct Indian employees is 32. In calculating that average do you include the wages of foremen?—Yes. This excludes covenanted men, but it includes foremen and coolies.

**D-4039.** With regard to housing, a number of your workmen live outside your town. Would it not be an advantage from a sanitary point of view to your workers if there was a Town Planning Act applied to all the surrounding neighbourhood?—I think it would be a very good thing, but I do not know whether the Government would be prepared to take it up.

**D-4040.** Have you approached the Government on the matter?—No.

**D-4041.** *Miss Power:* Dealing with the comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers, you do not give any statistics to show whether there has been any marked increase in the case of your workers, whereas the Tinsplate Company has given some interesting figures, although they are a younger company than yours. Have you not worked out any figures of that kind?—We have for departments, but not for the works as a whole.

**D-4042.** Will you let us have them?—Yes.

**D-4043.** *Mr. Cliff:* As I understand, on the one hand the Union are unable to exercise control over the men, and on the other hand the Company are unable to exercise any control over the work-people?—(Mr. Peterson): That is true.

**D-4044.** Do you agree with that, Mr. Alexander?—(Mr. Alexander): Yes. (Mr. Peterson): I do not think anybody can exercise control over these men.

**D-4045.** You strike me as being rather pessimistic about any solution of this, except the lapse of time?—It is a matter of patience and education, like everything else in this country. My own personal opinion is that Government are too neutral. This is a country in which

Government cannot afford to be neutral in questions of this kind, but that is the attitude they take up. Practically everything is controlled by the Government ultimately. It is the biggest buyer in the country, and it supplies all funds.

**D-4046.** Mr. Homi said yesterday that he wants some form of Government intervention. Is your point that you want a Socialist State?—Personally I am a Socialist. The difficulty is for a Government tribunal to force its will on both parties. We saw that in Bombay. Although one side will accept the findings, the other side ignore them.

**D-4047.** As far as I can see from the records, it has always been the Union who has had to approach the Company. Can there be a change of tactics, and the Company approach the work people, whether they are in one or two combinations, with a view to getting effective machinery providing for effective representation, with some third party present who commands the confidence of both sides?—Yes, I think we could do that.

**D-4048.** Do you think it is worth while?—(Mr. Alexander): I would say anything is worth while.

**D-4049.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: If you have Union A. and Union B., are you to get them both together?—(Mr. Peterson): The principal difficulty would be to get anybody to agree to preside as a third person.

You call together Union A. and Union B. Then the next point is the third person?—Yes. We could ask the Government to appoint an independent Tribunal, under the Act.

**D-4050.** *Mr. Cliff*: My suggestion is, not a question of voluntary arbitration: consider the point of getting some conciliation between the Company and the Union, whereby effective means of representation can be devised. Having got that, you will possibly make in your machinery some term of reference to a third party in the event of disagreement. I can see the difficulty, but surely it is no more difficult than the present position?—A strike in India is not like a strike anywhere else. The men go out, usually without any demand or any grievance. Nobody knows why they have gone out. For a period of 3 or 4 weeks you cannot find anybody with whom to negotiate. When you do find somebody, and you start negotiations, all sorts of new grievances are invented and put forward.

**D-4051.** My point is not a question of a strike period. My point is a question of an open platform, with Government assistance if you like. Let there be a threshing out of the question of the people being able to make effective representation, and let there be a threshing out of the question as to whether in fact the Company is able to get it over to the men. There have been grave complaints against your Company that you are not able to get it over to the men. If there is

going to be any basis of peace and understanding you will agree with me that it has got to be got over to the people concerned. My point is, is it worth while to try this with an open platform with regard to representation, and with regard to getting the thing right through to the bottom?

*Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is not your difficulty this—that if you did all that Mr. Cliff asks, you are afraid that the work-people would still go out on strike without any notice, and without taking advantage of this machinery?—Exactly. That is what would happen.

**D-4052.** *Mr. Cliff*: I agree with the point put by Sir Victor, but in the disputes which have occurred, I have formed the impression that there has been some "stickiness" about meeting people?—Not from me.

**D-4053.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: Perhaps you will explore Mr. Cliff's point?—Yes.

**D-4054.** *Col. Russell*: The Labour Federation's memorandum states that you have housed from 30 to 40 per cent. of your workers, and you in your memorandum say that you have made a great point of studying the type of quarters best suited to the needs of the workers. To which types are you referring?—(*Mr. Alexander*): To all types for all classes of workmen.

**D-4055.** You have a considerable number of types. The one we saw yesterday was known as the hexagonal lay-out?—That is the *busti*. That is not one of our own quarters.

**D-4056.** But you have given approval to that lay-out?—Yes.

**D-4057.** I think the general opinion would be that the Indian prefers that kind of lay-out?—Only that particular class.

**D-4058.** You state that building loans given up to the 31st March 1929 were only two lakhs and three thousand. The Union state that there have been great difficulties in getting these loans?—There is no difficulty in getting a loan. That is a general statement. We must have specific cases. We do not agree with the statement.

**D-4059.** Your memorandum refers to four different types of quarters. Will you give us details as to the sizes of types N. 1 and R.M.?—We will send you the plans of the types of quarters.

**D-4060.** The statement has been made that although the hospital accommodation is reasonably satisfactory, the number of medical officers are insufficient. Twenty-four medical officers for a population of 100,000 seems to me a little deficient, especially for the outlying *bustis*. Would it be agreeable to the Company to open dispensaries in the outlying *bustis*?—(*Mr. Peterson*): Ordinarily in this country medical

relief and administration is a province of Government. Our population is over 100,000. If additional doctors are required, Government should provide them.

**D-4061.** Have you asked Government to do so?—We have suggested that Government should assist us, but they have declined to do so.

**D-4062.** If a man or his wife is too ill to come to hospital, does the medical officer go and visit him in the *busti*?—(Mr. Alexander): Yes.

**D-4063.** Apparently no private medical practitioner is practising in Jamshedpur. Does the Company actually forbid any independent medical practitioner from coming inside Jamshedpur to practise?—I do not think the question has ever arisen. (Mr. Peterson): The Company would certainly not forbid it.

**D-4064.** A definite statement has been made that you do forbid it?—Certainly not with the knowledge of the Company.

**D-4065.** May it not be due to the fact that there would be no housing accommodation available for such an individual?—That may be possible, but it has not come before the Company, and the Company has not refused. It has no power to refuse.

**D-4066.** Where would he get a house?—He would build himself one.

**D-4067.** On our land?—Yes. He could take land from us, or sub-let a house from somebody.

**D-4068.** There would be no objection to grant him land?—None whatever.

**D-4069.** Or a house?—We would not give him one of our own quarters because our own workmen need them.

**D-4070.** Have you any sanitary organization in Jamshedpur?—(Mr. Alexander): Yes.

**D-4071.** You say something about a trained health officer, but apparently he is not a medical officer at all?—He is. He is a qualified Medical Officer of Health.

**D-4072.** I understood that the whole of the Public Health organization was under Mr. Temple?—It is under the hospital. It is directly under Mr. Temple, but it is supervised by the Chief Medical Officer.

**D-4073.** Has the Chief Medical Officer time to do that?—Yes. They come to him for advice, and during his rounds he pays attention to it.

**D-4074.** Do you maintain that Dr. Chakravarty has time to supervise the public health work in an area such as Jamshedpur?—Not efficiently.

**D-4075.** You give details of your maternity benefit scheme. We learn that you do not give any payment before the child is born. Does that mean that a woman has to work until the actual day of child-birth?—  
(Mr. Peterson): This scheme is based on recommendations of doctors.

**D-4076.** Your doctors?—No, doctors of an allied concern. They advised us that in the case of these coolie women it was a great advantage to them that they should work up to the day of their confinement; it was much better for their health.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

# BIHAR AND ORISSA

## EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING.

### JAMSHEDPUR.

Monday, 24th February 1930.

PRESENT :

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding.*)

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.

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.*)

*Joint Secretaries.*

MR. S. LAL, I.C.S.

— MR. A. DIBDIN.

MR. J. LEYSHON, MR. H. D. TOWNEND and MR. W. O. HENDERSON, representatives of the Tinplate Company of India, Ltd., Golmuri Works.

**D-4077.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Mr. Townend, I understand that you are the Commercial Representative of the company?—(Mr. Townend): Yes.

**D-4078.** Will you tell us how long you have been connected with the tinplate industry?—Since the construction days in 1920-21.

**D-4079.** Mr. Leyshon, will you please tell us what your experience has been of the tinplate industry both at Home and here?—(Mr. Leyshon): I have been connected with the tinplate industry, as a worker from the time I was 17 years of age; till my 6th year I was working on the mills as a practical man; since then I have been on the executive line as foreman, superintendent and manager.

**D-4080.** Your experience has been chiefly in America?—In America and here.

**D-4081.** And you Mr. Henderson?—(Mr. Henderson): I have been connected with the Tinsplate Company since the commencement of 1920.

**D-4082.** You are now the Chief Accountant?—Yes.

**D-4083.** In your memorandum you have given us some interesting figures of production for the years 1923 to 1928. Could you give us your production for 1929?—(Mr. Townend): It is about 33,000 tons.

**D-4084.** The falling off from the high figure of 41,000 tons in 1927 to 36,000 tons in 1928 was due to the strike at the Tata Iron and Steel Works from which you get your raw material, and the falling off in 1929 was due to a strike in your own works?—Yes.

**D-4085.** You say in your memorandum that only 10 per cent. of your labour is local. That means that the other 90 per cent. comes from the outlying districts. May we know who actually engages that labour?—(Mr. Leyshon): The heads of the various departments engage the labour. Our plant is divided into two parts. Mr. Price is in charge of the Hot Mills while Mr. Russell is in charge of the Finishing Department. All our labour in the plant is employed either by Mr. Price or Mr. Russell, while Mr. Henderson employs men for the office. All appointments have to be approved by me.

**D-4086.** If I were a worker seeking employment in your plant whom should I approach first of all?—You should go to the time office, which acts in a way as an employment office.

**D-4087.** Who is in charge of that?—The chief time-keeper.

**D-4088.** Is he an Indian?—Yes. If extra men are required for the department under the charge of Mr. Price, the foreman concerned, with the approval of Mr. Price, takes the men on. The same procedure is followed in recruiting men for Mr. Russell's departments.

**D-4089.** So that before a man is actually taken the approval of the Superintendent concerned is necessary?—Yes.

**D-4090.** If you have to dismiss a man who dismisses him?—No man is dismissed as a rule without first giving him a warning. For instance, if a man creates some trouble in any department, the foreman concerned will warn the man. If he pays no attention to the warning he is, with the approval of either Mr. Price or Mr. Russell, suspended for a day. If the man does not correct himself he is suspended again for two days. If the man still persists in having his way he is finally discharged with my approval.

**D-4091.** On the question of labour turn-over you say that the average is 2.6 years. That means that practically a third of your hands turn over every year?—Not necessarily. That was not our intention when we put that in. (Mr. Townend): The trouble is that usually the same

people turn-over time and time again, and it is very hard by statistics to trace what the actual turn-over is. It may be that half the people turn-over in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years—I do not say that that is the exact figure—or it is quite possible that our coolie labour may turn-over ten times in that period. This would give an apparent average turn-over of 50 per cent.

**D-4092.** Would you be good enough to send a note showing the number of your supervising staff, including the foremen, and the number of your skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled staff?—Yes.

**D-4093.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : On pages 14 and 15 you have given a list showing the rates of wages of different classes of labour. You can complete the list by putting against each the number employed by you?—Yes.

**D-4094.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say : "Migration of workers—no effect, as our labour turn-over is low.", and yet you also say that your average turn-over is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years?—(Mr. Leyshon) : It does not necessarily mean that they all go. Some of our best men stay all the time. For instance, our skilled men on the rolls do not go; some of them have been with us from the start of the plant.

**D-4095.** *Mr. Cliff* : How long should a man be away before he becomes a new man : Does this  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years turn-over mean that if a man goes on leave and does not return in time he starts as a new hand?—Not necessarily.

**D-4096.** Have you got any rules about that?—What we do in a case of that kind is this : Suppose we have a man getting Rs. 2 or Rs. 2-8-0 and he goes on leave with the permission of the Superintendent for 2 weeks, 3 weeks or a month. If he comes back within that time or within a week later, we will reinstate that man at his old rate. If he has gone for 2 or 3 months and we do not know where he is, we naturally fill his place with some other man. But later on if he comes back and he is employed again by us, perhaps he does not get the same rate that he was getting when he went on leave; he may start on a lower rate. But if he is a good man we go on increasing his rate by As. 4 a month till he gets his original rate again, provided he is doing the same job.

**D-4097.** Let us leave aside the lower paid staff for the moment and deal with the staff with a fair degree of skill. Do I understand you rightly that, if these men go away either at the end of 12 months or at the end of 2 years for a period of 2 months or anything like that, they are being re-employed but they are not being regarded as being in continuous service unless they do not exceed their leave by more than approximately a week?—They are re-employed if they return within a limited time.

**D-4098.** Does that mean that the same people are coming back really but they are not regarded as being in continuous service?—The record would not show a man who comes after 6 months as being in continuous service.



**D-4099.** With regard to the lower paid labour do you trouble yourself very much about them whether it is continuous service or not?—(Mr. Townend) : No, because continuous service has hitherto had no effect on anything; it is only recently that we have introduced the provident fund scheme where continuous service will matter.

**D-4100.** I am not thinking of the benefits; I am really thinking whether in the main you are not handling the same body of labour?—(Mr. Leyshon) : No. We will prove that to you later.

**D-4101.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say that you have two works committees, one dealing with safety regulations and the other with works organization. Have you got a constitution for them?—We have no regular constitution.

**D-4102.** How many Indians and Europeans are there on each committee?—7 or 8 Europeans and probably an equal number of Indians.

**D-4103.** Do the same people represent on both the committees, or are there separate men for each committee?—Mostly they are the same men, because they are the heads of departments, including our doctor and the sanitary inspector, who are really the best men we have.

**D-4104.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You have only heads of departments on these committees, and there is no actual representative of the workmen?—No.

**D-4105.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : Do you keep minutes of meetings of these committees?—Yes.

**D-4106.** Could you let us have a copy of these minutes, say, for the last three months?—Yes.

In your memorandum you say : " 724 houses have been built with loans granted by the company, the total of which up-to-date amounts to Rs. 22,907." I think the figure of 724 is not correct?—(Mr. Henderson) : I think it is a misprint for 124.

**D-4107.** You refer to evictions. Have you had many evictions?—(Mr. Leyshon) : We have had evictions only since the strike has taken place.

**D-4108.** How many evictions did you have?—I do not know the exact figure; I think the number of applications would be about 240. No actual evictions have yet taken place.

**D-4109.** Did you go to the court?—Yes.

**D-4110.** How long did it take to evict a worker?—It takes about 5 months to get an eviction order. Few cases have yet been decided. Other cases are continually coming off.

**D-4111.** With regard to the Notified Area Committee, I believe it has been reconstituted lately?—(Mr. Townend) : It has been running more or less in the same form for some years.

**D-4112.** There has been a change made in recent months?—I do not know about the change made in recent months; but the notified area committee was given municipal powers by Government during the last year or two.

**D-4113.** Do you look after your own particular area?—We look after our own people but not our own area. The Board of Works look after the roads, trees and so on in our area.

**D-4114.** I understand that the Board of Works and the Notified Area Committee are in effect the same body?—More or less, yes.

**D-4115.** You are on both these bodies?—Yes.

**D-4116.** How many representatives have you on these bodies?—We have one representative.

**D-4117.** What does he do?—He is on the Committee, and he attends the meetings of the Committee. There are officers who carry out the executive functions in our area just as in Jamshedpur.

**D-4118.** Therefore the control is over the whole area; you do not look after any particular area to the exclusion of others?—No.

**D-4119.** You find this system to be satisfactory?—Yes.

**D-4120.** In your memorandum you say: "Our policy has always been to reduce numbers and increase wage rates," and you have given us some interesting figures. You have given the annual output from the year 1923. I wonder whether you could tell us the total number of workers that you required to man the plant to get this production?—(Mr. Leyshon): The last trouble that we had has changed the conditions considerably. We have now about 200 more men than we actually need. We have taken them on as a result of the strike, because they were good workers at one time or another. But we would need no more men now than we had before. For instance, in 1925 the tonnage was 29,000 and in 1926 it was 34,000. It is safe to say that we can make 44,000 tons with the same number of men that we had in 1926; that is to say, with 3,000 men. This is due to increased efficiency; the men now are more willing to work; just before the strike we were educating our people.

**D-4121.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* How did you educate?—We had the necessary European supervision in every mill. Of course, we are now gradually Indianizing it.

**D-4122.** How did you educate the men to want to do more work?—By offering bonus on production. We had a fixed daily rate and for increased production we fixed a bonus rate; that is to say, over a limited number of boxes they were to get so many annas a box. That contributes largely to the increased output. (Mr. Townend): You wanted the number of work-people for each year since 1923; we will give you the figures.

**D-4123.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Have you had any signs of Ca'canny policy in your works?—(Mr. Leyshon): Not lately.

**D-4124.** When did you have it?—We had it before the recent trouble; in fact, it began in December 1928. It was a question then of the agitation coming on. A labour organization had been formed and apparently the things that the Company had done were not satisfactory to the members of the committee. While we were endeavouring to get things straightened out the ca'canny policy began. We had a bonus scheme which we considered to be fair at that time—and since that time it has been proved that it is a fair scheme—and we told the men and the members of the committee that they should work on the bonus scheme.

**D-4125.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* When you say members of the committee do you mean the members of the union committee?—Yes. We told them that they should give this scheme a fair trial. Many of the men in the hot mills, that is the mills where the plate is first rolled, realised that they could make a fair bonus. They were working very hard with the result that some of the crews were making much more tonnage than others. On investigation from the Superintendent and the foremen we found out that certain members of the committee were going up and down the mills and telling the men to go slow, because by showing a greater production the other workers would be penalized.

**D-4126.** *Sir Alexander Murray:* Dealing with the bonus scheme, you have given the figures for March and April. I take it that they are the figures for March and April 1929?—Yes.

**D-4127.** That statement shows that the best crews were earning a bonus of 20.6 per cent. You have given the average figure to be 11 per cent. Some of them must have been earning very much more and some very much less than 11 per cent.?—Yes, they were. I would say that nearly all our crews could do about the same amount of work. The only difference was that some were trying to work while others would not work, not that they could not work.

**D-4128.** Have you re-started this bonus?—Yes.

**D-4129.** Could you give us corresponding figures after you re-started the bonus scheme?—(Mr. Henderson): Yes. In November 1929 the best crews got 30.21 per cent. bonus, and the average was 12.54. In December 1929 the figures were 39.24 and 21.35 respectively; while in January 1930 the figures were 35 per cent. and 22.39 per cent. respectively. (Mr. Leyshon): Taking the workmen as a whole, the crews that made the average of 11 per cent. in March 1929 were in reality better and more experienced than the crews we have now.

**D-4130.** You have a number of new men now?—We have many new men on every crew.

**D-4131.** If the crews in March 1929 had worked as hard as the crews that are working now, the average would have risen to more than 22 per cent.?—It would have been at least 25 to 26 per cent.

**D-4132.** You say that fining has been completely discontinued since the beginning of 1928. I take it that instead of fining you now have the system of warning?—Yes. I was not in favour of the fining policy.

**D-4133.** When the union was in existence did you collect the union's subscriptions by deducting from the wages of the workers?—No.

**D-4134.** Would it be a fair question to ask whether you approve or disapprove of the system of deduction from the wages of the workers?—It is absolutely wrong.

**D-4135.** Have you ever met with it anywhere else?—No. If you permit me to say so, I do not think that it is fair to the worker himself.

**D-4136.** In Europe it is not fair to the worker himself?—No. I have collected union dues many years myself, and I never approved of it. If a union organization is accepted by a management, it seems to me to be the business of the union to conduct its own affairs and to collect its own bills. It conveys the idea, if the management collect it, that the employee has the management to contend with and the union to contend with also. He has the privilege, no doubt, of saying "Well, the management should not collect my dues." But it can be used against him and he can be told: "All right, if you get into trouble we will not take care of you."

**D-4137.** I appreciate the way in which you have put it. When such is the difficulty where you have one union, I take it you will agree that the position will become much more complicated when the management has to collect subscriptions for 2 or 3 competing unions?—Yes, certainly.

**D-4138.** *Mr. Cliff:* I am not expressing any views on the merits or the demerits of the policy. You said that it was unfair to the worker. May I know in what way it is unfair to the worker?—I believe in this respect that he has the union officials on one side, if he does not altogether approve of trade unionism, and he has the management on the other.

**D-4139.** Surely, you only deduct from those persons who are members?—In the first place, why should we deduct?

**D-4140.** I want to see where the question of unfairness to the man comes in if he wishes to join a union. There are several classes of societies in India, like the co-operative societies and provident funds, to which deductions are made from the wages. What difference is there, on merits, between a trade union and a co-operative society or a provident fund society?—There is much difference. Sometimes you get rivalry in a trade union due to various officers. If my faction is elected and your faction is not elected there is always a breach.

**D-4141.** That is true of every organization in the world?—But it is more so in a trade union than in a co-operative society.

**D-4142.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : With regard to unclaimed wages, may we know whether it is a substantial sum?—(Mr. Henderson) : No, it is not very great. I think it is about Rs. 5,000.

**D-4143.** You say that a statement of unclaimed wages is available. Will you please send in a copy of the statement?—Yes.

**D-4144.** *Sir Victor Sassoon* : I understand that in your early days you were very much interested in taking a very active part in trade union activities?—(Mr. Leyshon) : Yes.

**D-4145.** And your sympathies have remained where they used to be?—It is pretty hard to forget it all.

**D-4146.** You are trying to do your duty to your employers as manager and at the same time, as far as possible, meet what you consider to be the legitimate aspirations of the workers?—Absolutely.

**D-4147.** We can, therefore, take it that you are in a much better position to sympathize with trade unionism than the average manager who has not been as much interested in trade unionism as you have been?—Yes.

**D-4148.** From what you have stated, I notice that in the early days you dealt with the union committee here. Did you deal with that committee in fixing these rates?—Not exactly. We felt this way that we had done everything in our power and had paid as much money as we could pay. We had fixed a bonus rate, we had a provident fund scheme; we went as far as the Company could go.

**D-4149.** While you were working up your rates, did you take the union into your confidence?—No; we submitted the rates to them afterwards.

**D-4150.** Usually, in other countries, would that be the procedure? Would the management make out the rates and then submit them to the union, or would they work them out with the union?—It has been my experience that if it is a question of a wage scale, the workers' union take that up and submit their scale to the manufacturers and the manufacturers generally submit their scale to the union. A conference is then held for deciding what scale there should be.

**D-4151.** That was not done in your case?—No.

**D-4152.** Is that probably because the committee of the union did not have the technical knowledge to be able to discuss these matters?—We set down our scale of wages and bonus. A counter proposition was made by the union which we knew to be absolutely wrong, and the Company could have never paid it. Mr. Homi who was the president of the union at that time was very familiar with our business, but the scale of bonus that he put in went beyond what the Company could pay. If we had accepted it, our production would have been much less and the rates of bonus would have been increased.

**D-4153.** Although you took into consideration the union's proposition, you still adhered to your own rates because their request was not reasonable?—We could not do more than we did.

**D-4154.** What is the position to-day? Is there a union committee now?—No, not to my knowledge.

**D-4155.** There are no representatives of the men that you can deal with to-day?—No.

**D-4156.** You can now deal with them only as individuals?—That is so.

**D-4157.** You said that you educated your men to earn more money by giving you more production. You apparently did that before the strike?—Yes.

**D-4158.** You told us that the union committee went round, trying to give the workers the opposite form of education and asking them not to take advantage of the bonus?—Yes, they did.

**D-4159.** But since there has been no union and no committee the men are acting up to their own convictions and now you are getting a better production?—Yes.

**D-4160.** How would you as a trade unionist reconcile those two facts?—There is a difference between the trade unionism we have experienced in India and the trade unionism that I am familiar with; there is a considerable amount of difference between trade unions at Home and trade unions here.

**D-4161.** We have always seen the employers asking for trade unions on British lines and not on the lines they have been here. Have you any constructive proposals to make for building up Indian labour on those sound lines?—It is quite a problem.

**D-4162.** It seems to me then that either you have got to carry on as you are now doing with what is called the *ma bap* system, or else you have got to have trade unions on unsound lines similar to the ones you have already had. Is there no other way to meet the situation?—I do not know of any other way. There is one thing that I tried but I failed in my effort. I tried to apply my experience as a trade unionist to get the Indian along the same lines, but it seems that even the leaders that came here gave wrong advice; I do not mean political leaders; I am referring to trade unionists.

**D-4163.** Having failed, what do you propose to do now?—I do not know what we propose to do now. Until something else develops we are going to carry on on the same lines as we have hitherto been doing.

**D-4164.** You say it is not for you to train men in order that they may form a union on sound lines; but it is for them to train themselves?—Yes. We did give them help when the union was formed. For the first meeting of the union we sent a representative from the office who was assistant to Mr. Henderson. Just before that we took what we thought was one of our best Indians in the office who spoke 5 or 6 languages, and we made him the head of the labour department. His duty was to work between the management and the union.

committee. Being an Indian we felt that he would be accepted by the union and that he would get along better because he understood the workers well. When the first meeting of the union was held this gentleman who is a shorthand writer went to the meeting with Mr. Henderson's assistant, and the understanding was that he should take a verbatim report of the meeting and give the union a copy of it if they wanted it. The first meeting of the union was not too bad, in my opinion. The discussion was very much along trade union lines. I was very pleased with the progress that was made. It was not very long until there was another meeting. This meeting was entirely different from the previous one. Some of the leaders who came there delivered speeches, and one of the speeches was to this effect: "There is only one way by which we can get *swaraj* and that is by uniting the labourers together". At that time I was not concerned with *swaraj*, nor am I particularly interested in it now. The speech went on: "I understand that the management has agreed to accept your labour union. This is the first time in my experience in India that I have heard of a management accepting a union. It took years in Great Britain and America before a union was accepted. You must be aware that it is a trick; it is the cunningness of the management. We do not care whether the management recognize our union or not. If we have a properly constituted labour union and get it registered under the Trade Union Act, the management must recognize us. If you are united you need not care whether you are recognized or not." I realised at the time that they were making a bitter mistake. I sent for the labour leader, but he did not come. The next time I sent him another invitation and he accepted it. We took up the 18 demands, and we discussed them with this union. We talked about trade unionism. I quoted passage after passage from his speech and told him: "You are giving wrong information to the men. You are leaving these men under the impression that if they are united into a union they can get anything they ask for. That is wrong. The object of trade unionism is mutual co-operation. You are already talking about a strike. The last thing that a good trade union leader will resort to is a strike. If I was leading the men in India or in any place, I would use the strike as a last resort." I got the 27 members of the union committee into my office and told them: "Gentlemen, we have accepted your organization in absolutely good faith. This Company, and I myself personally, want to treat our labour very well. If we are to get along you must not go to your meetings and have all this strike talk. I need not tell you that I am strong enough, and that if you have a strike you will be defeated." I told them this long before the strike. They agreed with me and went out. But unfortunately we saw that after some time they started the same thing again, of going on strike. We found that within a short time the opinion of the poor labourer had been changed completely. The labourer was told: "You have got a union and you can get anything you like. You should strike to get your demands, and keep on striking." That might have been all right a good many years ago, but it is wrong now. The question of suspensions came up, and the

men would not do this or that. I was very anxious to avoid a strike, and we realised that it was necessary to put a few suspended men back to work. I will give you one illustration. A man was suspended on Wednesday, and I told Mr. Price to put this man back to work when he came. My intention was to have a hearing and to prove that the man was absolutely wrong. "If you do not put the man to work we will shut the mill down" that was the threat that was held out. I said: "We will take the man's case up on Saturday, and if he is not guilty we will take him in." But in the meantime there was a *hartal* and the plant was at a stand-still. We told the men "Take the iron out of the furnace; we will pay you. This is not fair to you. You are acting without any authority. We will take up the case on Saturday." The men did not hear us at all. Shortly after this we had another *hartal* and the mill was shut down again. We had no warning of any kind. I sent for Mr. Homi and other members of the committee.

**D-4165.** What did they say?—Mr. Homi gave me to understand that he knew nothing about it, and he put the men to work. I had a talk with Mr. Mitra, who was the Vice-President of the Union. He was a young, intelligent and smart man, and I told him: "If you do not talk to your own people here, surely you are going to have trouble". But he had no weight; none of them had. For instance, in the annealing department, the big furnace was working only three days a week. Before the union was formed, the men working on the furnace used to go and help in another department after they finished their three days' work. They were being paid wages for 6 days. After the union was formed, these men said: "We will not work after the furnace is down". Mr. Russell pointed out to Mr. Mitra and to the other members of the committee the unreasonable attitude of the men. These members tried to convince the men that they were wrong, but the men paid no attention.

**D-4166.** Who was pulling the string?—I do not blame any one in particular, but it was evident that the union committee which was supposed to control their men could not do it.

**D-4167.** In your memorandum you suggest that picketing should be made illegal?—The picketing that I saw should be made illegal.

**D-4168.** You would not object to 2 or 3 people standing together to persuade their fellow men not to go to work, but you would object to picketing by 500 people?—I would not object to peaceful picketing. I would not object to a union picketer standing on the road and telling the man who is on his way to work: "We are all on strike. We do not want that you should go to work. We believe that our cause is right, and if we all do not go to work we will win the strike". I object to what I call illegal picketing. A fellow starts to work, and two pickets meet him and tell him not to go to work. The man says: "I have got to go to work, because I have a wife and a couple of children to support. I have nothing to eat. I have my sympathies



with you, but in the circumstances I have got to go." He comes to the next two pickets, and he tells them the same thing. Then he meets the next two and so on. By the time he gets down to the fifth set of picketers he decides that he better go home and starve.

**D-4169.** *Mr. Cliff:* That is moral suasion?—I do not agree with you.

**D-4170.** *Sir Victor Sassoon:* Is it your point that you cannot have peaceful picketing here?—It is very doubtful. I have been a picketer myself, and my instructions always to my pickets going round were to be peaceful and to keep within the law.

**D-4171.** Did they carry out your instructions?—No.

**D-4172.** You do not believe that picketing can be peaceful and that is why you consider that it should be made illegal?—Illegal as far as we are concerned here.

**D-4173.** Why do you say that?—Because I cannot speak of other places which are not familiar to me.

**D-4174.** You cannot expect Government to pass a special statute, to make picketing illegal, for the Tinsplate Works only?—We do not say that.

**D-4175.** When you say that picketing must be made illegal it must be statutory?—From what I saw here I based my opinion. If the same conditions exist in other places I would say the same thing.

**D-4176.** Is it your view that Government should by statute make picketing illegal?—Yes.

**D-4177.** That is for everybody?—Yes.

**D-4178.** *Mr. Cliff:* On the question of hours of labour, you say that you work three 8-hour shifts and the normal working week is of 6 days or 48 hours. I want to know why you do not work 10 hours instead of 8?—We could not because three 8-hour shifts is 24 hours, and we have divided the day into three shifts.

**D-4179.** Does that apply to all the departments in the works?—It applies to the mills and the tin house. In the other departments, such as the pickling and the warehouse, they can use one shift or two shifts, but on the mills it is customary in tinsplate and sheet works to work to a continuous 8-hour shift.

**D-4180.** It is customary in the world, and you accepted it?—As far as rolling plates, yes.

**D-4181.** Have you got anything to say with regard to the effect of 8-hour day on your workmen?—I think they approve of the 8-hour day.

**D-4182.** Having brought the class of labour that you have brought into the Tinsplate Company during the last few years, have you been

discouraged with the progress that has been made?—I have been encouraged by the progress that has been made.

**D-4183.** To what do you attribute the encouragement that you have got from Indian labour working in your company?—We have always tried to treat our labour with consideration. We have brought an expensive European organization from Great Britain and take an interest in training the labour here.

**D-4184.** You would lay great emphasis on the training of Indian labour?—Yes.

**D-4185.** You would definitely say that as far as your experience is concerned, you are not discouraged but rather encouraged?—Yes.

**D-4186.** Dealing with the semi-skilled and skilled labour it is stated that you pay higher wages than is generally paid?—We believe our rates are comparatively higher than those paid in other parts of India.

**D-4187.** What is your experience of the higher wage policy pursued by the company?—I believe in paying good wages.

**D-4188.** Apart from believing, having worked that out in practice in your own factory, do you believe that the experience which you have had over the years that you have been here has been of practical benefit both to the workmen and to the firm?—It has been of benefit as far as the workman himself is concerned, but the unfortunate part of the thing is that what the Company has done has been upset by outside influences.

**D-4189.** Having practical experience, I wanted to know what you had to say first of all with regard to an 8-hour day, secondly with regard to the training, and thirdly with regard to the higher wages?—(Mr. Townend): We have no experience of paying low wages.

**D-4190.** You do not think that the wages paid to your coolie labour are low?—What we pay is high wages even for coolies. None of these people would earn more than one or two annas a day in their own homes.

**D-4191.** My experience is that in certain places the coolie labour is paid equally or a little higher?—We have never paid low wages relative to the peoples' wants and needs.

**D-4192.** You never tried with low wages?—No.

**D-4193.** But you have tried with high wages?—Yes.

**D-4194.** Whether, as far as your factory is concerned, high wages have led to less working hours being given?—(Mr. Leyshon): The working hours have always been as stated.

**D-4195.** In many places evidence has been laid that if one paid higher wages the labourer would not work for the time laid down for

him; he would absent himself from work because he has got more money to spend. I want the experience of your own factory in relation to that?—It has been said that the more you pay the more you make him stop working. That is true to some extent. (Mr. Townend): We do not let people go and come back. (Mr. Leyshon): We found that many of our men who had good jobs here and who had left us 3 or 4 years ago came to us during the strike, because they were making good money. I will give you an interesting instance. Only a few weeks ago four of our men who were getting high rates of wages came to Mr. Thomas their superintendent, and said: "We are leaving for our country. We wish to thank you and the manager and everybody for your generosity, kindness and consideration. We shall ever pray for your long life and prosperity. We have made enough money to get a tract of land". But, of course, we do not have many cases of that nature.

**D-4196.** When the men here are working week by week have you got any complaints to make with regard to their regular daily attendance?—No, it is not bad. Our absentees are approximately 10 per cent. which, in my opinion, is not bad for any labour. We have gone into that carefully.

**D-4197.** That includes people who go away?—Yes.

**D-4198.** With regard to your experience of trade union in your own works, before the union was formed you were faced with a difficulty with regard to production, as I understand it, and you laid the men off?—Before the union was formed, we did not experience much difficulty with regard to production.

**D-4199.** Am I advised wrongly if I say that when there was a strike in Tata Company, the output of tinplates was reduced, there was a fall in the demand for tinplates and consequently there was a reduction in the working days?—Tatas could not give us as much steel as we needed to work full time. This went on more or less for five months. During all that time we paid our men full time wages for half time work. We paid Rs. 2,50,000 in wages for work we did not receive.

**D-4200.** I am advised there was loss in wages consequent on the reduction of working days?—No, we worked half time but paid full wages for five full months.

**D-4201.** There was no loss in wages?—I would not say that. I do not think there is any place in India where full time wages are given for half time work.

**D-4202.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What is your monthly wages bill?—About Rs. 1,25,000.

**D-4203.** *Mr. Cliff*: I have just a few questions to ask you with regard to your experience of your Union. I am advised that you met Mr. Daud, representative of the Union recognized by you in January 1929 at Golmuri?—Yes.

**D-4204.** When you met him, apparently you said that any relaxation of the restriction of the working days was not possible, but you came to an understanding on some minor matters. Does that represent the result of the negotiations between Mr. Daud and your Company?—That was during the Christmas holidays. We paid five days' wages to all workers for that week whether they had actually worked two days or three days. This was rejected by the Union and Mr. Daud came to see me in that connection.

**D-4205.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: The men wanted to be paid for six days?—Yes. If the mill had worked full time one shift would have had six turns and two other shifts five turns each. Since no shift worked six turns all were in the same position and we paid them all the same amount for five days. They were not satisfied and this was one of the points that led up to the strike.

**D-4206.** *Mr. Cliff*: Mr. Daud came to see you and later on Mr. Homi came to see you. One of the questions at issue was the relaxation of the restriction of working days. If the men had been paid full time wages for half time work that surely would not have been an issue?—(Mr. Townend). That was with reference to short time work in January owing to lack of orders. Owing to the strike in Tatas and consequent short production from our mills the Oil Companies had to order a large amount of tinplates from Wales. During those two months tinplates were still arriving from Wales and there was not much demand for our product. We had therefore to work half time during January. When January was over we began to work full time.

**D-4207.** *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You paid your men full time wages for half time work when the Tatas were on strike but did you not do the same when you could not work full time owing to lack of orders?—We paid them half a days' wages for days they did not work.

**D-4208.** *Mr. Cliff*: Mr. Daud met you in January and had to go back to tell his men that any relaxation of the restriction of working days was not possible. Mr. Homi met you on the 7th February and the result of the negotiations included an undertaking to run the works full time as far as possible?—We have always done that.

**D-4209.** So that in February it was still an issue?—(Mr. Leyshon) It was an issue in February. I remember Mr. Homi telling me that if the works were kept open full time the men would be satisfied. I told him that it was our endeavour to keep the works open full time as far as possible and that we lost money by working part time.

**D-4210.** Both in January and February it was an issue and you could not give a definite undertaking to Mr. Daud to keep the works open full time as far as possible?—(Mr. Townend): We gave a similar undertaking to Mr. Daud, but I think Mr. Homi was the better general.

**D-4211.** Both in January and February the Company could not give an undertaking to keep the works running full time?—(Mr. Leyshon):

With regard to this question of working part time we received a letter from Calcutta that owing to the conditions in the installations and the fact that Welsh plates were still arriving we had better slow up our operations. We posted that notice at the gate but the members of the union did not believe it. In fact they said it was a lie on the part of the Company. Mr. Daud came to see me about it. He said that if I had no business for a month I might rather close down the works instead of working half time. I said I was agreeable to it. Immediately one of his friends intervened, there was some conversation between them and Mr. Daud said : " Better carry on as at present ".

**D-4212.** I see that Mr. Daud comes to you in January and makes a settlement on some minor matters. Another trade union leader described as a better general comes along afterwards and these are the improvements that he secures : (1) increase in rates of pay, (2) a bonus scheme, (3) a provident fund scheme, (4) maternity benefit, (5) large increase in housing. A union is formed and within a very short time meets your Company and these are apparently the things which your Company are prepared to concede. Is that so?—Not because a union was formed. Those were things already planned out before the union was formed.

**D-4213.** They were not offered in January but they were apparently offered in February?—(Mr. Townend) : The housing scheme was sanctioned in the previous year. (Mr. Leyshon) : Everything else was worked out before the Union was formed but it was not feasible to put them into operation when we had been working half time for five months. We were not given an opportunity to get on our feet.

**D-4214.** I appreciate your difficulties about finance. My difficulty is with regard to the handling of labour and with regard to your meeting with the trade union. Let me illustrate what I mean. If a union can send a man in January and only obtain a settlement on some minor matters and can then send a man in February and get all these concessions that surely shows there was the fear of the strike—I think you are wrong. When the union was formed all these questions were discussed with the members of the Union absolutely honestly. We knew there was going to be a union in our works ; we did not fear it. We did not want to crush it. I think our strike was a tragedy. Union or no union we had all these schemes worked out during the Steel Company's strike. While the strike was going on in Tatas it was only natural to suppose that our people would attend their meetings. I would have myself attended the meetings if I had been one of the workers. In fact we did not object to their doing that and they did attend the meetings. We were paying good wages to our men considering the losses we have made ever since the beginning of our operations. We could not have paid them bonus or provident fund ; we were only six years old and we could not have done all those things before that time. Nearly all the questions that have arisen since the formation of the Union were mapped out by me. I took the scheme to

Calcutta and had the tentative approval of the Board of Directors. I pointed out that it was only natural to suppose that our men would make demands very much along the same lines as the employees of the Steel Company and that we should try and meet them. Then Mr. Daud came to us and we told him that all these things were being worked out and that the Company was trying to meet all their demands except the 25 per cent. increase in wages. We had a 5-hour conference and at the end I asked him whether he sincerely believed in the intentions of the Company and would go and tell his men accordingly. He said he had no doubt about the Company's intentions and would go and inform his men accordingly. I told him that if he did so he would be thrown over by his men. He said he knew the Indian better than I did and no such thing would happen. But in fact he went and told his men that the Company sincerely intended to satisfy their demands and he was consequently thrown over. That was where I scored.

*Mr. Cliff* : It is apparent to any one looking at the situation that the trouble at the Tatas had a natural reaction on the men of your Company.

**D-4215.** You made certain concessions to Mr. Homi which you were as a Company planning to give?—Mr. Daud would have got the same thing if he had not been thrown over.

**D-4216.** In your memorandum you say: "We look with favour on a properly constituted and well run union." May I take it even as a result of your experience you have not given up the hope of dealing with a *pucca* trade union, if you like?—If it is a *pucca* trade union we will have no objection to it.

**D-4217.** Will you have any objection as a Company to meet a representative of a trade union organized by Mr. Joshi in order to get better relations between your Company and the combination of your work-people?—It just depends. With due respect to Mr. Joshi or anybody else I should like to say that when our workers feel that they would like to have a labour organization I will certainly consider it. I do not want men to come here and create grievances and say: "Look here, see how you are treated. The only way to redress your grievances is to join our union." It is all wrong.

**D-4218.** You will admit that there are inside and outside your works a number of men who are still loyal to the tinplate union?—We have no objection to that.

**D-4219.** You want a well run union?—We do not want any union.

**D-4220.** You would not object to it?—No, I would not.

**D-4221.** You would not welcome it?—We have got to consider the men. It will take many years more for them to join another labour organization because they are absolutely deceived and disgusted with the last one. We do not glory in that at all. If we had a properly

constituted union now in our plant I could not give them any more than what we have given them already. You can take it from me we are going to treat our employees just as well without a union as with a union. They would not benefit by having one, I promise you that.

**D-4222.** *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you say: "We have no standing machinery for regulation of relations between ourselves and our work-people." Have you not got any shop committee or any other body to discuss the grievances of the work-people?—Till now we have not recovered from the last strike and not been able to do anything in that respect. Our men can see the foreman superintendent and myself at any time they like and have their grievances redressed. After the trouble we had things like shop committees are out of the question.

**D-4223.** What happens about those grievances now?—We do not have any.

**D-4224.** Nothing at all, no suspensions or dismissals?—We have very few suspensions; in fact I do not think we have had any.

**D-4225.** Does a dismissal not cause a grievance?—I think we have had two dismissals in three months. There is no man discharged from the works without my going into the case and satisfying myself.

**D-4226.** Then it is a kind of temporary elysium.

**D-4227.** In your memorandum you deal with a club. Does this club exist for the workers or for the clerks in the higher grades?—It was left to a committee of the employees to manage it. I think there were about 175 members in it. We took two of our quarters and converted them into recreation clubs for our employees. They had their own board, president and vice-president. Just before the trouble I intended to put up tennis courts but the strike upset them. They have now football and cricket.

**D-4228.** What exists for the 2,800 men of the unskilled coolie class?—They have recreation grounds where they can play football, hockey, cricket or tennis. We had some sports a few months ago.

**D-4229.** There are no institutes suitable for illiterate men?—No, we started a library but we had no time indeed to develop in that direction.

**D-4230.** In your memorandum you say:

"Employees are indebted to the Company only for small cash loans (very few) or for loans granted to enable them to build their own houses."

You pay higher wages than is customary in India. Do you know anything about the state of indebtedness of your workers not to the firm but to outside money-lenders?—(Mr. Henderson): I know they are very much indebted inspite of the fact that we started two co-operative

societies and refused to allow the *Kabuli* money-lenders inside our property. There are many instances where the more a man earns the more he spends.

**D-4231.** Have you ever tried analysing the indebtedness of your people?—You cannot tell, for instance, to what extent the workers earning different levels of wages are indebted, what particular castes of people are especially indebted and so on?—It is rather a difficult problem. The workers do not tell their exact debts.

**D-4232.** Dealing with the question of leave you have, I see, got specially good arrangements with regard to grant of leave to your employees, but you seem to be up against the same difficulty as other firms of men overstaying their leave. How do you tackle that problem? Do men realise the obligation on their part to meet the grant of leave with pay by returning up to time?—We are not in a position to grant leave with pay for all our employees. The ordinary workers have no privilege leave with pay; the monthly rated staff have 14 days a year with pay. Some of them come from distant parts and they are allowed to accumulate their leave so that they may have sufficient time to go home and return. They are what we may call the intelligent type and we have no difficulty with them as regards overstaying leave. It is the people who go on leave without pay that generally overstay their leave.

**D-4233.** Can you tell us the percentages of men who are entitled to leave with pay and leave without pay?—I cannot say offhand.

**D-4234.** With regard to maternity benefit you say you allow six weeks' leave on full pay upon confinement. How do you divide this 6 weeks before and after confinement?—Two weeks before and four weeks after. We rely entirely on the doctor.

**D-4235.** Is the doctor a man or a woman?—He is a man doctor. The woman goes to the nurse in the hospital and notifies to her that she is entitled to the benefit.

**D-4236.** In your memorandum you deal with the question of admission of infants. You have only got 100 women but you do not say anything about contractors' women workers. Do you not employ contractors?—Not inside the works, but for special works outside.

**D-4237.** Are there any considerable number of women employed by contractors?—Not inside the works.

**D-4238.** There are no women employed except the 100?—No.

**D-4239.** Have they separate bathing places?—Yes, they have.

**D-4240.** What is the difficulty about the children of these 100 women staying in the rest sheds and is there no woman to look after the children?—(Mr. Leyshon) during the strike we arranged for one or two older women to look after the children in the rest shed. But the



women insisted on bringing their children into the mill. I did not like their bringing the children into the mill and I said I would not have women working in our Company. I did not want women workers and would pay the men. But the labour foreman said he would not be able to get coolies here unless we had some *rejas* also. The *rejas* would head coal, for instance, but the men would not do it. Similarly there are certain things which the *rejas* alone would do. The foreman said that we would be losing some of the best coolies because they would not work unless their women also were allowed to work with them. They work together and go home together. Therefore we had to employ the women also, not because we were getting them cheaper. It is not a question of finance in that respect. Personally I am in favour of not employing them, but it will work a hardship on the *rejas* if we do not permit them to work.

**D-4241.** *Sir Alexander Murray* : I understand that your Company stands between the Tata Iron and Steel Company on the one side and the Burma Oil Company on the other side?—(Mr. Townsend) Yes, they are joint shareholders.

**D-4242.** Do you have published accounts?—No, we are a private company.

**D-4243.** Are you run at a profit?—We will run always at a profit under present conditions if we do not have labour trouble. We have been in existence for the past six years and we have been working at a loss.

**D-4244.** The wages that you pay and the money you spend on welfare work does not appear to be such a serious factor as it would be with a concern which had to depend on European markets for its existence?—Nevertheless, we have been operating at a loss. We have written down Rs. 67,50,000. Other companies have done the same thing and they are continuing. We should certainly be able to make a profit from now onwards.

**D-4245.** You said you paid 5 days' wages for working two or three days a week?—Yes.

**D-4246.** You also said you paid more wages than other people?—Yes.

**D-4247.** These are things that can be done only by a Company which stands in a favourable position?—I agree with you there. If we had not the Burma Oil Company behind us we should have closed down long before this. We have been enabled to do all this on account of the backing of the Burma Oil Company.

**D-4248.** Tell us something about the working of the municipal notified area. Are you satisfied with the present conditions. Are the interests of labour well looked after under a constitution such as that

of the Notified Area Committee?—Yes. We are in a peculiar position here. We are the Electric Supply Company and the Water-Supply Company of the district and so on. As regards sanitation there is the Board of Works. The main activities of the district are done by our own Company and not by private supply companies.

**D-4249.** Have you had any occasions to represent your grievances before the Notified Area Committee?—We seldom have any grievances.

**D-4250.** Do your workers ever bring forward any grievances with regard to inadequacy of water-supply, conservancy and so on?—They get a standard of conservancy and water-supply far beyond what they are accustomed to in their villages. Occasionally we get complaints of shortage of water-supply in particular areas owing to unequal distribution of water. We adjust the valves and set the matter right. But we do not get any general complaint of inadequate supply of water or bad conservancy arrangements.

**D-4251.** You have the provident fund scheme in operation now?—Yes. The final rules have not been framed. Since they were originally drafted there have been a series of changes, but we allow people to put in their money now and pay our contribution also. They will know the precise rules later on.

**D-4252.** Does the scheme cover all the workers, the lowest paid as well as the highest paid?—Any one except the covenanted staff can become a member of the fund. We first fixed a minimum pay of Rs. 15 a month as qualification for membership of the fund but we removed that restriction.

**D-4253.** You told us that the turn-over for the bulk of your low paid men was 2½ years. How could they join the provident fund?—I do not think that type of labour joins the provident fund. (Mr. Henderson). Only 5 of them have till now joined the fund.

**D-4254.** Could you give us the accounts of your co-operative society showing how many of your people are indebted and to what extent?—You may take it from me that almost all the members of the co-operative society are indebted.

**D-4255.** How do they carry on?—Each one stands surety for the other and so on. They do not feel satisfied unless they have a loan from the Society.

**D-4256.** *Mr. Joshi:* I am trying to understand the causes that led to the strike in the Tinsplate Company: As regards wages do the Tatas pay more than the Tinsplate Company?—(Mr. Leyshon) I would not say that. Our average wage per month before the strike during March 1929 was Rs. 37.8 for all labour and Rs. 40.25 for all labour excluding coolies and *rejas*. I can give the corresponding figures for December. For all labour including coolies and *rejas* the average was Rs. 42.48 plus a bonus of Rs. 7.43 or Rs. 49.91. Excluding coolies and

*rejas* the average comes to Rs. 44.44 plus a bonus of Rs. 7.40 or Rs. 51.84. The corresponding figures for January were Rs. 43.26 plus Rs. 8.52 or Rs. 51.78 for all labour and Rs. 45.11 plus a bonus of Rs. 8.97 or Rs. 54.08, excluding coolies and *rejas*.

**D-4257.** I have here a statement that "the maximum rates in the Tata Sheet Mills are Rs. 7 a day as against Rs. 2-12-0 of the Tinsplate Company and their minimum rates are higher." What do you think of this statement?—That is not altogether correct. The work in the first place inside the sheet mill is not to be compared with the work in the tinsplate mill. The work in the Tatas is more heavy and arduous, and if the rates there are a little higher they are justified in having it so. But as far as Rs. 7 a day is concerned I do not know more about it than this: Tatas had a few Indian rollers who had replaced some Europeans and they might have been paid higher rates. We also intended to Indianize our plant before the strike on the Mills as the second contracts of the Europeans expired. This was made generally known to the Union members. We intended to fix a rate for the Indian rollers that would compare favourably with Tatas, not because Tatas were paying that. Our Indian rollers' wages are now Rs. 4 a day plus an average bonus of Rs. 5 a week. As we Indianized the remaining crew also there was a corresponding increase for the heaters, the roughers and the finishers.

**D-4258.** The Rs. 7 to which the statement refers was paid to European rollers, was it?—The European rollers who came out had Indian finishers to help them. The rate was then fixed for the Indian who did the manual work while the European furnished the technical experience. We have now replaced some of the European rollers by Indian rollers and increased their pay. Still there is one European foreman who assumes responsibility for the mill.

**D-4259.** With regard to the case of Abdul Samad, is it true that you refused to reinstate him although you promised at one time to take him back?—That was one of the questions that led up to the strike. Abdul Samad was a heater on one of our Mills. The roller on the Mill had been having considerable trouble with him. He was quite a good workman but had been listening to a lot of ca'canny business. He was throwing out iron and so forth. He was warned and then suspended. Mr. Homi interceded on his behalf and we had a meeting in the Superintendent's office with Mr. Homi and two others. We did not agree to take back Abdul Samad there and then but promised to reconsider his case next Saturday. We did not want to penalize Abdul Samad. Mr. Homi was satisfied that Abdul Samad was guilty of the offence and that he would be laid off till Saturday next. We then hoped to take up his case with the members of the Union Committee or any one else.

**D-4260.** Was that done?—But they had a *hartal* on Saturday. One of them took up a very defiant attitude towards the superintendent

foreman, members of the committee and myself. The next day we suspended him also,—one of the best workmen we ever had and were sorry to lose. We were told to take him back or shut the plant. Mr. Homi told the men to keep on working.

**D-4261.** Was he taken back?—No, he was not taken back. We ran into the strike.

**D-4262.** They did not wait till Saturday?—They did not wait. They sent me an ultimatum that if we did not take him back they would go on strike. I told Mr. Homi that since the men took a defiant attitude I would not take up their case till the next Saturday but the men would be paid for the time they were laid off. Later on Mr. Homi sent me a letter asking me to exercise my prerogative of mercy in this case. It was not a question of mercy; it was a question raised by the men whether labour was going to be stronger than the Company. I told Mr. Homi that I was very sorry I could not do anything in his case. Mr. Homi told me that unless we did that he thought there would be a strike which he would try and prevent. Since then Abdul Samad had written to us admitting that he was wrong and that he was sorry for it.

**D-4263.** Here is another statement in this document. On the 22nd March the Union waited in deputation upon the Manager to represent certain grievances but the deputation was not received by the Manager as he disapproved of the personnel of the deputation?—Yes, that is correct.

**D-4264.** What is the meaning of disapproving of the personnel?—We agreed to meet any member of the Union Committee or anybody else. But just before the strike the situation became so unpleasant we did not know what they were going to do. At one of the meetings Mr. Burham made statements which were absolutely wrong, condemned and cursed everybody and used vile language, yet this was the man in whom we were personally interested. He was a foreman in the tinhouse on Rs. 125 a month. He was sick for three months and his pay was sent to his quarters. After three months I saw him one day at the gate. He said he was not very strong. I asked him to attend office for 15 or 20 minutes and then go home if he felt weak. He went home and did not return for 2 months more. We paid the man his full pay all the time for doing nothing. This was the man who got up at the meeting and used vile language against every one here. I therefore told the delegation that I would see any one of the remaining 2,999 men in the Union but I would have nothing to do with this ungrateful Burham. Here is a letter from the man which you may read.

**D-4265.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: I see from the letter that the man regrets his attitude and prays to be taken back. Does he not point out his connection with the Union officials.?

**D-4266.** Mr. Joshi: It always happens that extreme and intemperate speeches are made by some persons at union meetings. Does that justify the management refusing to see a man sent by the Union as its representative?—It all depends on what a man calls you. We have certain amount of self-respect, union or no union.

**D-4267.** It is stated here that at this time the management employed Gurkhas as workers. Is that correct?—It is all wrong.

**D-4268.** With regard to the Hot Mill it is stated that you agreed to give a 2-anna increase in wages. Is that correct?—There was a little bit of misunderstanding between Mr. Homi and myself on this question. There were certain men holding lower rated jobs but being paid higher rates. In the beginning of our operations we had to pay men Rs. 2 and Rs. 2-8-0 to work in the hot mills in order to attract them to this kind of new work. But in a few years' time we realised we had to grade the jobs and adjust rates. It was a question of adjustment of wages that brought this 2-anna increase. Mr. Homi misunderstood that to cover all the workers whereas in fact it covered only the lower rated men. We had some discussion on the question and as a compromise it was finally agreed that we would move the men on lower rated jobs into higher rated jobs and continue to pay them lower rates till they learnt the new job when they would get the 2-anna increment. That was one of the causes of misunderstanding.

**D-4269.** With regard to the acting allowances to men acting in the place of absentees, did you agree to that on general terms?—We are in the best position to determine whether a man ought to get an acting allowance or not. We are giving it now also.

**D-4270.** Was it ever partly granted and partly not granted?—Suppose there is a man getting Rs. 2-8-0 a day in the mill. If another man getting Rs. 2 a day takes this man's place we pay him Rs. 2 a day till he is able to do the new job thoroughly. If he is able to do it well he is paid Rs. 2-8-0 like the first man. We have a mechanic on Rs. 250 a month, a sort of general foreman. The man next to him is on Rs. 100 a month. He can act as head but he is not the real head. If the head foreman is absent and the assistant acts in his place, should he get his wages? It is ridiculous. The Electrical Engineer may be off for a day and his assistant may take his place, but if there is a vacancy he cannot qualify for the job.

**D-4271.** Mr. Giri wanted to see you but it is said that you refused to see him. What were the grounds on which you refused to see him?—We tried and made arrangements with the Union to meet them. We pleaded with them not to go on strike in order to take advantage of the Trade Disputes Act. We consented to meet Mr. Giri or anybody provided the works were not shut down. But we were deceived absolutely. When all these things were taking place before the strike Mr. Homi said that the question of suspension was the most important one and that if it was settled all the rest could be straightened out easily. I had a conference with Mr. Homi and his friends and I

agreed not to discharge or suspend even a single man next week no matter what they did, whether they tore the furnace down or shattered the mill. If the mill went all right next week I agreed to do the same for the next week. We did not want to suspend the men or discharge the men because we should have had to get other men to take the place of the discharged or suspended men. I told Mr. Homi that here was a chance for his Union to function and keep the men all right and asked him whether he had any other grievances to put forward. He said there was nothing. This was on Friday and I told Mr. Homi I expected to get along very well next week. We begin work on Sunday night. I was at Jamshedpur on Sunday afternoon. At 6 o'clock I was told there was a strike in the mill. I was surprised at the turn of events and went straight to the mill and saw a number of men at the mill gate wearing picket badges. I asked them why they were doing that and they said they were on strike and that Mitra baboo had given them these badges. I sent for Mr. Mitra and asked him what all this was about and told him: "You were in my office on Friday. We left as good friends. No issue was at stake. The only important question was that of suspensions and that was granted to you. Now why are your men on strike? What are they on strike for?" Mr. Mitra said that his men had revolted!

**D-4272.** Are your labour charges in the shape of wages greater now than before the strike?—Our charges are not greater. The men are earning more money. They were earning 11 per cent. bonus before, now they are earning 22 per cent. bonus.

**D-4273.** The rates have not changed at all?—No.

**D-4274.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: These increased wages per man, of which you have told us, are due to increased output?—Yes.

**D-4275.** *Mr. Ahmed*: You are in favour of a Union being started on British lines?—If it is started on the same lines as a British or American or any other *bona fide* Trade Union, I would have no objection to it.

**D-4276.** In Great Britain picketing is legal?—Picketing is legal in most countries, but the Union authorities are held responsible for the action of the picketers. Here they are not.

**D-4277.** Do you object to picketing?—I have no objection to peaceful picketing. I object to it when it passes the stage of peaceful picketing, and that is what happened in our strike. It was an absolute reign of terror to the Indian who wanted to come to work. The men who want to work should be permitted to work.

**D-4278.** Was it not the cause of the strike that the workmen wanted a higher rate of wage?—No.

**D-4279.** What was their grievance?—You have just heard me state that in my office, 36 hours before the strike was declared, they had no grievances.

**D-4280.** You remember that in the Legislative Assembly last year there was a debate about the matter, and that a resolution was passed. What have you to say about that?—It seemed to suit the occasion very well to have that debate in the Assembly just when it occurred, because the Lahore Conference was not very far off.

**D-4281.** Have politics been mixed up in the matter?—The politicians were the ones who took it up in the Assembly.

**D-4282.** And they applied politics to the case of your Company?—Naturally.

**D-4283.** What is the attitude of these leaders against your Company? Do they want to ruin you in your business?—That is rather a broad statement.

**D-4284.** Your managing staff are Europeans, and the shareholders are European. Therefore these Congress men are against you?—I would not like to make a positive statement, but it seemed to be a very convenient issue.

**D-4285.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many Europeans have you?—The total number of Europeans on our books was 120. The total number of Europeans on our books now is 37. In a year from now we expect, as contracts expire, that there will be at least ten or twelve less. We do not feel that that is too bad in the way of Indianization in such a short period as 6½ years in such a highly technical process.

**D-4286.** *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you honestly think that coolies getting 9 annas a day can maintain themselves, their wives and their children?—They are doing it. We are offering inducements to our coolies. We have coolies earning Rs. 2 a day. If they show an aptitude and inclination to get on we promote them.

**D-4287.** They do not get a living wage?—(*Mr. Townend*): The villages round Jamsheḍpur, where a number of these people come from, are unquestionably the best looking villages in India, because the people supplement their agricultural earnings by working in the steel works or in our plant; and the wages they get industrially are far higher than they would ever get on their fields.

**D-4288.** Only 10 per cent. of local people are employed in your factory. 90 per cent. come from outside?—Yes, and those 90 per cent. earn more than 9 annas.

**D-4289.** How is it, that, with the high wages that you pay, you cannot get more than 10 per cent. of your people from the locality and adjoining districts?—They are not of the right mental type.

**D-4290.** Can the adjoining districts not supply men of that type?—No. They go up to the tea gardens.

**D-4291.** I take it that is because they can earn much more in the tea gardens than they can earn at your place?—Oh no.

**D-4292.** Do the coolies here carry loads?—They unload coal.

**D-4293.** That does not require much skill. If it is more remunerative here to do that work why do they not stick to your factory instead of going to far-distant places?—We get all we need.

**D-4294.** What is the proportion of your coolie labour that comes from outside the district?—All our coolie labour comes from the immediate locality, say within a radius of 100 or 200 miles. I want to make it clear that we never recruit from outside. We employ our labour at the works' gates, and it happens to come from all over India.

**D-4295.** How is it that when Punjabis come from thousands of miles away at your rate of pay you do not get Bengalis or Biharis?—(Mr. Leyshon): The Punjabi physically is stronger than the average Indian, and the Punjabi, working at the furnaces doing hard work, receives the most pay.

**D-4296.** We have heard that the workers have grievances about housing accommodation, maternity benefit, bonus, workmen's compensation and lack of other amenities. Do you say that, in spite of these complaints, they are contented?—Yes.

**D-4297.** Then how is it they get into the hands of exploiters?—That is what I cannot understand. All these things were promised to the Union then, and the men have received them now. Everything was apparently settled 36 hours before the strike. Why they went on strike we do not know.

**D-4298.** You have among your officers some educated Indians?—Yes. We are endeavouring to Indianize wherever it is possible.

**D-4299.** Could you not gain them over?—(Mr. Townend): They were mainly the Union leaders.

**D-4300.** The Trade Disputes Bill was passed a year ago. Did you take advantage of it?—(Mr. Leyshon): We pleaded with the Union officials to wait until the Trade Disputes Act became effective and then to take advantage of it.

**D-4301.** Did you take advantage of it?—We told the men to take advantage of it. We told them to wait, and they absolutely ignored the Act and went out on strike.

**D-4302.** Did you avail yourselves of it?—We could not apply it, because we did not know the men were going on strike. We had had no quarrel with the men.

**D-4303.** After they went out on strike did you take any steps?—After they struck we waited for one week for them to send a delegation to see us. We thought it was their place to do so, since they had struck, but they did not do so. We then put a notice up offering them all their jobs. They laughed at that. Then we decided to open the works for those who wanted to come and work, and we had no trouble in getting men.



**D-4304.** There is a provision that representatives of labour and employers shall negotiate in order to settle matters?—Not after a strike. We were willing to do it before they closed the works down. If at any future time we should have a Union in our works again, it will be on the distinct understanding that before a strike is declared they will take advantage of the Trade Disputes Act before they close the works down. Then we will negotiate; but if they strike without any notice, and then ask for the application of the Trade Disputes Act, it will be refused as far as we are concerned.

**D-4305.** *Mr. Clow*: Was the substitution of suspensions for fines copied by you from the Steel Company; or did the other Company copy it from you?—We did not copy it from any one. When we started in India we were new, and fining a fellow a couple of annas was done as a penalty. We did not approve of it. We thought that whatever a man earned he should get. Although our foremen insisted that they could get better results from fines, we altered it to suspension for one day.

**D-4306.** Is suspension more or less unpopular than fining?—It is not unpopular for this reason. We try to allow, as far as possible, for the mentality of the average Indian. We have regular meetings with our foremen and take these things into consideration. We do not take advantage of the average Indian because he makes a mistake. We try to reason with him. If he persists in doing it, then we suspend him for a day.

**D-4307.** What proportion of the men you now have were with you immediately before the strike?—One-third.

**D-4308.** Did they work harmoniously with the new hands?—Absolutely.

**D-4309.** What happened to the 2,000 men who left your employ?—Most of them went home.

**D-4310.** To what extent is it possible for a man to rise in the works? Does the ordinary unskilled man ever rise out of that grade?—Yes. Some of the one-time coolies are now operators making Rs. 2-8-0 a day. If you go through our plant looking for coolies making Rs. 2-8-0 a day you will not find them, because they have ceased to be coolies. If an Indian proves to be efficient, irrespective of his creed we try to help him.

**D-4311.** With regard to the men who have been placed in the jobs formerly held by Welshmen, what class are they drawn from; how did you get them?—They simply came to us when we opened the works. They came from all parts of the country.

**D-4312.** Had they previous experience?—No; we have taught every Indian.

**D-4313.** Even those holding supervisory jobs?—Yes.

**D-4314.** *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have found during our tour that most strikes have had an economic basis. They are based on some

grounds of difference of opinion between the employer and the employees. We have also found that concessions are nearly always given after a strike. Do you wonder, therefore, that the illiterate Indian worker looks upon a strike as his most effective weapon?—It is only natural for him to do so.

**D-4315.** Speaking from your long experience when "a dispute exists or is apprehended" what do you suggest ought to be done?—I would suggest that it should be made generally known that the Trade Disputes Act has been passed, with the intention of helping capital and labour to prevent disputes which are generally disastrous to both sides. It should be made public that the Trade Disputes Act is a law of India, and must be applied. The labour leaders all over India should say to every Union "Before you strike you must take advantage of this law. If you do, we will back you up. If you do not we will not back you up".

**D-4316.** Supposing a dispute exists or is apprehended, and the parties do not agree to Government nominating anybody: Government is forced to act on its own initiative. Government has two courses open to it: either to appoint a board of conciliation or a court of inquiry. Take a board of conciliation. Is that possible when the parties are not agreed?—Not as long as the Trade Disputes Act is effective.

**D-4317.** This is under the Trade Disputes Act?—It might be applied before the strike.

**D-4318.** This is before the strike. Can you imagine a board of conciliation functioning within your plant before the strike takes place?—We would have been delighted to have had it before the strike.

**D-4319.** A board of conciliation or a court of enquiry?—It would have made no difference to us before the strike.

**D-4320.** You would have personally welcomed a court of inquiry before the strike?—Absolutely.

**D-4321.** What was your reason for not welcoming it after the strike?—I do not believe there was any period during the strike when the Government of Bihar and Orissa was not thoroughly conversant with every move that went on. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner visited our place regularly. They knew exactly what the Company was doing, and I have reason to believe that they knew what the other side was doing. When the strike was first declared the men took up a fighting attitude, saying "We will bring this Company to their knees". The men believed it. That was the feeling for the first two months. The leaders said "The Company is not operating the plant. They are only burning oil. They are only doing this and that. It is all bluff. Don't you be fooled by it". While they were doing that, I had 2,700 men inside the plant within five weeks. Mr. Dain came to me several times and said "What do you think of a court of inquiry? I said we were not asking for it. He said "Do you object?" I did not object, but as far as I was personally concerned I did not want it for this reason: the peaceful picketers and the others outside

said " There is going to be a court of inquiry appointed, and as soon as it is appointed we will get our settlement ". That was one of the biggest things we had to counteract inside the works. The workmen inside came to Mr. Russell and Mr. Price and said " Is the court of inquiry going to be appointed? The strikers say we shall lose our jobs if it is ".

**D-4322.** Your particular position was complicated by the fact that your plant, as a matter of fact, was running, and that a court of inquiry would have complicated the situation, and would have discouraged a lot of the men who were inside?—Yes.

**D-4323.** A court of inquiry could have been held before the strike, when you were having a difference of opinion with your workers?—Yes.

**D-4324.** Or if it had been asked for after the strike had taken place, and if all the workers had been out?—Yes.

**D-4325.** But your plant, having been started up again with fresh hands, you were afraid that a court of inquiry might have complicated the issue?—Yes.

**D-4326.** Have you any suggestions to make to us with regard to the maintenance of law and order in this area?—I believe that when there is a strike on there should be plenty of police protection in order to preserve law and order. They should not help the manufacturer, nor should they help the men who are on strike, but they should be absolutely neutral. We found that they were absolutely neutral in our strike. There were reports that the Government and the police were helping the Company. It is not true.

(The witnesses withdrew).

**ROYAL COMMISSION**  
ON  
**LABOUR IN INDIA.**

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TO

**Volume IV, Parts I and II.**

**BIHAR AND ORISSA  
WITH COALFIELDS.**

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Provision adequate, *Indian Mining Fedn.*, I, p. 215.

Revision advocated, *P. C. Bose*, II, 1482.

Rules more generous than Act, *Tata Iron and Steel Co.*, I, p. 167.

Statistics, *Tata Iron and Steel Co.*, I, p. 167-8.

Utilisation, *Indian Mining Fedn.*, I, p. 215, *Indian Mine Managers' Assn.*, I, p. 254.

Waiting period: *Government*, I, p. 49.

Payment by certain concerns without claiming benefit of, *Government*, I, p. 49, (*Dain*), II, 113-4.

Worker's knowledge of rights, *Indian Mining Assn.*, I, p. 245; *Cork*, II, 2138-9.

Working of, *Lang*, I, p. 227.

### Works Committees

#### Coalfields:

None, *Government*, I, p. 19; *Mitter*, I, p. 189.

None, and not necessary, *Indian Mining Fedn.*, I, p. 213.

Indian Cable Company, *Government*, I, p. 21-2.

Messrs. Tata's, *Dain*, II, 3734-5.

Tinplate Co., *Government*, I, p. 22; *Tinplate Co.*, I, p. 171, (*Leyshon*), II, 4161-6.

#### Zamindari property: See also under Recruitment coalfields.

Acquisition of, reason for, and subsequent giving up of, *Bray*, II, 3007.

Giridih colliery settlement, *Lancaster*, II, 3203-5, 3229, 3293, 3295, 3346-50, *Tuckey*, II, 3348, 3350.

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