



ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON  
LABOUR IN INDIA.

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EVIDENCE.

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Vol. V.—Part 1.

BENGAL

[Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars].

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#### NOTE TO PART I.

In this part is reproduced the bulk of the evidence submitted to the Commission in the form of written memoranda in reply to the list of subjects circulated in August 1929. In preparing this volume the Commission have sought to retain all matter likely to be of permanent interest to students of the subject, and not available elsewhere. Material supplied to the Commission which has already been printed and published elsewhere has in general not been reproduced. Where memoranda have been abridged all considerable omissions have been indicated in the text.

### 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.

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- (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.
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    - (b) Possibility of practical schemes.
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    - (c) Other causes.
  - (iii) Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.
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  - (i) Average duration of employment.
  - (ii) Extent of casual employment.
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    - (a) Extent, character and causes.
    - (b) Seasonal or otherwise.
    - (c) Time and wages lost.
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\* This word should be read as indicating generally the changes in composition of the labour staff of an undertaking.

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- (10) *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*
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| 25         | Mr. K. N. Pandey                       | Asst. Station Master.  |   |   |         |                   |
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| 35         | Mr. F. C. Badhwar                      | Employment Officer, Lillooah.                                      |   |   |         |                   |
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## GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

## I.—Recruitment.

*Letter from Government of Bengal, dated 18th October, 1929.*

I am directed to enclose herewith two memoranda,\* on Section I (Recruitment) in the list of subjects issued by the Royal Commission on Labour in India. These memoranda, which have been compiled according to the headings in the provisional list of subjects, contain the official views of the Government of Bengal on the items within their administrative cognizance on which opinions have been asked for by the Commission.

2. The main facts connected with recruitment of labour in Bengal are that the great majority of workers in organized manufacturing industries and in plantations are recruited from other provinces, and that such recruitment is regulated by the industries concerned without official intervention. Bengal is a labour-receiving and not a labour-supplying province. So far as Bengali labour is concerned, therefore, no problems of unemployment arise. Such unemployment as does occur is of a temporary character only, and solves itself automatically in a short period. In Bengal for many years there has been a demand for more labour than is available. And if there is slackness in one industry, the labour is sooner or later absorbed in another.

3. The average incoming worker is unskilled: he comes to seek *ham*, and has no definite idea as to what the *ham* may be. He prefers to work in close proximity to his fellow villagers or relations, but if work is not available in their areas, he goes elsewhere. If he settles down in a manufacturing area, where he is absorbed in a regular calling in which in due course he becomes skilled, he has no difficulty in getting employment if he loses his job, provided he is a well-behaved and reasonably good worker, for skilled workmen find a ready market for their services in this presidency. If he remains unskilled, he may move from place to place, as his inclinations dictate and opportunities offer. If, at the worst, he can get nothing to do, he returns to his home, and perhaps sends out a more competent younger or older brother to seek work, while he himself works on the family plot of land. Actually the immigrant may prefer casual or seasonal employment. He may not desire to settle down as a factory hand for the reason that he may not wish to be separated from his family for the greater part of the year. His home circumstances may be such that he does not require regular wages.

4. In times of stress during famines or floods there may be a temporary over-supply of labour in Bengal, leading to lack of employment. Similarly, the flow of labour may vary according to the type of harvest in labour-supplying areas. In the coal-mining areas, for example, the supply of labour varies inversely with the quality of the harvests. A good harvest means a bad labour supply, as there is less need for the villager to seek extra means of sustenance, and a bad harvest the opposite. Famines and bad harvests thus lead to unemployment in the sense that there is a surplus of labour asking for employment. The problem is primarily an agricultural one, and is not susceptible of treatment by western methods, such as unemployment insurance. In the present stage of industrial organization, indeed, unemployment insurance, so far as Bengal is concerned, is not only impossible; it is unthinkable.

5. As indicated in the appropriate memorandum, Bengal fortunately is not seriously affected by famines. When they do occur, they are dealt with by the regularly constituted famine machinery. It is the famines or poor harvests in other provinces which affect the labour supply of Bengal, and whether such machinery is necessary for them is not for the Government of Bengal to say. Possibly some type of special recruitment agencies might help, but, as far as Bengal alone is concerned, they are not necessary. Such agencies, indeed, unless under the most rigorous management, tend to deteriorate. It is well known, that the existing *sirdari* system of recruitment is honeycombed with abuses arising from the relations between the *sirdar* and the person recruited. Those abuses continue from the actual recruitment right through the term of employment, so long as the person recruited continues to be under the control of the *sirdar*. The same is true of other recruitment, such as lascar recruitment through serangs. Evils of this nature cannot be terminated by official organizations. They might almost be said to be essential to Indian labour at its present stage of development. The cure lies with labour itself through its

\* (1) Recruitment; sub-headings (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9). (2) Recruitment for Assam; sub-heading (6).

own organizations, the virility of which depends on some measure of education, the provision of which in the case of the great majority of industrial and plantation workers in Bengal is not primarily a Bengal problem. Something too, may be done on the side of employers by the organization of special labour offices under well-qualified labour or welfare supervisors, but the task of eradicating the long-established habit of receiving and giving bribes or *dastoori* is not one that can be expected to yield results quickly.

6. So far as the information at the disposal of the Government of Bengal goes, there is no case for establishing new agencies for the recruitment of labourers for Bengal industries or plantations. No representations have been made for such by either employers or workers. Were any industry, such as the tea industry, to require new methods, each case would be considered on its merits, but the probability is that the problem of the Government of Bengal would be similar to what it is at present in respect of recruitment to Assam, viz., their main function would be to provide for the safe transport of workers recruited in other provinces.

7. With regard to the recruitment of seamen, I am to say that the administration of the mercantile marine has now been taken over by the Central Government, and that all papers bearing on the subject have been transferred to them. I am, however, to say that prior to the transfer, the Government of Bengal were in entire agreement with the policy which, it is understood, the Government of India are now pursuing with regard to lascar recruitment. That policy is to encourage shipping firms to adopt what has come to be known as the British India system of recruitment. The muster system for serangs not in the permanent employ of individual firms, which, it is understood, has also been introduced, should aid in eliminating at least a part of the bribery which has been going on in the lascar recruitment system, but the extirpation of bribery between serang and lascar, like that between *sirdar* and factory operative, depends mainly on the lascars themselves. Calcutta crews, it has been indubitably proved, cannot be selected at random. Serangs must be allowed the right to select or reject members of their crews, and lascars must be allowed the preference of choosing the crews with which they sail. To force serangs to take men they do not wish, or to compel men to sail with crews with whom they do not wish to work, would be to court disaster on the high seas. The part of Government in eliminating bribery between serangs and the members of their crew lies in impressing upon the members of the crew at the time of signing on or off that the wages they earn are theirs alone, and that they are under no obligation whatsoever to pay one anna to anyone else. Government, of course, could also inform lascars that criminal action might be taken in cases of proved corruption. Experience, however, has proved in Bengal, as it has also proved in other countries, that allegations of bribery in almost every case ultimately fail, because of lack of evidence. The future of bribery among lascars depends largely on the effectiveness of the Indian Seamen's Union, a body which has already done much to help to extirpate the evil and which has recently been registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926.

(1) *Origin of Labour*—(iv) *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life*.—The Census Report for Bengal for 1921 (Part I), paragraph 99, distinguished five types of migration:—(a) Casual migration due to short moves continually taking place between adjacent areas; (b) temporary migration, due to business journeys, pilgrimages and the like; (c) periodic migration, arising from seasonal causes, such as harvests; (d) semi-permanent migration, when persons reside and earn their living in one place but retain their home and family connections in another; and (e) permanent migration, when, for various causes, families are settled in permanent areas other than their home districts.

The migration of industrial labour falls within the last three classes, but there are no reliable figures to show the extent of periodic migration. Migration of this type is caused by seasonal demands for labour and most of it is agricultural in character. The chief industry utilizing labour of this class is jute-baling, most of the workers in which are not assembled in factories when the census figures are taken.

Migration in Bengal may be examined from three points of view:—(a) General migration; (b) migration to particular areas; and (c) migration in individual industries.

(i) *General Migration*.—The figures of general migration show the movement of the population from two points of view:—(a) Movement to Bengal from areas outside Bengal; and (b) movement within Bengal.

With regard to the latter, migration within Bengal, there is little to be said so far as industrial labour is concerned. The causes of such movement are connected with the social, commercial trading, educational and agricultural necessities of the population. The only areas in Bengal that can be said to supply industrial workers to the metropolitan manufacturing area, a term used to indicate the manufacturing districts on the Hooghly, stretching about two miles inland on each side from Naihati

to Budge-Budge, are Midnapore, and, to a smaller extent, Bankura. There is, indeed, a general movement of population from Burdwan to the metropolitan area; thus in 1921 there was a balance of migration from Burdwan to Hooghly of 8,803 persons, as compared with 6,221 in 1911, and from Burdwan to Calcutta of 15,749 in 1921, as compared with 20,234 in 1911; but this movement of population includes persons of all classes and arises mainly from social, educational, commercial and trading reasons. Burdwan is not a supply centre of labour for the metropolitan area. Midnapore, however, does send large numbers to the industrial areas, as shown by the balances of migration from 1891 to 1921. The figures in 1891 were 44,958, and they grew through the decennial periodic figures of 67,665 and 96,743 to 114,176 in 1921. Thus, Midnapore has supplied large numbers of workers to the metropolitan mill area, and these numbers have shown marked increases from decade to decade. The exodus from Midnapore is evidence of the very heavy pressure of the population on the soil in that district. The bulk of emigration from the Bankura district arises from agricultural reasons. In 1921 only 6,262 emigrants went from Bankura to Calcutta, 1,647 to Howrah, and 2,335 to the 24-Parganas. Considerable numbers of the aboriginal inhabitants of Bankura seek work in the Raniganj coalfield, but the majority of the emigrants from that area prefer agricultural work, if possible, in the neighbouring districts.

The important type of migration from the point of view of industrial labour is migration from other provinces to Bengal. Nearly 2,000,000 persons of all classes and races were enumerated in 1921 as coming from outside Bengal, including other provinces in India and other countries, and the great majority of the immigrants came from the areas which supply labour to Bengal industries and plantations. Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces, for example, supplied 66·1 and 17·8 per cent. of the total respectively. The following table indicates the extent of immigration and the variation in the decade 1911-21 :—

| Province or state or country. | Immigrants<br>from it to Bengal<br>(thousands). |       | Emigrants<br>to it from Bengal<br>(thousands). |       |
|-------------------------------|---|-------|--|-------|
|                               | 1921.   | 1911. | 1921.  | 1911. |
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. .      | 1,228   | 1,252 | 117  | 165   |
| United Provinces .. .. .      | 343   | 406   | 19   | 26    |
| Nepal .. .. .                 | 87  | 107   | Not available.                                 |       |
| Assam .. .. .                 | 69  | 67    | 376  | 194   |
| Central Provinces .. .. .     | 55  | 21    | 3  | 6     |
| Rajputana Agency .. .. .      | 48  | 37    | 1  | 1     |
| Madras .. .. .                | 32  | 14    | 3  | 7     |
| The Punjab and Delhi .. .. .  | 18  | 19    | 6  | 4     |
| Europe .. .. .                | 13  | 14    | Not available.                                 |       |
| Bombay .. .. .                | 11  | 8     | 8  | 7     |
| Burma .. .. .                 | 2   | 3     | 146  | 136   |

General immigration increased in volume between 1901 and 1911, but the figures fell in the period 1911 to 1921, especially the figure of immigrants from Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces, and Nepal—three of the chief recruiting areas of Bengal. There was, however, a distinct increase in the numbers from the Central Provinces, due to the exploiting of areas in that province by the tea industry. The decrease in numbers affected the agricultural more than the industrial parts of Bengal; nevertheless, it was interpreted in the Census Report of 1921 as indicating that the tide of immigration had reached its high watermark and had turned since 1911.

The proportion of immigrants to the total population in each district also shows how far the industrial and plantation areas depend on outside help. Thus, in the metropolitan industrial area, as also in the district of Burdwan, in which the Asansol-Raniganj coalfield is situated, and the Northern Bengal tea area, the immigrant population varies between 100 and 150 per 1,000 inhabitants in Burdwan, to 287 and 390 in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, respectively, and 664 in Calcutta; as against a figure varying from about 30 to 90 per 1,000 in Central and Northern Bengal and from 10 to 40 in Eastern Bengal.

The most important streams of immigration which flow directly to the industrial and plantation areas in Bengal are :—(a) From Bihar and the United Provinces to the metropolitan industrial area; (b) from Nepal into Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri; (c) from Chota Nagpur to Jalpaiguri; and (d) from Orissa to the metropolitan industrial area.

The total numbers of immigrants to Bengal (all districts) from Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces in 1911 and 1921 are as follows :—

|                          | 1911.     | 1921.     |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. . | 1,248,401 | 1,220,426 |
| United Provinces .. .. . | 404,198   | 342,810   |

The following tables show :—(a) The number of immigrants from the several Bihar and Orissa and United Provinces districts which send the greatest number of recruits to the metropolitan area—

|                                    | Hooghly. | Howrah. | 24-Parganas. | Calcutta. | Total. |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| <b>Bihar districts—</b>            |          |         |              |           |        |
| Patna .. .. .                      | 5,013    | 6,160   | 12,333       | 19,989    | 43,497 |
| Gaya .. .. .                       | 4,802    | 5,612   | 13,986       | 38,083    | 62,483 |
| Shahabad .. .. .                   | 3,407    | 7,324   | 20,672       | 16,068    | 47,471 |
| Monghyr .. .. .                    | 3,506    | 3,802   | 15,458       | 15,947    | 38,713 |
| Saran .. .. .                      | 10,477   | 6,562   | 24,768       | 10,331    | 52,138 |
| Muzaffarpur .. .. .                | 4,677    | 4,018   | 11,682       | 14,656    | 35,033 |
| Darbhanga .. .. .                  | 1,908    | 2,572   | 5,436        | 7,793     | 17,709 |
| <b>United Provinces districts—</b> |          |         |              |           |        |
| Balia .. .. .                      | 3,204    | 9,082   | 9,712        | 3,491     | 25,489 |
| Ghazipur .. .. .                   | 2,779    | 4,586   | 16,631       | 7,065     | 31,061 |
| Benares .. .. .                    | 1,912    | 3,179   | 8,515        | 10,948    | 24,554 |
| Azamgarh .. .. .                   | 2,115    | 3,598   | 12,458       | 5,753     | 23,924 |
| Jaunpur .. .. .                    | 1,220    | 5,047   | 8,656        | 5,588     | 20,511 |
| <b>Orissa districts—</b>           |          |         |              |           |        |
| Cuttack .. .. .                    | 8,995    | 16,571  | 37,472       | 31,720    | 94,758 |
| Balasore .. .. .                   | 3,864    | 6,134   | 13,785       | 12,131    | 35,914 |

(b) the numbers in the metropolitan area who were born in Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces in the 1901, 1911 and 1921 censuses.

|                      | Born in Bihar and Orissa. |                |                | Born in United Provinces. |                |                |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                      | 1921.                     | 1911.          | 1901.          | 1921.                     | 1911.          | 1901.          |
| Hooghly .. .. .      | 62,553                    | 50,105         | 29,571         | 17,377                    | 15,013         | 12,069         |
| Howrah .. .. .       | 69,667                    | 58,094         | 43,692         | 42,242                    | 47,243         | 39,727         |
| 24-Parganas .. .. .  | 177,989                   | 144,723        | 78,822         | 88,913                    | 83,536         | 46,295         |
| Calcutta .. .. .     | 185,265                   | 207,446        | 176,313        | 67,433                    | 89,695         | 90,452         |
| <b>Total .. .. .</b> | <b>495,474</b>            | <b>460,368</b> | <b>328,398</b> | <b>215,965</b>            | <b>235,487</b> | <b>188,543</b> |

The figures in the former table show that certain areas in the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa account for 553,255 persons, or more than a quarter of the total number of immigrants to Bengal from outside. The manufacturing areas of Bengal receive relatively few immigrants from the Chota Nagpur plateau, as the aboriginal tribes prefer out-of-door work in the country.

Although the above figures do not differentiate between labourers and other immigrants, it is safe to say that the great majority of the immigrants take up some sort of manual labour: in the words of the Census report of 1921 :—

“ Many of them (i.e., the immigrants) ply their traditional caste-trades in the industrial area as they do also in towns in others parts of Bengal. Muchis and Chamars are cobblers; Goals are milk-men and cartmen; Kahars are *palkibearers* and coolies are Kurmis, Bhats, Gorus, etc.; Nunias are commonly earthworkers; Mallas, boatmen, and so on. Other castes are domestic servants, and needy Brahmins from Orissa are found in great numbers in the towns employed as cooks by orthodox Hindus of the higher castes. Chhatris and others of superior caste from Bihar and the United Provinces are constables, *durwans*, *samindars' peons*, and the like. Most of the menial staff and porters on the railways come from Bihar



and Orissa. Such immigrants are found in considerable numbers all over Bengal, although they are fewer in Tippera, Noakhali, Chittagong, Bakarganj, Khulna, Jessore and Faridpur, than in the rest of the province."

The migration from the Sonthal Parganas to Bengal affects only the Asansol area. In 1891, the number of immigrants to Burdwan from the Sonthal Parganas was only 6,241, but with the development of the coal-mines, their numbers rose to 13,825 in 1901, and to twice that number or 27,376 in 1911, which number rose to 28,042 in 1921. The rise in figures is directly attributable to the development of the coal industry in the Raniganj field and to the growth of other industries in the same area.

Plantation labour accounts for the very high proportion of immigrants in the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling areas. The two streams to the tea-gardens come from Nepal and from Chota Nagpur and the Central Provinces. The numbers of emigrants for the last four decades migrating from Nepal to Darjeeling, Sikkim and Jalpaiguri, are shown in the following table :—

| Found in—        | 1921.  | 1911.  | 1901.  | 1891.          |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Darjeeling .. .. | 58,026 | 70,021 | 76,301 | 88,021         |
| Sikkim.. .. .    | 20,876 | 25,610 | 22,720 | Not available. |
| Jalpaiguri .. .. | 23,681 | 34,015 | 18,649 | 20,578         |

The explanation for the fall in the numbers of Darjeeling is given as follows in the report (page 145) :—" In 1891, the total population of Darjeeling district was only 223,314 so that at that time no less than 39·4 per cent. of the population had been born in Nepal. The hills had in fact been peopled anew by Nepalese during the 30 years or so previously. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the number born in Nepal has since decreased, as settlers died off and were succeeded by their native-born children. That after the lapse of another 40 years, as much as 20·5 per cent. of the population still consists of emigrants from Nepal, is evidence that the stream of migration has by no means run dry. Sikkim was closed to settlers from Nepal up to the time of the war of 1889, and the number born in Nepal found in the State in 1891 must have been very small. The immigrants from Nepal in 1901 were 40·6 per cent. of the whole population, and still form 25·5 per cent. though Nepalese must have shared equally with others in Sikkim the heavy mortality which has reduced the population by just over 10 per cent. in the last 10 years in spite of continued immigration."

The number of Nepalese emigrating to Jalpaiguri shows fluctuations for which the explanation would appear to be that the Nepalese go to the Jalpaiguri gardens for temporary appointments only, and that they return to their own homes or to the Darjeeling area after a period. A secondary explanation offered in the Census report is that as Nepal is the nearest source from which labour can be drawn for the Duars tea-gardens, the supply is more elastic than that of Chota Nagpur. Therefore, it is probable that the Nepalese are recruited to meet temporary demands, whereas the tea-gardens make an effort to settle the Chota Nagpur labour permanently in the Duars area. In the Duars and Terai, the bulk of the labour is imported from the Chota Nagpur plateau, i.e., from the provinces of Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces. The centre of the supplying area is Ranchi, and the variations, and the reasons therefor, in the recruitment of this labour are indicated in the following extract from the report :—

"The number of persons born in Ranchi who were enumerated in Jalpaiguri district at the last census was no less than 126,214. The number from Singhbhum was 7,545, from Palamau 1,595, and from Hazaribagh only 1,323, and there were smaller numbers from other parts, so that migration from Ranchi completely swamps that from adjoining districts. In 1891, there were but 18,808 immigrants in Jalpaiguri from Lohardaga district as it was then, fewer than there were from Nepal. Recruiting went on apace in the next 10 years and the census of 1901 showed 80,436 persons in Jalpaiguri who had been born in Ranchi. Apparently, there was a movement in the direction of employing Nepalese labour in the next decade, for though the number of immigrants from Ranchi had risen to 99,000 by 1911, the number from Nepal was nearly double as large as in 1901. During the last 10 years, the tea industry seems to have definitely decided against Nepalese labour on the gardens in the Duars, where it has proved by no means as satisfactory as in the hills, for not only

has the number of recruits from Ranchi risen by more than 25 per cent. since 1911 and the number of Nepalese immigrants to the district fallen by 30 per cent., but there has been a commencement of recruiting further into Central India. In 1901, there were only 609 persons in Jalpaiguri district who had been born in the Central Provinces and in 1911 the number was 611, but the figure according to the recent census has risen to 8,334 persons, of whom 6,314 came from Nagpur district, 989 from Bilaspur and 897 from Raipur. The number of females who have been brought in is almost equal to the number of males. This even balance of the sexes is also apparent among the emigrants from Ranchi, for the tea industry finds employment for females as easily as for males."

(ii) *Migration to particular areas.*—The above analysis of general migration also indicates the trend of the population to particular areas, namely, the metropolitan and the tea-garden areas. No further analysis is necessary regarding the latter area as the extent and causes of the movement of workers have already been demonstrated, as also has the ratio of males to females. Some further remarks, however, are necessary regarding Calcutta and individual manufacturing centres in the metropolitan area not only to show the extent of the non-Bengali population, but also to give some indication of the causes of particular streams of migration and of the effects of migration on domestic life.

The census figures for 1921 show that just less than a quarter of the inhabitants of Calcutta and the suburban municipalities of Cossipore, Manicktollah, Tollygunge, the South Suburbs, Garden Reach, and Howrah, were born in the city, that rather less than a quarter of 22·25 per cent. were born in the neighbouring areas of the 24-Parganas and Howrah, and that rather more than half were born further afield; 16·70 per cent. were born in other parts of Bengal, 34·99 per cent. in other provinces, and 1·19 per cent. outside India. 5,288 persons per 10,000 in Calcutta and suburbs were born further away than in Calcutta and the 2 adjoining districts, and the following table shows the number per 10,000 who were born outside the Calcutta and district area, and also the number of females per 1,000 immigrant males:—

| Birthplace.  | Numbers per 10,000 of the population. | Females per 1,000 male immigrants. |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Burdwan Division beyond Howrah district .. .. .      | 854                                   | 542                                |
| Presidency Division outside Calcutta and 24-Parganas | 284                                   | 540                                |
| Rajshahi Division and Cooch Behar .. .. .            | 61                                    | 426                                |
| Dacca Division .. .. .                               | 395                                   | 322                                |
| Chittagong Division .. .. .                          | 75                                    | 95                                 |
| Bihar and Orissa .. .. .                             | 1,991                                 | 183                                |
| United Provinces .. .. .                             | 958                                   | 327                                |
| Rajputana .. .. .                                    | 230                                   | 467                                |
| Punjab .. .. .                                       | 79                                    | 346                                |
| Bombay .. .. .                                       | 66                                    | 392                                |
| Central Provinces .. .. .                            | 61                                    | 635                                |
| Madras .. .. .                                       | 46                                    | 813                                |
| Assam .. .. .  | 30                                    | 280                                |
| China .. .. .  | 24                                    | 184                                |
| Europe .. .. .                                       | 64                                    | 322                                |

The labour supply areas in Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces furnish 1,991 and 958 immigrants respectively per 10,000 of the population; in other words, the Province of Bihar and Orissa supplies nearly one in five of the Calcutta population, a greater number than comes from the rest of Bengal outside the city and the two adjoining districts. The United Provinces supply one in ten, but whereas only 183 females accompany each thousand Bihar and Orissa male immigrants, 327 females accompany each thousand of the United Provinces male immigrants. The larger ratio of the United Provinces women is further due to the fact that the United Provinces men are in more regular employment than those from Bihar and Orissa, and also that their women find work in certain factory processes along with the men. Similarly, there is a higher proportion of females accompanying the immigrants from the Madras Presidency, because not only do Madrassi women not object to being seen abroad, but they also find employment readily in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, in factories and as domestic servants.

The following table gives an analysis of immigrants to Calcutta and its suburbs by sex and age :—

| Birth place.   | Females per 1,000 male immigrants. | Number per mill of each sex aged |         |        |         |              |         | Dependants per 1,000 workers. |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------------|---------|-------------------------------|
|  |                                    | 0-15.                            |         | 15-40. |         | 40 and over. |         |                               |
|  |                                    | Male.                            | Female. | Male.  | Female. | Male.        | Female. |                               |
| Midnapore .. ..  | 568                                | 108                              | 109     | 668    | 544     | 224          | 347     | 293                           |
| Hooghly .. ..  | 497                                | 142                              | 171     | 569    | 484     | 289          | 345     | 546                           |
| Dacca .. ..  | 292                                | 125                              | 249     | 639    | 525     | 236          | 226     | 496                           |
| Patna, Gaya, Shahabad, Monghyr, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Saran in Bihar. | 218                                | 99                               | 187     | 621    | 546     | 280          | 267     | 247                           |
| Cuttack and Balasore in Orissa.  | 62                                 | 75                               | 155     | 699    | 586     | 226          | 259     | 79                            |
| Azamgarh, Benares, Gazipur and Jaipur in the United Provinces.             | 371                                | 118                              | 179     | 590    | 550     | 292          | 271     | 369                           |
| Bikanir and Jaipur in Rajputana.   | 471                                | 183                              | 224     | 600    | 539     | 217          | 237     | 353                           |
| Normal distribution by sex and age in Bengal.                              | 932                                | 400                              | 400     | 412    | 426     | 188,         | 175     | —                             |

These figures apply to all immigration into Calcutta, but from the industrial point of view, attention has to be concentrated only on those arising from the Bihar and the United Provinces districts and Cuttack and Balasore in Orissa. The last column, dependants, indicates only the dependants who accompany the immigrants. The table shows that the Oriya most readily separates from his family. Only 79 dependants per one thousand workers come to Calcutta and only 62 women per 1,000 males. Probably, the small number of females accompany the better class of Oriyas who are engaged in trade and professions, so that, as the Census Report points out, the Oriya cook or coolie never brings his family with him. The table also shows that seven out of ten Oriyas are workers in the prime of life. There are a few boys under 18 and none who are not old enough to be working. Men over 40 are less numerous than immigrants from other parts. The age proportions of males from Midnapore, which adjoins the Balasore district, and which also, as shown separately, supplies a large number of immigrants to Calcutta, are similar to those of males from Orissa. More dependants, however, come from Midnapore, and half of the females earn their own living. In this half one female in every three admits to being a prostitute. The age distribution of persons born in Hooghly, the Report points out, is less abnormal, although there is still less than one female to two males and dependants are only about one to every two workers. One-third of the females earn their own living, but among female workers one among every four owns to being a prostitute. Immigrants from Bihar include many more women than those from Orissa, but the proportion is still only about one female to five males. The proportion of older people is higher and they are all workers. The proportion of females, the number of dependants, and the number of old people are all higher amongst emigrants from the United Provinces.

The birth-place figures of the 1921 census, when compared with similar figures for the previous three decades, show that the number of immigrants from every part outside Bengal increased very much between 1891 and 1921. The figures, which are given in the table below show variations from decade to decade :—

| Born in                           | Found in Calcutta City. |         |         |         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                   | 1891.                   | 1901.   | 1911.   | 1921.   |
| Bihar and Orissa .. ..            | 149,742                 | 165,313 | 204,484 | 185,635 |
| United Provinces .. ..            | 54,110                  | 90,414  | 89,695  | 67,534  |
| Central Provinces and Berar .. .. | 8,912                   | 1,926   | 2,666   | 4,747   |
| Madras .. ..                      | 1,221                   | 1,922   | 3,014   | 3,425   |

For example, the number recruited by Bengal from the United Provinces rose in 40 years from 54,000 to 67,000, reaching a peak of 90,000 in 1901. The fall of emigration from the labour supplying areas is mainly due to the fact that Calcutta has reached saturation point, so far as the creation of important new industries is concerned. New concerns are started not in Calcutta or its immediate neighbourhood, but in the more outlying parts of the metropolitan area. The only type of labour emigrant which goes on increasing is the Oriya, as they flock to Calcutta to take up the many unskilled and casual jobs which an expanding city always offers.

The above description shows the figures for Calcutta and suburbs; figures, however, were also compiled in the 1921 census showing the birth-place of the population in typical mill towns near Calcutta. The following table shows the remarkable difference in the ratios of persons born outside the province, in country towns in Bengal, as compared with the mill towns in the metropolitan area :—

| Inhabitants of:—      | Number per mille.          |                               |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                       | Born in the same district. | Born in other part of Bengal. | Born outside the Province. |
| Mill towns .. .. .    | 209                        | 96                            | 695                        |
| Country towns .. .. . | 814                        | 106                           | 80                         |

In the mill towns, only about one-fifth of the total population was born in the area surrounding the towns, whereas only 8 per cent. of the people of the country towns were born outside Bengal. In Titagarh, a compact manufacturing area, no less than 90 per cent. of the inhabitants were born outside Bengal. In Bhadreswar, a similar town on the opposite side of the river, 79 per cent. were born outside Bengal. As the Census Report points out, these towns may be regarded as no more than colonies of up-country men. It is also pointed out that, although a few workers had children with them who were born since they immigrated, practically none of them had settled down and brought up their families to maturity to swell the number of the native-born. In the words of the Census Report, these places "are no more than the temporary habitations" of the workers.

The following table gives the number of females per 1,000 males in the average mill town, the average industrial or commercial town, Calcutta City and Bengal as a whole in the decennial periods from 1872 to 1921 :—

|  | Number of females per thousand males. |       |       |       |       |       |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | 1872.                                 | 1881. | 1891. | 1901. | 1911. | 1921. |
| The average country town .. .. .           | 947                                   | 971   | 903   | 869   | 841   | 816   |
| The average industrial or commercial town. | 798                                   | 767   | 685   | 605   | 582   | 537   |
| Calcutta City .. .. .                      | 552                                   | 556   | 526   | 507   | 475   | 470   |
| Bengal .. .. .                             | 992                                   | 994   | 973   | 960   | 945   | 932   |

The table shows a gradual decline in the number of females per 1,000 males for the whole of Bengal, but the greatest disproportion is in the industrial areas and in Calcutta. In 1872, the proportion of the sexes in Calcutta was low, but it was relatively high in the industrial towns. Since then the decline in the ratio in the industrial towns has been very marked. This is due to the steady influx of single male workers who have left their families behind. In Calcutta, the census figures show only 374 married females per 1,000 married males, and only 47 per cent. of the total number of women were returned as married. Hence, it is clear that the predominance of males involves a great increase in sexual immorality, and this, in its turn, tends to discourage men from bringing their wives to the towns with them.

As regards particular streams of migration in Bengal, the main facts have already been given. The supply areas are, for industries, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, the Central Provinces, and Madras; and for plantations, the Chota Nagpur plateau, Nepal, and the Central Provinces. The great body of emigrants from the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa come from two distinct areas—in Orissa from the districts of Cuttack and Balasore, in Bihar the western districts, in the United

Provinces the eastern districts. More than 80 per cent. of those who come to Bengal from the Central Provinces come from three districts, Bilaspur, Raipur, and Nagpur; while two districts in the Madras Presidency, Ganjam and Vizagapatam, with Madras City, send most of the Madras immigrants.

Further analysis of the figures of immigrants to Calcutta and suburbs shows that seven districts in Bihar send more than 5,000 immigrants each—Gaya 48,000, Patna 28,000, Shahabad 26,500, Muzaffarpur 21,000, Monghyr 20,500, Saran 17,000, Darbhanga 10,000, and Hazaribagh 7,000. The Orissa districts send:—Cuttack 46,000, Balasore 16,500, and Puri 5,000. Nine districts of the United Provinces adjoining each other send more than 5,000—Benares 16,500, Ghazipur 15,500, Balia 14,000, Azamgarh 12,500, Jaunpur 12,000, Mirzapur 8,000, Fyzabad 6,500, Sultanpur 6,000, and Allahabad 5,500. The general cause for emigration from these districts is pressure of population in the districts themselves, but the direction of emigration of making a living, is determined largely by the system of recruitment for the large Bengal industries through sirdars. Sirdars in the jute mills, engineering works, and other concerns recruit in their own native villages and surrounding areas; hence, there is a tendency for people from the same village or the immediate neighbourhood to congregate in the same industrial area in Bengal. For example, 8,240 out of a total of 14,092 emigrants from Balia district, were found in Howrah, but of a total number of 12,562 emigrants from the adjoining district of Azamgarh, Howrah had only 2,593. Similarly, in the other mill-towns the tendency is for men from the same area to congregate together. For example, 27·3 per cent. of the total population of Titagarh or a total number of 14,350 persons were born in five adjoining districts—Patna, Gaya, Sahabad in Bihar, and Balia and Ghazipur in the United Provinces; 22·7 per cent. of the population of Bhatpara and 19·6 per cent. of that of Bhadreswar came from the same areas. It may also be noted that 6·6 per cent. of the population of Serampore came from these areas, and that 12·3 per cent. of the population of Titagarh, 7·1 per cent. of that of Bhatpara, 7·3 per cent. of that of Serampore, and 6·7 per cent. of that of Bhadreswar came from Cuttack and Balasore.

The actual vocation of immigrants is also determined to a certain extent by the type of work. Oriyas, for example, are found in larger proportions in Calcutta, where there is greater scope for casual labour and domestic service. Two-thirds of the Oriyas from the districts of Cuttack and Balasore, in 1921, were found employed in the city, whereas the Biharis are divided between the city and the suburbs in almost equal proportions. A relatively small proportion of emigrants from the United Provinces come actually to Calcutta; they are employed more largely in the mill areas outside the town. Generally speaking, the up-country men are found in larger proportions in industries where a certain amount of skill is required, whereas Oriyas tend to adopt unskilled callings.

(iii) *Migration in individual industries.*—The above analyses have reference to the total number of immigrants with respect to the areas from which they come, and in which they temporarily settle, to the sex ratio between males and females, and to particular streams of immigration. A short description is given below of migration as it affects individual industries.

The occupational census of 1921 (Census Report, 1921, Volume V, Part I, Chapter XII) gives figures showing the numbers and birth-places of persons supported by the chief industries in Bengal—agricultural, manufacturing, and transport. The only agricultural industry with which we are concerned is the tea and plantation industry, and only two types of plantation need be considered: one is tea-gardens, and the other cinchona plantations. The two cinchona plantations are in the Darjeeling hill area, and in 1921 they were returned as employing only 2,088 persons. Tea plantations in 1921 employed 87,413 males and 101,136 females of all grades, including children under 14. These were employed in 340 gardens. The birth-place of the unskilled labourers in tea-gardens which includes all the labour save a small minority, is also shown in the census tables. The two main tea-garden areas are the Jalpaiguri and the Darjeeling districts, and the returns show that of a total labour force of 141,141 unskilled labourers employed in Jalpaiguri, 90,348 were born in the Chota Nagpur plateau, 29,018 in Jalpaiguri itself, mainly the children of imported labourers, and 16,529 in other parts of India, mainly, it may be assumed, in the Central Provinces and Madras. In Darjeeling, of a total of 62,729 unskilled labourers 29,632 were born in the district, 8,359 in the Chota Nagpur plateau, and 22,824 in other parts of India outside Bengal (most of them in Nepal). In Chittagong and Tripura State, which between them employ 5,115 workers, a big proportion, viz., 1,576, were born in the same area as that in which they were employed, while 1,462 were born in other parts of India.

In transport, which supports one way or other, 16 per 1,000 of the population of the Presidency, birthplace figures are shown for steamer coolies, railway coolies, and railway khalasis, and for day-labourers and coolies, including workers in docks and ships. Steamer coolies, railway coolies and railway khalasis, classed together

under one heading in the census figures, are shown as comprising 26,830 adult males, 2,096 adult females, 3,046 male children under 14, and 288 female children under 14. Of this total of 32,260, 9,008 were returned as born in the district of enumeration, 1,586 in the adjoining district, and 1,118 in other districts of Bengal. The numbers from North Bihar were 3,676, from South Bihar 4,879, from the Chota Nagpur plateau 2,325, from Orissa 1,824, from the United Provinces 5,030, from Madras 182, from other parts of India 2,626, and from outside India 6, or a total of 20,548 from outside Bengal, as compared with 11,712 in Bengal. Day labourers and coolies, including workers in docks and ships were classified together, and showed a total of 97,883 made up of 90,918 adult males and 3,986 adult females, with 2,917 male and 62 female children under 14. Of these, 11,441 were born in the district of enumeration, 7,942 in the adjoining district, and 10,731 in other districts of Bengal, that is a total of 30,114 in Bengal. The total from outside Bengal was 67,769 made up of 11,538 from North Bihar, 21,386 from South Bihar, 2,254 from the Chota Nagpur plateau, 18,366 from Orissa, 12,138 from the United Provinces, 90 from Madras, 1,678 from other parts of India, and 319 from outside India. Of the foregoing number, 69,541 adult males, 2,378 adult females, and 2,115 children under 14 were employed in Calcutta, i.e., a total of 74,034, and of this only 24,559 were born in Bengal, the remainder were born outside Bengal; and of these South Bihar provided the largest number—17,812, Orissa the next largest, 12,440, North Bihar, 9,542, and the United Provinces 6,942. From the above figures it will be seen that only a little over 9,000 out of over 32,000 railway and steamer coolies were born in the Bengal districts in which they were working, and many of these must have been the children of immigrant workers. The great majority of such workers come from the United Provinces, Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa. It is, therefore, clear, as the census report says, that the people of Bengal leave all the work of porters on the railway and steamer routes to immigrants. The same is true of day labourers and coolies, including dock labourers.

The census figures give a fairly complete analysis of the birthplace of both skilled and unskilled workmen. The result for all the industries for which figures were compiled is indicated below :—

(1) *Skilled Workmen*.—The total was 169,860 adult males, 9,771 adult females, 2,119 male children under 14, and 224 female children under 14, or a total of 181,974. Of that total 51,151 were born in the district of enumeration, 13,429 in the adjoining district, and 6,560 in other districts of Bengal, or a total of 71,140 born in Bengal. North Bihar provided 27,120, South Bihar 24,779, the Chota Nagpur plateau 2,427, Orissa 12,524, the United Provinces 35,991, Madras 4,180, other parts of India 3,225, and outside India 588.

(2) *Unskilled Workers*.—The corresponding figures total 588,488, composed of 363,610 adult males, 137,300 adult females, 54,822 male children under 14, and 32,716 female children under 14. Of the total, 135,669 were born in the district of enumeration, 21,725 in the adjoining district, and 16,945 in other districts of Bengal, that is a total of 174,339 born in Bengal. North Bihar provided 36,099, South Bihar 63,977, the Chota Nagpur plateau 122,942, Orissa 51,766, the United Provinces 68,154, Madras 13,294, other parts of India 57,535, and outside India 342.

The above statistics were compiled for collieries, cotton spinning and weaving mills, jute mills, silk filatures and mills, iron foundries and iron and steel works, machinery and engineering works, paper mills, flour mills, railway workshops, steamer workshops and shipwrights' and dockyard workshops. It does not include tea-garden labour, which has already been dealt with, but it includes railway and steamer coolies and day labourers, including workers in docks and ships, in Calcutta and its suburbs. The following table indicates the number per 10,000 workers born in the various parts of India :—

|                      | Number per 10,000 workers born in |              |              |               |         |                   |         |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|
|                      | Bengal.                           | North Bihar. | South Bihar. | Chota Nagpur. | Orissa. | United Provinces. | Madras. | Other parts of India. |
| Skilled workmen ..   | 3,910                             | 1,490        | 1,362        | 133           | 691     | 1,974             | 230     | 177                   |
| Unskilled workmen .. | 2,835                             | 919          | 1,657        | 612           | 1,367   | 1,812             | 334     | 449                   |

The figures show that, taking skilled and unskilled workers together, those born in Bengal are only 3,187 per 10,000, that is less than one-third. The proportion born in Bengal is much lower amongst unskilled than among skilled workmen. In each case, skilled and unskilled, the proportion of Bengalis is really lower than the figures show, because they include a number of children of immigrants, probably more amongst the skilled than unskilled, for skilled labourers have more permanent employment than unskilled, and many of them bring their children to work with them. Immigrants from North Bihar are more numerous than those from South Bihar among the skilled, but they were not much more than half as many among the unskilled. Skilled workmen from the Chota Nagpur plateau are relatively few: the proportion is four times as high amongst the unskilled. Twice as many unskilled Oriyas come to Bengal as skilled, but more skilled workmen come from the United Provinces than unskilled. The proportion of unskilled workmen from Madras is also greater than the skilled. Both among the unskilled and skilled, the province of Bihar and Orissa supplies many more operatives than Bengal, and the United Provinces supplies half as many to the skilled as Bengal itself does, and two-thirds as many to the unskilled.

With respect to coal-mining, the census gives figures for 202 mines, or, discounting 13 which employ less than 20 men, 189 as against 129 in 1911. In 1911, all but one were located in Burdwan, and the one was in Bankura. In 1921, there were two in Bankura, which, however, only employed 53 persons between them, 4 in Birbhum, with 418 employees, and the rest were in the Raniganj field. The number is now, as shown in the last report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India, 191. The detailed figures show that, amongst both unskilled and skilled employees, the majority of workers were born in the area in which they were employed. The bulk of the others came from the Chota Nagpur plateau, and immigrants are proportionately more numerous amongst the unskilled labourers than amongst the skilled.

The chief manufacturing industry in Bengal is jute spinning and weaving. This industry is concentrated in the metropolitan industrial area, and the following table shows the total number of mills and the total number of employees in 1911 and 1921:—

|                  | Number of mills in |       | Number of Employees in |          |         |          |
|------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------------|----------|---------|----------|
|                  | 1921.              | 1911. | 1921.                  |          | 1911.   |          |
|                  |                    |       | Males.                 | Females. | Males.  | Females. |
| Hooghly .. .. .  | 9                  | 7     | 41,300                 | 9,875    | 25,579  | 6,358    |
| Howrah .. .. .   | 12                 | 9     | 57,388                 | 10,059   | 37,993  | 6,464    |
| 24-Parganas .. . | 38                 | 31    | 133,644                | 26,372   | 95,077  | 21,139   |
| Calcutta .. .. . | 5                  | 3     | 5,336                  | 784      | 6,534   | 1,362    |
| Total .. .. .    | 62                 | 50    | 237,668                | 47,090   | 165,183 | 35,263   |

The number of mills, according to the latest report of the chief inspector of factories is now 86, and the number of employees is 331,899, composed of 260,342 adult males, 53,678 adult females, 16,939 male children below 14, and 940 female children below 14. Table XXII, in Parts IV and V of Volume V of the 1921 Census Report shows the detailed numbers of skilled and unskilled labourers according to birth-place. The number of skilled workmen who were born in Bengal was only 31·56 of the total, whereas only 2 out of every 11 of the unskilled labourers were born in Bengal. Allowing for the fact that many were children of immigrant workmen, it is thus clear, as the census report says, that the people of Bengal take a very small share in the labour employed by the premier factory industry of the province. Of the total number of unskilled workers, 36,988 were born in the United Provinces, 29,607 in South Bihar, 23,218 in Orissa, 15,947 in North Bihar, and 10,786 in Madras.

The figures for jute presses could not be given in the Census Report, as the census was taken at a period when the majority of presses were closed down.

At present there are 14 cotton spinning and weaving mills in Bengal. In 1921, the census accounted for 12 mills with more than 100 operatives each, and five employing from between 10 and 20. In 1911, 9,552 males and 1,286 females were employed. In 1921, this number had risen to 11,780 males, and 1,955 females, inclusive of children. A third of the skilled workmen in cotton mills were returned as born in the near neighbourhood of the mills. The immigrants were shown as

coming mainly from the United Provinces and Orissa. A smaller proportion of the unskilled labourers were born in the neighbourhood of the mills, and larger proportions came from the United Provinces and Orissa.

The metal industry is not so concentrated as the jute industry, but the great majority of concerns are in the metropolitan area, the others, including the blast furnaces being in the Asansol area. Skilled workmen in iron foundries, iron and steel works, and machinery and engineering works are practically all male adults. Amongst the unskilled workers, however, there were 2,247 adult women, 458 boys, and 166 girls, to 7,406 adult males in iron foundries, but most of them were employed in one large foundry. In iron and steel works there were few women employed, and, again, they were mostly employed at Asansol. The number of children employed in iron and steel works was relatively small. Very few women were employed as unskilled labourers in machinery and engineering works, and also very few boys. Persons born in Bengal take a greater share in the iron industries, as is shown by the following table :—

|                                 | Skilled workers. |                 | Unskilled workers. |                 |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                                 | Total.           | Born in Bengal. | Total.             | Born in Bengal. |
| Iron foundries .. .. .          | 4,600            | 2,611           | 10,277             | 3,717           |
| Iron and steel works .. .. .    | 2,588            | 1,663           | 3,857              | 998             |
| Machinery and engineering works | 10,685           | 7,696           | 6,691              | 1,678           |

Amongst the immigrants, the proportion of unskilled workers is higher than that of skilled workers. The proportion employed from the eastern districts of the United Provinces and the western districts of Bihar is also less in the metal industries than it is in the jute mills.

Railway workshops, which, in 1921, employed 30,387 males and 727 females, as against 22,272 males and 463 females in 1911, showed the following figures :— 7,385 born in Bengal ; 4,109 in the United Provinces ; 1,996 in North Bihar ; 1,603 in Madras ; 1,210 in South Bihar ; 786 in Orissa ; 104 in Chota Nagpur ; and 1,712 in other parts of India, mainly the Punjab. Among the skilled labourers, 7,385, out of a total of 19,124, were born in Bengal. The majority of the skilled immigrants came from the United Provinces, North and South Bihar, Madras, and other parts of India, mainly the Punjab. All supplied over a thousand ; in two cases—other parts of India and South Bihar—the numbers being almost 2,000. Of the unskilled labour in railway workshops, totalling 10,836, 2,666 were born in Bengal, and the rest distributed over the rest of India—the United Provinces and the Punjab supplying the bulk of it.

3. *Methods of Recruitment.*—Practically the entire labour force of Bengal outside tea gardens and specialised employment, like the inland steamer services, is recruited by means of the sirdar system, reference to which has already been made.

In the Duars and Terai tea areas, approximately 90 per cent. of the estates recruit through the Tea District Labour Association. The system is modelled on the Assam system, and is operated by a special Duars and Terai Sub-Committee of the Indian Tea Association, and it has been found to work satisfactorily. The Darjeeling estates do not recruit in the plains. They rely entirely on hill labour, who move voluntarily backwards and forwards between their homes and the tea estates.

In the case of inland steam vessels, the serang takes the place of the sirdar in general industry.

The existing methods of recruitment work well, and, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned, no question of intervention with a view to improvement has arisen.

7. *Unemployment*—(ii) *Application of International Conventions relating to unemployment.*—These two subjects were fully considered in 1921-22 in connection with the Washington Convention and Recommendation concerning unemployment. The Government of Bengal expressed the following views on the Convention and the Recommendation :—

“ The Governor in Council agrees with the Government of India that Article 2 of this Convention, which requires (a) the establishment of free public employment



agencies under the control of a central authority, and (b) the appointment of advisory committees consisting of representatives of employers and of workers is premature for India."

So far as the Province of Bengal is concerned, free public employment agencies are not necessary to inform people in areas affected by famine or scarcity where work can be obtained. The Province of Bengal is fortunately not affected in the same way as other provinces in India by periodic famines, and in those cases in which famine conditions do from time to time establish themselves, or where local scarcity occurs, the existing administrative machinery of the Government is sufficient for the dissemination of necessary information to the people who are likely to migrate in search of employment. There is, however, no necessity in Bengal for the permanent establishment of public employment agencies. If such agencies became necessary, as the result of temporary calamities, they could be created as circumstances demanded.

(i) *Extent and character.*—As already indicated, there is practically no industrial unemployment in Bengal. From time to time, the volume of unemployment in the main industries varies for special reasons, such as seasonal fluctuation, as in the jute presses, or changing over from the multiple to the single-shift system in the jute manufacturing industry or the slump in the coal trade, but the labour either transfers itself to other industries or simply leaves for its home districts. During the last two or three years, a large number of jute mills have changed over from the multiple to the single shift system; it is estimated that on the single shift about 25 to 33 per cent. less labour force is required than on the multiple shift, but in spite of the changes no trouble has been reported to the Government with regard to unemployment. In the coalfields, although many mines have been closed down in recent years, no difficulty has been experienced in miners finding work, if they desire it, but few of them depend entirely on mining for their livelihood.

Generally speaking, the supply of skilled labour in Bengal is not equal to the demand, and if there is much labour, either skilled or unskilled, turned off for trade reasons, it is either easily absorbed or disappears to its home districts.

9. *Apprentices Act, 1859.*—This Act is reported to be a dead letter in Bengal.

6. *Recruitment for Assam.*—(i) *Need for retention of control.*

(v) *Possible substitute for the existing system.*—The Assam tea industry is the only industry which is controlled in its recruitment of Indian labour. Other industries, and even the tea industry in the Duars, Darjeeling and Madras Presidency are free from Governmental control. There are some who advocate that the Assam tea industry should also be free, but up to now the Indian Tea Association has not accepted this view; on the contrary, it has definitely urged that Government control is necessary. The advocates of control fear that if recruiting were free, abuses would arise as they did in the past from the competitive spending of money to secure labour. There appears to be no doubt that the unrestricted spending of money with the object of securing labour under a system of free recruitment, would very quickly revive all the abuses which were associated with the *arkati* system of recruitment. If free recruitment is to be inevitably associated with lavish and uncontrolled expenditure on recruitment, then there can be no doubt that the continuance of control is essential. The labourer gets no advantage from the large sums spent on his recruitment. On the contrary, the greater the amount expended in securing his emigration the less happy is likely to be the lot of the labourer. Recruitment expenses swell the labour bill and it may be assumed that, as no firm can afford to expend an indefinite amount on labour, high recruiting expenses injuriously affect the wages and other conditions of employment. Furthermore, the large amount spent on the importation of labourers, did, in the past, engender a tendency on the part of employers in Assam to restrict their free movement in the labour market. Till very recently a system of labour rules was in force which had the effect of making it exceedingly difficult for a labourer to find employment on any garden other than that which imported him. These rules are now being revised.

What should be aimed at is a system whereby recruiting expenses will be reduced to a minimum and the labourer will be given the utmost freedom, even after he reaches Assam, to secure the best market for his labour.

(iii) *Composition and working of Assam Labour Board.*—As the Board consists chiefly of representatives of the tea industry, it is a means by which the industry is associated with Government in the administration of the Act, and as such it has proved valuable in removing abuses previously connected with recruitment.

(iv) *Defects of existing Act and system.*—The chief defect of the existing Act is that it was passed to regulate a system of recruitment entirely different from the system now in vogue. Recruitment by contractors, sub-contractors and recruiters

has been abolished and all other form of recruitment except recruitment by certified garden sirdars working under the supervision of licensed local agents has been prohibited. Registration of coolies by Government officers has been abandoned and labour contracts, together with the penal provisions for their enforcement, have been done away with. These changes have entirely altered the character of recruitment for Assam and the consequential changes in the Act have completely altered the Act itself. A fundamental consequence of the abolition of labour contracts and Government registration of emigrants, is, that the definition of "labourer" contained in the Act ceases to have any application. The repeals and alterations of the Act have, therefore, resulted in the peculiar position that an Act designed to regulate the emigration and conditions of employment of labourers has no application whatever to labourers as defined in the Act. At the present moment, recruitment is regulated almost entirely by rules promulgated by notifications of the Provincial Governments under sections 3 and 91 of the Act read in conjunction with the penal sections 164 and 174. The system works simply because the tea industry endeavours to make it work. An overwhelming proportion of recruitment for Assam is conducted by the Tea Districts Labour Association and it is the policy of this Association which represents the great bulk of the tea industry to carry out the system of legal control imposed by Government. Other minor recruiting agencies which are in existence also follow the same policy. Should the present system of control ever be seriously challenged it will probably prove unworkable.

Though the tea industry submits to the present system of control, it cannot be said that it is satisfied with it or that the system is a good one. The restriction of recruitment to certified garden sirdars imposes a serious handicap on the industry and renders recruitment unnecessarily expensive. On an average, each sirdar recruits one coolie. It is reported that in Ceylon and Malaya each recruiter secures on the average 6 and 9 recruits respectively. The evils of the present Assam system in this respect have been aggravated by the strict interpretation which has been placed by the courts in at least one province on the word "assist" in section 164 of the Emigration Act. Under this interpretation it is unlawful, for instance, for a missionary who is approached voluntarily by members of his congregation who desire to emigrate to Assam, to send them to a certified sirdar or a licensed local agent for the purpose. It has also been held that general propaganda by the Tea Districts Labour Association local agents setting forth the conditions of employment in Assam is inadmissible under the Act, inasmuch as it would constitute illegal assistance to recruitment.

A further instance of the rigidity and unsuitability of the present Act is found in the fact that it contains no provision whereby an emigrant who comes in of his own accord to a local agent with a view to emigration to Assam can be forwarded. The difficulty is at present overcome by the expensive method of getting a sirdar sent down from the garden in Assam to which the coolie wishes to proceed, but even this course is open to objection, as at any time it may be held that the local agent is guilty of illegal assistance to recruitment in putting the sirdar in touch with the recruit.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on technical defects of which the Act is full. Enough has been said to show that the Act is unworkable.

(v) *Possible substitutes.*—A possible substitute for the Assam Labour and Emigration Act VI of 1901 will be found in the draft Bill forwarded by the Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, with their letter No. L-1266, dated the 3rd December, 1928. That Bill proposed to repeal the existing Act and to substitute therefor an Assam Labour Recruitment Act. The Government of Bengal accepted the general principles of the draft Bill, subject to minor modifications.

The Government of Bengal are not directly interested in restrictions on recruitment and movements of labour, as no restrictions exist in respect of Bengal industries or plantations. Bengal is, however, interested in seeing that no abuses or scandals in connection with the movement of labour from or through this province to Assam take place. The Government of Bengal therefore accepted the general principles of the draft Bill which provide for the retention of control with certain relaxations.

### III.—Housing. IV.—Health. V.—Welfare. VI.—Education.

#### LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

dated 26th November, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of the following papers\* containing information, and, where necessary, the views of the Government of Bengal on the above headings :—

A.—Letter No. 79 T. Com., dated the 21st April, 1927, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce Department, to the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Department of Industries and Labour on Welfare Work.

\* Papers F and G are not reprinted here, and parts of some of the other papers have been omitted.

This letter contains an analysis of, and commentary on, the types of welfare work, including housing, medical relief, and education, undertaken by the various industries in Bengal.

B.—Note on housing and health conditions on data obtained from certain jute mills, by Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health, Burdwan Circle.

This note, compiled on the basis of the items in the final list of subjects, partly covers the same ground as the letter referred to above.

C.—Report on housing and health conditions in eight collieries in the Asansol coal-mining area, by Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health, Burdwan Circle.

This report may be read with the corresponding passages in the report of Mr. Beale, forwarded with my letter No. 1330 T. Com., dated the 21st October/12th November, 1929.

D.—Note on the sanitary condition of printing presses in Calcutta, with particular reference to lead-poisoning, by Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

This note is the result of an investigation made in 1921–22.

E.—Extract from a report on housing and health conditions of workers in tea-gardens, by the officiating Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri (Mr. N. V. H. Symons, I.C.S.).

\*F.—Joint report on the general health and working conditions of children employed in factories in Bengal, and their certification under the Indian Factories Act, by Captain W. O'Connor, I.M.D., Certifying Surgeon of Factories, Barrackpore, and Military Assistant Surgeon H. C. Pownes, Certifying Surgeon of Factories, Bengal.

\*G.—Report regarding ventilation and humidification of cotton mills in Bengal, by Mr. R. C. Parsons, B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E., Inspector of Factories, Bengal.

H.—Memorandum on Sickness Insurance.

I.—Memorandum on Maternity Benefits.

J.—Memorandum by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal (Rai Jamini Mohan Mitra Bahadur), containing information on co-operation.

K.—Report on educational facilities for children of the labouring classes in Bengal, by Khan Bahadur Maulvi Tasadduk Ahmad, Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.

2. The above papers contain the information at the disposal of the Government of Bengal on the various items included under the main headings—Housing, Health, Welfare, and Education.

3. With regard to item (16) (*Extent to which housing is provided*), I am to refer in particular to paragraph 12 of paper A, in which it is pointed out that 100 per cent. of the concerns covered by the returns received in 1926–27, provide some sort of housing for their employees. Further information on housing in the colliery area of Bengal is provided in paragraphs 16 to 22 of Mr. Beale's report. Further notes on the type of houses provided are given in Dr. Batra's reports (papers B and C).

4. In summary it may be said that housing is provided generally in Bengal by employers, and that the extent and quality of housing depends on the cheapness and availability of land. In the more congested areas in Calcutta, Howrah and the near neighbourhood, housing facilities are not provided on so big or so good a scale as in other areas. Government and other public agencies do not provide houses for industrial purposes. No statistics have been compiled to show the extent of housing provided by private landlords or by workers themselves, but it is known that, particularly in the jute mill municipalities, a considerable proportion of workers' houses is provided by private landlords and sirdars.

5. As regards item (17) (*Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses*), information regarding coal mines is provided in Mr. Beale's report. With respect to housing in other industries, arrangements have also to be made privately. The Land Acquisition Act cannot be used for the purchase of land for building workers' houses.

6. Accurate information on item (18) (*Nature of accommodation provided in each class*) is not available, except in regard to coal mines, *vide* paragraph 18 of Mr. Beale's report and the relevant item in Dr. Batra's report on the collieries (paper C). Dr. Batra makes certain remarks (*vide* paper B) on the type of houses provided in the jute mill area from the health point of view, and also on the provision made for lighting, conservancy, and water supply.

7. With regard to item (19) (*Utilisation by workers of accommodation available*), the information that has been collected shows that where houses are provided they are fully utilized by workers.

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\* Papers F and G are not reprinted here, and parts of some of the other papers have been omitted.

8. As regards item (20) (*Rent rates in various classes*), reference is invited to paragraph 12 of paper A. Dr. Batra says (*vide* paper B) that the rents vary from 8 annas to Re. 1 per month per room. In some cases the rents are as low as 4 annas per room (capable of housing four people), and in many cases accommodation is provided free.

9. On item (21) (*Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing*), no official information is available, nor is such information available on item (22) (*Moral effect on worker of industrial housing conditions; improvements tried and suggested*).

10. The outstanding feature of available information on heading "IV—Health" is that no general survey of the health conditions in the industrial centres in Bengal has been made. With the exception of the coal-mining area, which is under the Asansol Mines Board of Health, the figures which have been compiled must be accepted with reserve. In 1921 the Government of Bengal created a post of Assistant Director of Public Health for industrial purposes, but owing to financial exigencies it was found necessary to abolish this post. Intensive research into the health conditions of industrial workers in this province must await improved finances.

11. As regards item (23) (*General health conditions of workers*), reference is invited to the report of Dr. Batra contained in paper B, the report of Mr. Beale, and the joint report of the certifying surgeons (paper F). With regard to item (23) (iii) (*Working conditions: (a) at workplaces, (b) at home*), the Chief Inspector of Factories reports that in jute mills and other large industrial concerns, working conditions must be considered generally to be satisfactory. On the other hand, in small concerns, especially in the congested areas of Calcutta and Howrah, conditions are often unsatisfactory. He reports that this is particularly noticeable in the case of printing presses, where, in many cases, factories have been established in buildings originally intended for residential purposes. Such buildings are badly lighted and insufficiently ventilated. Dr. Batra's report on the sanitary condition of printing presses (paper D) amply bears out the remarks of the Chief Inspector of Factories. On the whole, however, factory operatives, particularly those employed in the better organized industries where housing accommodation is provided, are reported by the Certifying Surgeons of Factories, who have unrivalled opportunities of making observations on this subject, to have better physique and generally to be better nourished than non-factory workers. They are also reported by the same authorities to be less liable to disease, for not only are they accommodated in more healthy dwellings than other workers, but they are also protected from disease by prophylactic treatment provided by the mill authorities. As regards sub-item (23) (vi), it has to be added that the effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities were mentioned in the memorandum on heading I (Recruitment).

12. Information on item (24) (*Extent of medical facilities provided*) and item (25) (*Extent to which medical facilities are utilized*) is contained in paper A, supplemented by paper I and the reports of Mr. Beale, Mr. Symons (paper E) and Dr. Batra (papers B, C and D).

13. With regard to item (26) (*Sanitary arrangements: (a) at work places, (b) at home*), the Chief inspector of factories reports as follows:—

"(i) *Latrines—(a) At workplaces.*—Under the Factories Act, all factories with the exception of those outside municipal limits, are required to provide latrine accommodation in accordance with a scale laid down in the Factories Rules and they must be designed and constructed to the standard approved by the Chief Inspector of Factories and the Director of Public Health. In most of the larger factories, septic tank latrines are provided. 87 septic tanks have been installed during the past 10 years and these provide accommodation for approximately 375,000 workers.

As regards tea factories and small concerns outside municipal limits, only a few have been provided with latrine accommodation. The difficulties being experienced are the scarcity of conservancy coolies, the natural habits of the labour, and the necessity for separate latrines for different castes. Owing to the open position of most of these factories, the absence of latrines seldom gives rise to any nuisance within the factory compound.

(b) *At home.*—Where housing accommodation is provided by factory owners the sanitary arrangements are usually the same as in the factory.

(ii) *Drinking water.—(a) At work places.*—The provision of drinking water in factories is governed by Rule 29 of the Bengal Factories Rules:—

' 29 (i) *Drinking water.*—In every factory a supply of water fit for drinking, and consisting of at least as many gallons as there are persons employed in the factory, shall be provided daily free of cost.

(ii) Such supply shall be derived either from a public or private supply of efficiently filtered water, or from one or more wells or specially reserved tanks so situated as not to be possible of pollution or contamination by organic matter or other impurities.

(iii) Proper arrangements approved by the inspector shall be made for maintaining in a drained and cleanly condition the area around the place where the drinking water is distributed.

(iv) When the drinking water is obtained from an intermittent public water-supply, each factory shall be provided with a storage of water not less than 1 gallon per head of persons employed.

(v) The inspector may, at any time, in order to satisfy himself that the water supplied is fit for drinking, take samples for analysis, and the cost of analysis shall be borne by the occupier of the factory.'

Its enforcement gives no anxiety except perhaps in the smaller establishments in congested areas, or away from municipal water-supply where lack of general cleanliness and up-to-date control makes pollution and inadequacy possible. Purity and adequacy of supply in the smaller establishments depend largely on the habits of the workers themselves, and they are such that no small employer can keep abreast of them in attempting to comply with the above rules.

The larger industrial establishments, however, notably jute mills, go far beyond the requirements of the Act in this matter, and where municipal supply is not available, tube-wells are sunk from which sufficient water is obtained to meet more than the workers' needs, or expensive plant for purifying the river water is installed. Some jute mills whose tube-wells have proved unsatisfactory have even routine arrangements for bringing water by boats from Calcutta to meet the workers' requirements in that respect.

(b) *At home.*—Where workers live in quarters provided by the factory-owners and near the factory itself, the same system of water-supply of the factory is extended to the quarters for the workers' benefit. Where workers live away from the factory and within municipal limits of water-supply, water is generally available in the shape of a common hydrant, or road taps so distributed, that all living within the vicinity may make use of them.

Outside of municipal areas, however, or wherever there is no water-supply, workers have to rely upon wells and tanks which may or may not be polluted or adequate, depending upon the workers' habits and the state of the previous monsoon.

(iii) *Bathing and Washing.*—It can be generally said that with respect to all large industrial establishments bathing and washing facilities, are provided for the workers. In smaller factories, however, situated in congested areas of municipalities, on account of the lack of space, adequate bathing and washing arrangements cannot be provided. Such workers, therefore, have to rely upon the adequacy of water-supply and the municipal hydrant near their own homes. Those workers living outside the reach of municipal water-supply make use of tanks and the water from wells, the former often being polluted, possibly shared by buffaloes, and made use of for all domestic purposes."

Complete information regarding sanitary arrangements at the workers' homes is not available, but, as the Chief Inspector of Factories points out, where housing accommodation is provided by factory-owners, the sanitary arrangements are usually the same as in the factory. Workers living in municipal areas in houses not provided by the factory-owners may utilize the facilities available for other residents in those areas. Outside municipal areas, if water-supply is not provided by the factory, workers have to depend on wells, tanks, rivers, etc., for drinking, bathing, and washing.

14. As regards item (27) (*Extent and nature of official supervision*), the only Board of Health especially devoted to industrial purposes in the province of Bengal is the Asansol Mines Board of Health. The extent of official inspection in the tea-garden area is mentioned in the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri. Apart from municipal regulations, there is no official inspection of mills in other industrial areas in respect of matters which do not fall within the purview of the Factories Act.

15. *Item (28) : Suitability of existing Factories and Mines Acts and Rules.*—This item is read to apply only to control of temperature and humidification, and the nature of the action taken by the local Government in this respect is indicated in Mr. Parsons's report (paper G)\*. The local government are in general agreement with the conclusions reached by Mr. Parsons. At present there is no provision in the Factories Act under which temperature may be controlled in the sense of

\* Not printed here.

preventing extremes of temperature causing distress or ill-health to workers. Extremes in temperature, it is known, are detrimental to the health of workers, but prolonged investigation is necessary in order to determine what the most healthy and workable standards of temperature are. A provision should be included in the Act to enable the Chief Inspector of Factories to adopt such means as are reasonably possible to mitigate the effects of very high (or very low) temperatures in factories.

16. *Item (29) : Disease.*—Reliable material on the prevalence of industrial diseases in Bengal is lacking. Reference is invited to the appropriate sections in the reports of Dr. Batra (papers B, C, and D), Mr. Beale, and of the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri (paper E). Special information regarding sub-item (29) (ii) (*Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm, and other tropical diseases*) has not been forwarded, as this heading is read to apply to the prevalence of these diseases as a whole in the presidency, a subject which is dealt with in the reports of the Public Health Department, and also in the annual administration reports of the province.

17. *Item (31) : Maternity benefits.*—Since the local government expressed their views on the subject of legislation for maternity benefits in their letter No. 4912 Com., dated the 4th July, 1925, relevant extracts from which are reproduced in the memorandum on the subject (paper I), considerable advance has been made in the provision of maternity benefits, and the principle was accepted by the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association as part of the terms of settlement after the recent strikes. On general grounds, the Government of Bengal are still inclined to the view that legislation is not necessary in the main industries in Bengal, but if some measure of co-ordination could be adopted between the various provinces, they would not oppose a maternity benefit measure of the nature introduced in Bombay.

18. Information on item (32) (*Extent of welfare work*), item (33) (*Employment of welfare officers and workers*), item (34) (*Nature of other welfare activities : (a) by employers, (b) by other agencies*), and item (35) (*Results achieved*) is provided mainly in paper A, but reference is also invited to the relevant sections of Mr. Beale's report. As regards sub-item (34) (i) (*Provision of refreshments, shelters, and creches*), the Chief Inspector of Factories has reported as follows:—

“In so far as the smaller establishments are concerned there can be said to be no definite arrangements to accommodate workers in these respects. It is not only a question of lack of room, but small employers have not reached the stage of consideration of such refinements. As regards refreshments, workers are left to look after themselves and apparently there is no objection raised to food-sellers entering the factory compounds. In the larger engineering concerns, however, better arrangements are generally made with respect to those workers who cannot return to their homes on account of distance; food stalls and shelters being provided within the precincts of the factory.

As regards textile factories and the meal-time accommodation of workers living at a distance, little has been done to provide special shelters or refreshment rooms. Like other large industrial establishments, food vendors are permitted to enter the precincts of the factory, but generally speaking, that is the maximum of progress in this direction. Where mills are comparatively isolated, however, and the majority of workers live in the immediate neighbourhood of the mill and in the mills property, bazaars in many cases have been erected by the employers, and are controlled by them, thus clean and wholesome food is guaranteed to the workers at reasonable prices.

The provision of creches or enclosures for infants has long been under consideration by employers, but the difficulties of the situation can only be appreciated by those intimately acquainted with the customs, habits and prejudices of the workers. Two or three employers have actually made the experiment of erecting enclosures within the mill for the purpose of segregation of infants, and have encouraged, but not forced its use on female workers. Differences of caste, habits, and customs, however, appear to have been an insuperable barrier to the establishment of their effective and correct use. Those enclosures, erected by way of experiment, have had to be dismantled.”

19. Further information regarding creches is supplied in connection with item (82)—*Admission of infants to factories.*

20. Information on all the items arising from heading VI—(*Education*) is provided in paper K, and on co-operation in Paper J.

21. No information has been collected regarding provision for old age and premature retirement in factories, but probably intensive enquiries would show that pension and provident fund schemes are more prevalent than is generally supposed. The root difficulty in providing for old age and premature retirement in Bengal industries arises from the migratory character of the workers. An attempt has been made to ascertain in representative jute mills the length of service of workers. The

figures will be forwarded when available, but it may be said here that the chief guarantee against old age and premature retirement lies in the land connection of the worker. So long as he does not lose his lien on his ancestral home or small property, there is not the same need for his making provision for old age as there is for a worker in the west. How far a settled factory population has developed in Bengal has not yet been ascertained, but, as industry develops, the tendency would probably be for workers to lose their land connection. This might redound to the benefit of industry by creating a fixed class of skilled factory workers, but it would be a very doubtful benefit to the workers themselves.

## A.

*Copy of letter dated the 21st April, 1927. From—The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce Department. To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Industries and Labour.*

**Welfare Work.**

I am directed to refer to the letter of the Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, No. L.1248, dated the 3rd May, 1926, on the subject of welfare work among Indian workers. The Government of India forwarded with their letter a copy of a letter from the Director of the International Labour Office, Geneva, on the subject of measures for the utilization of the spare time of workers, arising from the recommendation on this subject adopted at the sixth session of the International Labour Conference; and they interpreted that phrase to mean welfare work in general, and to include all efforts made to ameliorate the conditions under which the workers live when they are not actually at work. With their letter the Government of India also forwarded two sets of forms "A" and "B," to be used in the collection of information, the former for the use of industrial concerns, and the latter for associations conducting activities of a welfare nature directly bearing on the working classes.

2. According to the desires of the Government of India, as expressed in paragraph 2 of their letter, the enquiry was conducted in consultation with the principal organizations of employers in this Presidency, and also through heads of departments interested in the subject, and local bodies known to employ fairly large numbers of workers. The services of commissioners of divisions were also enlisted to collect local information, and as a result, before the close of 1926, a fairly large volume of information had been collected, covering the chief classes of industrial and municipal activity in Bengal. A further effort was made to fill in some lacunæ in the material and to supplement that which had already been received by a rough application of the method of sampling. The various concerns under the Factories Act were classified under main headings—jute mills, cotton mills, printing works, etc.—those which had sent in returns were struck off the list, and random samples of the remainder were taken, to which form "A" was circulated direct. The result was gratifying; much additional information became available, and, judging from the ready response which followed the request for information, His Excellency in Council is persuaded that, had staff and time been adequate, a detailed survey of the whole Presidency of Bengal could have been made, which would have covered practically every concern under the Factories and Mines Acts, as well as municipalities and other public bodies employing large or fairly large bodies of labour. In spite of the limited resources at his command, His Excellency is pleased to report that the returns cover nearly 450 concerns, and nearly five lakhs of workers. Of the returns, a proportion was collected on the sample basis; so that it is safe to assume that the compilations which accompany this letter are sufficiently representative of the total labour force employed in organized industries in the Presidency of Bengal.

3. It will be seen that the returns, with one exception, are all in form "A." The only return in form "B"\* (which is enclosed) relates to the Karwal Nat Settlement at Saidpur on the Eastern Bengal Railway, which is managed by the Salvation Army. In this settlement work, medical attention, education and entertainment are provided for the settlers. From the paucity of returns in form "B" it is not to be assumed that similar activities are not conducted by other independent bodies. Information has been received, and incorporated in the general returns, which shows that missionary bodies are active in welfare work, particularly in the tea districts; such work, however, is only part of their total activities, and has not been shown separately in the returns. Similarly, in Calcutta there are bodies of workers whose activities affect factory employees; this is particularly the case with the various infant welfare centres conducted under the auspices of the child welfare branch of the Red Cross. In the return relating to the Pabna Municipality, it will be noted that there is a private organization of social workers in that town who are reported to devote attention to the depressed classes, which include the conservancy

\* Not printed.

staff of the municipality. The work of all such bodies, however, is not aimed specifically at factory workers: it applies to the population generally, and, as such, does not strictly come within the purview of the present enquiry which is primarily intended to include only the classes of persons or associations which work solely for the utilisation of the spare time of the workers, or for the amelioration of their conditions of living.

4. It will be noted that no reference has been made to returns of welfare work conducted by labour organizations. It is known that some local trade unions have, from time to time, tried to initiate, or have actually succeeded in initiating, schemes for the welfare of their members. Funds have been started for specific benefits, such as death benefit or marriage endowment, but such activities are ancillary to the main purposes of the associations, which are to take combined action for the purpose of negotiating better terms with employers. It cannot be said at the present stage that any of these labour bodies has had marked success in its efforts, but trade unionism in India is at present young and finding its way. In due course, with the introduction of the Indian Trade Unions Act in June next, full official information on the welfare activities of trade unions will become available in the ordinary official course, so that all that is necessary at the present stage is to call attention to the fact that a small number of such organizations is attempting to take up work such as is covered by the present enquiry.

8. Several features stand out prominently. One is that there is in the Presidency of Bengal almost an entire lack of organized welfare work on the lines on which such work is conducted in the west. The individual returns from which the general results have been compiled show that in a great many instances, in almost every variety of activity, attempts have been made at some time or other to start schemes which would properly fall within the category of the phrase of the International Labour Office: "the utilization of workers' spare time." Educational schemes, particularly night schools, have been started, sometimes by the industrial concern on its own initiative, sometimes in consultation with an outside body, but the great majority of such schools have failed from the lack of interest shown by employees. A number of attempts have been made to encourage sport amongst employees. In some instances they have had a fair measure of success, but on the whole the results have not been sufficiently encouraging to persuade industrial establishments, as a whole, to imitate the examples which have been recorded. In other cases—this is particularly the case in the coal mines area—attempts have been made to provide amusement either by indigenous games or by cinema entertainments, and these, again, have had very moderate success. In all these cases, of course combined with the desire to ameliorate the conditions of the workers, there has been the common economic motive of either increasing the efficiency of the worker or providing attractions sufficiently strong to prevent him going to other concerns or into other lines of industry or agricultural activity. It is well known that recruitment for some types of work requires much more organization and the expenditure of much more money than others, e.g., in the tea industry the labour problem is one of the chief cares of the industry, and not only have attempts been made to settle the imported labour in the area, but the various medical activities, which are now so common in the tea garden district, have as their object not only the preservation of the health of the imported employee, but the encouragement of infant welfare with a view to raising a healthy labour force on the spot. In the mining area of Bengal—but it is understood that this is more true of the Bihar and Orissa coalfields—attempts have been made to cultivate new needs in the simple-minded workers of Chota Nagpur with a view to encouraging them to earn more money to satisfy those needs. The typical collier works only so long as is necessary to give him a wage sufficient to meet his immediate needs. This wage earned, he refuses to work until more money is necessary to meet his increased expenses. Anything which would raise his expenses has been calculated in some quarters to be an incentive to longer work in the mines and, therefore, to greater production. In all industrial concerns, as also in mines and municipal services, welfare activity is affected by the floating nature of the population. Apart from the tea garden areas, where the labour settles down either for life or for a definite spell, the annual turnover of labour is very heavy, and the lack of continuous settlement, from the very nature of the case, militates against the organization of activities which require a certain amount of permanence.

9. The general results outlined in the previous paragraph summarize what seem naturally to follow from the present economic and cultural status of the Indian working classes. Welfare activities, such as are conducted in highly organized factories of Europe and America, presuppose a certain cultural basis, which, in its turn, largely depends upon literacy. The preponderating majority of the Indian workers is illiterate, and it is not to be expected that they can appreciate benefits



which presuppose a certain standard of education, even although the standard may not be very high. The social conditions of the working classes, moreover, militate against combined organization and common action, which is requisite for welfare schemes. The labour force is not only, in many cases, of a temporary and floating character, but also is often mixed linguistically, racially and in religion. In the chief industry of Bengal, for example, the jute mill industry, the workers come from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces, and Madras. There are Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians and Animists. Workers of one community tend to form groups within their own community; hence general welfare schemes, which presuppose a general homogeneity among the workers, are not likely to succeed till education is much more advanced. Not only is there a mixture of race, creed and religion in the jute mills, but there is also a considerable amount of difference in the economic position of the actual workers employed. In the mills north of Calcutta, for example, the labour is very largely imported. A very big proportion of it, at one period of the year or another, leaves for its own home districts, to be replaced temporarily by substitutes. In the south of Calcutta, however, a very considerable proportion of labour is recruited from the surrounding agricultural districts. The workers come in from the villages in the morning and return at night, often cultivating their own land in their spare time. In the former case, i.e., in the case of imported labour, were that labour more or less homogenous, there would be some *a priori* possibility of welfare organization. Yet such organization has not developed in spite of the fact that other circumstances have been favourable. For some years the majority of the jute mills have been working on a four-day week, leaving to the workers a free balance of three days. Such circumstances would seem to argue for the growth of activities to utilize the three extra days, and they might be expected to take the form of energetic exercises, such as football or hockey. This, however is not the case. In the latter case, i.e., in the case of jute mills situated in the south of Calcutta, where the four-day rule is in operation, the workers leave the mills on the last working day of the week, return to their own homes, do their home work and return to the mill again on Monday morning.

10. It is unnecessary to go further into local conditions such as are outlined in the previous paragraph. Enough has been said to show that, before judgment is passed on the returns which accompany this letter, the particular nature of the labour involved must be borne in mind. From the side of employer a very large amount of material has been collected to show that attempts have been and are being made to encourage efficiency among the workers. In engineering concerns, for example, it will be seen special vocational classes are in some cases provided for the training of artisans willing to take advantage of them; in one case, promising youths are helped to take recognized professional courses. It will be seen that attempts have been made in several groups either at maintaining or subsidizing schools, either night or day; but the results have not been encouraging because of a lack of response on the side of the workers. In some lines of activity, e.g., municipal work, it is hardly to be expected that special schools should be provided, as the workers may avail themselves of the facilities provided in the public educational system. Progress along such lines can only be slow, as it depends on the general appreciation of literacy among the classes affected. The same is true of clubs and reading-rooms. The limited scope of this side of welfare activity—one of the most prominent features of such work in the west—is not surprising; but even in the few instances shown in the returns it will be gathered that reading-rooms, libraries and clubs are provided in such cases as are likely to be appreciated, e.g., in railway workshops and shipbuilding and engineering works, in which the standard of professional attainment in the artisan classes is relatively high. The returns, indeed, give a sound basis for assuming that employers in India are likely to be ready and willing to meet such demands for welfare work as the growing standard of literacy of their workers may justify.

11. The information provided in the attached abstracts on the subject of health is so complete that little additional comment is necessary. As regards the concerns from which returns have been received, it would hardly be wide of the truth to say that practically cent. per cent. provide some sort of medical attention. In organized private industry medical relief is usually provided for each unit; in public services the medical facilities are provided for the workers and other classes of population at the same time, as in municipalities. The medical attention varies considerably in kind from group to group. In some big groups of industry, such as tea gardens and jute mills, practically every unit provides a self-contained staff, with a hospital, or dispensary, or both. A considerable number of cases provide special segregation huts or wards for infectious cases; creches and maternity benefits are common in the tea gardens; and there are several notable examples of these in the jute mills. Reference to this has already been made in the Government of Bengal Letter to the Government of India in the Legislative Department,

No. 4912 Com., dated 4th July, 1925. In the preponderating majority of cases medical attention and also medicines are provided free. Two or three further points in this connection require mention. One is that, in addition to the staff and the facilities provided in individual concerns, there are, in cases, public boards supported entirely or mainly by industrial concerns. In the coal area, for example, there is the Asansol Mines Board of Health concerning the beneficent activities of which reference is invited to the annual reports of the board itself and also of the Chief Inspector of Mines. In the tea district there is the Darjeeling District Medical Association which has done a great deal of useful work, and it is not out of place to mention here the contributions which the jute mill industry has made to the public health schemes in the jute mill area. Particular mention may be made of the contributions to the Bhatpara and Titagarh sewerage schemes. Another point requiring note is that, as shown from the reports from the smaller industries, particularly those in which mechanical power is used, first-aid appliances with stocks of ordinary medicines are kept to meet emergencies. This, it may be remarked, is a statutory obligation now on employers in England, and it is satisfactory to note that progress is so general in this Presidency. A third point requiring remark is the quality of the attention provided. In the large industries the medical services are well organised under well qualified men. The hospitals, segregation huts, and other buildings necessary for medical care are well-built, well-found, and, as a rule, kept scrupulously clean. In quite a number of cases—and this is particularly true of the tea garden area—medical care is supervised under either European doctors or Indian doctors with European qualifications, and much care is exercised not only in the cure of disease but in its prevention. On the whole, it may be said that employers in India have amply recognized the economic consequences of bad or indifferent health, and have always been ready, either by direct organization or through contribution towards special schemes, to do everything in their power to increase the physical efficiency of their workers. The prevalence of various epidemic and endemic diseases in India is, of course, responsible for this almost universal organization of medical relief, but at the present stage of development, it may be said that concentration on the physical well-being of the workers is a pre-requisite for an increased productive efficiency which in its turn will be reflected in a general rise in the standard of life. There is an obvious irony in including such activities in a return bearing mainly on the utilization of workers' leisure; but the various elaborations of welfare work, common in the west, can be imitated in India only if the workers have sound bodies necessary for continued and sustained effort in production and for the consequent enjoyment of leisure which their added emoluments may justify.

12. The returns under the head "Housing" may be viewed with satisfaction. In coal mines, for example, it will be seen that a hundred per cent. of the concerns covered by the returns provide housing for their employees. Although the actual returns do not show the same percentage in tea gardens, it is known that practically every tea garden does provide housing accommodation. The same is, in the main, true of jute mills and of cotton mills. The proportion is different in the case of engineering workshops and shipbuilding, but this is accounted for by the fact that these concerns are either in or close to Calcutta, which means that either the employees do not require the houses or that the land is so expensive that it is beyond the limits of financial possibility on the part of the concerns to provide the houses. The provision of housing accommodation for conservancy staffs of municipalities, it will also be seen, is very general; while the other returns, with exceptions which are explicable by local conditions, tell very much the same tale. Adequately to explain the housing returns would require a long commentary, as practically every case has to be examined in the light of particular conditions prevailing in the area in which the concern is situated. In the Bengal coalfield, for example, although the returns show a big proportion of houses provided for the colliers, there is not the same necessity for such provision as in the Jharia area, for the reason that in the latter area labour comes in from much further afield than in Bengal and has to settle down for longer periods at the mines. In the Raniganj area of Bengal it is quite a common thing for labour to come from villages surrounding the individual mines; sometimes the distance is fairly considerable, but the colliers prefer to go to their homes for the night to staying at the mines. Again, in jute mills the provision of accommodation must be considered in the light of the expense of making the provision. Where land is easily obtainable and fairly cheap, the provision is usually on a larger scale than in congested areas where the land is either not obtainable or is exceedingly dear. It cannot reasonably be expected, for example, that housing provision should be so extensive in the very congested town of Howrah as in the opener agricultural areas on the same side of the river opposite Budge Budge. On the whole, the housing accommodation provided by the jute mills is worthy of considerable praise. In one or two instances, indeed, it may be said that the quality of the housing and also the layout are models of their kind. In almost every case it would be true to say that the housing provided is much superior to that in the

villages from which the workers are recruited. The returns show also that the great majority of houses in all groups are provided either at a nominal rent or free. In very few cases are the workers charged an economic rent. Combined with the housing, there are, in many cases, well-organized bazaars managed under the direct supervision of the manager of the mill who takes pains to see not only that the quality of the provisions is good, but also that the prices are regulated to prevent imposition on the workers by traders. Some of the bazaars are utilized by the superior staff of the mill as well as by the coolies, and this, in itself, is a guarantee that the bazaars are kept clean, and that the food is fresh daily. Mention must also be made of the drinking-water arrangements, whether provided through municipal supply or through special supply arranged by means of artesian wells or otherwise by the mills. Much of this, of course, comes within the purview of the factory department.

13. Considerable interest attaches to the returns showing the number of concerns providing extra land for gardening, agricultural, or other purposes. Returns of this kind are naturally not to be expected from municipal areas, but attempts have been made in some cases near Calcutta to encourage the growth of small communities of workers with small patches of land given over to them for their own use. The idea behind this is largely to encourage the growth of a settled factory population near the factories, and to encourage the workers to bring their families to settle in the industrial areas. It will be seen that in the coal mines no less than 76 concerns out of a total of 104 make some sort of provision for garden or agricultural land. In the tea gardens such provision is practical universal, both agricultural and garden land being provided in a large number of cases. It is not uncommon in the more congested areas to give, where possible, small plots for gardening purposes, although the grant of agricultural land is out of the question. Generally speaking, it may be said that where the grant of such land is possible and where it encourages labour to settle down permanently in a given area, such grants are made. In the case of the tea gardens, in particular, the idea behind such settlement is not only to encourage the immigration of labour but to foster the growth of a new settled population which in time may solve the perennial labour difficulties from which the tea gardens suffer.

14. In actual recreational activities progress has been slight and disappointing. Attempts—and repeated attempts—have been made at encouraging sports and games, but the response has been poor. Facilities for outdoor and indoor games are provided only in a relatively small number of cases. Special arrangements are made in a number of instances for Pujā festivities, and for gramophone or cinema entertainments. Sports clubs are financed in a number of concerns either by the grant of subscriptions or by the provision of sports accessories. The absence of the sporting instinct amongst the workers of Bengal or of India is rather remarkable, particularly in the more congested areas where the opportunities for competitions are so numerous. The absence of such games is all the more worthy of comment in view of the extraordinary popularity of association football amongst the population in general. The contrast in respect to sporting proclivities between the eastern and western worker is very obvious, and rather inexplicable. The reason probably is a multiple one. *First*, the margin of pay saved by the workers is usually sent to their homes, *second*, their physique is not equal to the two-fold strain of a full day's work and a full day's play. This may be due to low vitality caused by such diseases as malaria or ankylostomiasis. In due course, probably when the general effect of the medical facilities which are so common is more felt, the workers may be more ready to take part in sport, particularly where the necessary provision for the sport is made by the concern which employs them. It may be noted in this connection that the development of sport in works clubs, as distinct from general clubs, in the west is mainly due to the activities of special welfare organizations. In this country there are practically no works officials whose duty it is to conduct welfare activities alone. In one or two cases, special Labour Advisers have been appointed the duties of whom include welfare work, among others, and it is probable that, if special organizations are set up the particular functions of which are welfare work, sports activity may receive the necessary impetus to make it as marked a feature of factory life in India as it is in the west.

15. In forwarding the accompanying summaries, the Governor in Council is satisfied that, having regard to the social composition of the working-classes in Bengal, and also to their economic status, there has been considerable advance in those activities which most nearly concern the working-classes as a whole. Much energy has been expended, on physical well-being, and the advance that has been made in this direction gives good grounds for hope that, with the gradual development in literacy and the growing recognition of their status and common purposes, the institutions necessary to meet their new needs will gradually develop on sound, if distinctive, lines, with the full co-operation of, and encouragement from, the employers.

I.—EDUCATION (*Abstract*).

| Industry.                                   | Number of concerns where Educational facilities are provided.        |   |  | Number of pupils or workers attending. |                                 |                              |   |  | Number of concerns providing libraries, etc.   |
|---|--|---|--|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|--|
|   | (a) For children employed.   | (b) For children of employees.                            | (c) For adults.                            | In the case of (a) previous.           | In the case of (b) previous.    | In the case of (c) previous. | In the case of (a) and (b) together where combined figures are given. | In the case of (a) and (c) together where combined figures are given.    |  |
| Coal Mines                                  | Nil.   | 5<br>School maintained 4<br>Only school-room furnished 1  | Nil.                                       | Nil.                                   | 96                              | Nil.                         | —   | —  | Nil.   |
| Tea Gardens                                 | 20 Maintained<br>14 Subsidized                                       | 27 Maintained<br>17 Subsidized                            | 14 Maintained<br>10 Subsidized             | 36<br>Total for 4 concerns.            | 208<br>Total for 10 concerns.   | 101<br>Total for 7 concerns. | 394<br>Total for 15 concerns.   | 84<br>Total for 4 concerns.  | In the case of one estate, it is stated that a library was started but had to be closed, as the books were stolen. In another case a beginning is said to have been made by free circulation of vernacular newspapers. |
| Jute Mills and Presses                      | 8<br>Schools maintained by all.                                      | 31 Maintained<br>20 Subsidized<br>Schoolrooms furnished 2 | 5 Maintained<br>3 Subsidized               | 27<br>Total for 1 concern.             | 1,154<br>Total for 14 concerns. | 61<br>Total for 9 concerns.  | 246<br>Total for 6 concerns.  | 150<br>Total for 1 concern showing combined figures for (a) (b) and (c). | 5<br>Library for Europeans only<br>Library for all 4   |
| Cotton Mills                                | 2<br>One of these is a night school meant also for adults.           | 2   | 2  | 58<br>Total for 1 concern.             | 150                             | 30<br>Total for 1 concern.   | —   | —  | In only one case it is mentioned that there is a well-equipped library with a reading-room, but that it is not taken advantage of by the workers   |
| Shipbuilding and General Engineering Works. | 3<br>Theatrical training 2<br>Evening school 1                       | 3   | 2  | 122<br>Total for 2 theatrical classes. | 402<br>Total for 1 concern.     | 88                           | —   | —  | 4<br>All provide libraries.  |
| Printing Presses                            | Nil.   | Nil.  | Nil.                                       | —                                      | —                               | —                            | —   | —  | Nil.   |
| Railway Workshops                           | 5<br>Includes 4 concerns providing only apprentice training classes. | 9   | 9  | —                                      | 1,340<br>Total for 8 concerns.  | —                            | —   | 307<br>Total for 6 concerns.   | 9<br>All provide libraries.  |
| Other (Misc.) Industries                    | 5<br>Schools maintained by all.                                      | 7<br>Maintained 6<br>Subsidized 1                         | 6<br>Maintained 5<br>Apprentice training 1 | —                                      | —                               | 230<br>Total for 4 concerns. | 320<br>Total for 5 concerns.  | —  | 3<br>Library and reading room 1<br>Club rooms 2  |

II.—HEALTH (Abstract)—contd.

| Industry.                | Number of concerns providing medical facilities.      |   |   |  |   | Number of concerns where charges are made.   |                            | Average number of persons treated daily.                          |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|----------------------------|---|
|                          | Doctor and dispensary maintained by                   | Doctor maintained and free supply of medicine arranged by | Dispensary kept and free medical attendance arranged by | Free attendance and free medicine arranged by      | Total of concerns providing medical facilities.   | (a) For medical attendance.  | (b) For medicine supplied. |   |
| Paper Mills ..           | 4   | —   | —   | —  | 4   | —  | —                          | 74  |
| Flour Mills ..           | —   | —   | —   | —  | Doctor .. 3<br>Dispensary .. 2<br>.. 1  | 2  | Nil.                       | 15 per month. Total for 2 concerns.                               |
| Rice Mills ..            | —   | —   | —   | 2  | 8<br>Including medical attendance in serious cases occasionally .. 4<br>Medicine paid for occasionally .. 2 | —  | —                          | No information available.   |
| Printing Presses         | 4   | —   | —   | 1  | 9<br>Including medical attendance only .. 3<br>First aid requisites only 1                                  | Nil.   | Nil.                       | Figures for 2 concerns only. 40 annually and 40 monthly.          |
| Railway Workshops        | 9<br>All providing hospitals under expert supervision | —   | —   | —  | 9   | Nil.<br>In 4 cases charges are said to be made for treatment of employees' families. | Nil.                       | 680<br>Total for 2 concerns. 1,088 monthly. Total for 5 concerns. |
| Other (Misc.) Industries | 10<br>Including provision of hospital facilities .. 6 | —   | —   | 17<br>Including provision of hospital facilities 2 | 29<br>Including medicine only .. 2  | 2  | Nil.                       | 132<br>Total for 13 concerns.                                     |

II.—HEALTH (Abstract)—contd.

| Industry.                | Number of concerns providing medical facilities.      |   |   |  |   | Number of concerns where charges are made.   |                            | Average number of persons treated daily.                          |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|----------------------------|---|
|                          | Doctor and dispensary maintained by                   | Doctor maintained and free supply of medicine arranged by | Dispensary kept and free medical attendance arranged by | Free attendance and free medicine arranged by      | Total of concerns providing medical facilities.   | (a) For medical attendance.  | (b) For medicine supplied. |   |
| Paper Mills ..           | 4   | —   | —   | —  | 4   | —  | —                          | 74  |
| Flour Mills ..           | —   | —   | —   | —  | Doctor .. 3<br>Dispensary .. 2<br>.. 1  | 2  | Nil.                       | 15 per month. Total for 2 concerns.                               |
| Rice Mills ..            | —   | —   | —   | 2  | 8<br>Including medical attendance in serious cases occasionally .. 4<br>Medicine paid for occasionally .. 2 | —  | —                          | No information available.   |
| Printing Presses         | 4   | —   | —   | 1  | 9<br>Including medical attendance only .. 3<br>First aid requisites only 1                                  | Nil.   | Nil.                       | Figures for 2 concerns only. 40 annually and 40 monthly.          |
| Railway Workshops        | 9<br>All providing hospitals under expert supervision | —   | —   | —  | 9   | Nil.<br>In 4 cases charges are said to be made for treatment of employees' families. | Nil.                       | 680<br>Total for 2 concerns. 1,088 monthly, Total for 5 concerns. |
| Other (Misc.) Industries | 10<br>Including provision of hospital facilities .. 6 | —   | —   | 17<br>Including provision of hospital facilities 2 | 29<br>Including medicine only .. 2  | 2  | Nil.                       | 132<br>Total for 13 concerns.                                     |

III.—HOUSING, ETC. (Abstract)—contd.

(1128)

| Industry.               | Number of concerns where houses are provided.   | Number of employees living in such houses.  | Number of concerns providing accommodation   |  |   | Number of concerns providing extra land.   |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|--|
|                         |   |   | (a) Rent free.   | (b) At favourable rent.  | (c) At full economic rent.  |  |
| Coal Mines ..           | 104<br>In two cases, it is stated that house building material and the necessary cost for repair are allowed to workmen living away from the mines. | 22,259<br>About 59 per cent. of the total employed. Concerns giving total numbers living in houses .. 80<br>Numbers living per room 19<br>No figures .. 5   | 104<br>This figure includes 1 mine where provision is also made for houses at concession rates of rent.  | 1<br>Included in the figure in previous column.  | Nil.  | 76<br>Garden and agriculture land .. 19<br>Only garden plots .. 6<br>Only agriculture land .. 46<br>Concerns having spare lands for this purpose but not actually granting any .. 5  |
| Tea Gardens ..          | 84  | 29,178<br>This figure represents the total for 36 concerns. In the remaining 48 cases it is stated that each unit of accommodation is used by a family of 4 persons on the average.                             | 84   | Nil.   | Nil.  | 82<br>Garden and agriculture land (of these 2 also concede grazing grounds) .. 30<br>Only garden land .. 8<br>Only agriculture land (of these 1 also provides grazing land and 1 seeds) .. 42<br>Only pasture land .. 1<br>Only land for cattle-keeping .. 1 |
| Jute Mills and Presses. | 87  | 126,254<br>About 45 per cent. of the total covered by returns. This figure represents the total for 80 concerns. Of the remaining 7, 1 gives the number living per room, viz., 4, and the rest give no figures. | 35<br>(i) Number providing one kind of accommodation, viz., rent free 25<br>(ii) Providing two kinds of accommodation, viz., rent free and at concession rates .. 9<br>(iii) Providing all three kinds of accommodation viz., rent free, at concession rates, and at full economic rates 1 | 61<br>This figure includes (ii) and (iii) under (a) and also<br>(i) Number providing one kind of accommodation viz., at concession rates .. 48<br>(ii) Providing two kinds of accommodation, viz., at concession rates, and full economic rates .. 3 | 5<br>This figure includes (iii) under (a) and (ii) under (b) and also:—<br>(i) Number providing one kind of accommodation, viz., at full economic rate .. 1 | 8<br>Grazing land .. 3<br>Paddy field .. 2<br>Land for miscellaneous purposes .. 1<br>Garden only to superior staff .. 2   |
| Cotton Mills ..         | 8   | 5,711   | 4  | 4  | 1<br>Included in the figure under (b).  | Nil.<br>In one case, it is mentioned that there is a square in the premises for common use and that the question of granting small plots for gardening is under consideration.   |

*of J. S. Srinivasa Chari.*

III.—HOUSING, ETC. (Abstract)—*contd.*

| Industry.                                   | Number of concerns where houses are provided.  | Number of employees living in such houses.  | Number of concerns providing accommodation   |  |   | Number of concerns providing extra land.   |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|
|   |  |   | (a) Rent free.   | (b) At favourable rent.  | (c) At full economic rent.  |  |
| Shipbuilding and General Engineering Works. | 17<br>This figure includes 7 concerns which furnish houses, only to the menial staff, e.g., Khalasis, watchmen, etc. | 8,386<br>About 34 per cent. of the total covered by returns. Total for 16 concerns.   | 15<br>One of these also provides accommodation at a concession rate to menials only.                           | 3  | Nil.  | 3<br>Garden land .. .. 1<br>Garden land for superior staff only .. .. 1<br>Garden and agriculture land and also for private dwelling .. 1  |
| Dockyards ..                                | 2  | 9,044   | 2  | Nil.   | Nil.  | —  |
| Paper Mills ..                              | 9  | 885<br>About 80 per cent. of the total employed.  | 3<br>One of these also provides houses at favourable rent.   | 1<br>As shown in previous column.  | Nil.  | —  |
| Rice Mills ..                               | 9  | 121<br>About 18 per cent. of the total covered by returns.  | 9<br>In one case there is accommodation only for the office staff.<br>In another only for seasonal occupation. | Nil.   | Nil.  | Nil.   |
| Printing Presses ..                         | 2<br>Both for only the menial staff.   | 22  | 2  | Nil.   | Nil.  | Nil.   |
| Railway Work-shops                          | 9  | 5,432<br>About 18 per cent. of the total covered by returns.  | 7<br>In 4 cases for menials only.  | 8  | 4<br>For the superior staff in all these cases.                                 | 5<br>Plots of land are said to be attached to quarters for gardening purposes.   |
| Other (Misc.) Industries                    | 28   | 2,888<br>This figure represents total for 20 concerns.<br>In the remaining 8 cases 5 give figures per unit of accommodation, and 3 give no figures. | 26<br>This includes 1 case where houses of all the three types are provided.                                   | 3<br>This figure includes the case mentioned in the previous column, and another where houses of the two types, viz., at concession rates and at full economic rent, are provided. | 2<br>This figure is also included in two previous columns as indicated therein. | 5<br>Garden land .. .. 4<br>Agriculture land .. 1<br>In three other cases it is stated that land is available for gardening, but that the workers are not interested in that sort of occupation. |



## B.

REPORT ON HOUSING AND HEALTH CONDITIONS BY Dr. G. L. BATRA, M.B., Ch.B. (EDIN. & D.P.H.), ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL, BASED ON THE DATA OBTAINED FROM 23 TO 28 JUTE MILLS NEAR CALCUTTA DURING THE LAST SEVEN YEARS, 1922 TO 1928.

## III.—Housing.

(16 to 22 in the list of subjects).

All the jute mills sending their returns to the Public Health Department provide, to their workers, rooms constructed in the neighbourhood of the mills at rents varying from eight annas to one rupee per month per room. The sizes of the rooms vary from 8 ft. by 8 ft. to 10 ft. by 10 ft.; in few cases the dimensions are 12 ft. by 10 ft. In nearly all cases the rooms are made back to back and in most pucca floors and tiled roofings have been provided with narrow verandahs, generally 4 ft. wide used for cooking purposes by the workers. No electric light is provided inside the rooms, and very often the rooms are dark and *in none of them sunlight can penetrate through.*

Regarding *ventilation*, it is unsatisfactory being *back to back* houses, and the only openings in the rooms are the doors and if there are windows, they are kept shut. There are no chimneys or openings kept for escape of the smoke in majority of houses.

Each room is usually occupied by three or four workers. i.e., 25 square feet of space are usually available for each worker. Very seldom he sleeps in the open. Good many workers live in the neighbouring basties of the mill area under conditions of housing worse than those described above as the drainage, water supply and conservancy arrangements are *far worse* there.

## IV.—Health.

23. *General Health Condition of Workers.*—(iii) *Working conditions*—(a) *at work places* are fair on the whole, except where the jute is being sorted and carded; there is not adequate arrangement for taking off the dust and this is specially important as mostly women are employed in this department; usually these women bring in their young infants and children who toddle about and live in that dust-laden and hot atmosphere during the working hours of the mills.

(b) *At Home.*—The condition of the average worker's home (dwelling place) near the factory, I have already described under "Housing," above, and the condition prevailing in his own native village or town would be better than what has been stated above, as there is sure to be more sun and air.

(iv) *Dietary.*—It varies according to the labourer's class and the province he is imported from; as persons coming from Bihar and U.P. usually take hand-made bread at least once a day and use ghee oftener; whereas flesh diet is taken oftener by Muhammadans than Hindus. The worker near Calcutta spends more money on food, but the one in the mofussil lives cheaper. I will give the details, as stated directly to me, by the workers of the Clive Jute mills, on the 5th September, 1929 "Diet varies among Bengali and non-Bengali workers regarding hours and quality. Among Bengalis, it is cooked in the morning at 5 a.m. and eaten at 7 a.m. before going to the mill; the quantity usually taken at each meal is rice (*rice-water is thrown away*)—1½ *powa* (16 ozs.), dal (pulses) ½ *powa* (4 ozs.), ghee (fat) ½ *chhitak* (½ ounce) and fresh vegetables taken are potatoes and *patals*, etc. Flesh is taken once a week, and fish 2 *chhitaks* (4 ozs.) cooked in portions of ½ *chhitak* (½ oz.) of mustard oil on alternate days for each meal; the same kind of meal is repeated in the evening at 9 p.m. being cooked at 7 p.m. In the middle of the day at 1 p.m. some parched rice or other light thing is taken. The non-Bengalis (Behari and U.P. workers) take at 6 a.m.—atta 4 *chhitaks* (8 ozs.), ghee ½ *chhitak* (1 oz.), sugar 1 *chhitak* (2 ozs.), milk (when obtainable) or tea; at 11 a.m.—atta 4 *chhitaks* (8 ozs.), dal 2 *chhitaks* (4 ozs.), fish 2 *chhitaks* (4 ozs.), flesh 4 ozs. or 2 *chhitaks*, once a week. Fresh vegetables taken are potatoes, *patals*, etc. Weavers take something light at 4 p.m. and at 7 p.m. the same meal is repeated as taken at 11 a.m." The average monthly expenditure on food in the case of both Bengali and non-Bengali workers is said to be Rs. 16 per mensem per head, besides expenditure on light meals and chewing "pan" (betel-leaf) and tobacco, etc. A very simple diet of dal and rice only costs Rs. 8 per mensem per head. The average monthly expenditure on food, as stated above, is said to be Rs. 12 per head, but the following rates of food articles per seer, given below, will show that it is not possible if the articles of diet, stated above, are taken twice; as each meal will then cost 6 annas at least, and no workman, earning on an average Rs. 15 to

Rs. 35, can afford it. Atta or rice per seer is 4 annas, fish Re. 1-8 annas per seer, oil 12 annas, dal 5 annas, ghee Rs. 2-8 annas, and vegetables 3 annas. It will be seen from the above that there is very little of fresh vegetables, proteid, fat, milk or milk-products taken by the workers and their children; thus there is great deficiency of *proteids, fats and vitamins* in the diet menus of workers resulting in a gradual deterioration in health particularly of workers who cannot afford to go to their native villages for a part of the year, as I think that workers going to their native villages every three months should be encouraged and made obligatory; because they recoup their health quickly there by getting more sun, air, milk and milk-products, fresh vegetables, less dust and no machinery noise; more money should be spent by employers in this direction to keep them fit, and it would pay the employers in the long run. This is the only remedy when there is not much land or space to spare near the mills. It may sound "utopian," but, after all, I am repeating the same cry, as in England for the last 20 years—"Back to the country."

(v) *Physique*.—Physique of the workers is gradually deteriorating as I have noticed this carefully during the last 10 years, but I have no accurate scientific data to offer in support of my statement, e.g., weight, height, chest measurement, etc.

(vi) *Effects of Disturbance of Sex Ratio in Industrial Cities*.—There is a great disturbance as there are fewer women and no privacy is possible in the present condition of housing. There is practically open prostitution near the workers' houses, and most of the workers do not bring their women folk for these reasons.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities Provided*.—(i) *By employers*.—In the jute mills (numbering 28) in the neighbourhood of Calcutta all the employers have provided for the medical treatment of their workers by opening dispensaries within the mill compounds and placing them in charge of doctors at their own cost, but most of these doctors are not registered medical graduates.

(ii) *By Government* and (iii) *by other agencies*.—Nothing is done, as far as information is available at present.

29. *Disease*.—(i)—*Prevalence of Industrial Diseases*.—I came across a particular kind of rash which the workers get all over their bodies in the beginning of their employment in jute mills, especially in the sorting and carding section, where there is lots of dust, but very seldom seen in the spinning and weaving sections. To establish its pathology it requires further investigation and it might be of interest to note that the application of turmeric has a soothing effect.

### C.

## REPORT ON THE HOUSING AND HEALTH CONDITIONS OF THE EIGHT COLLIERIES IN THE ASANSOL COAL MINING AREA VISITED BY DR. G. L. BATRA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL, IN THE END OF JULY, 1929.

*General Remarks*.—The Asansol Mines Board of Health, constituted under (Bengal) Act II of 1912, was brought into active existence by Government during the War in the early part of 1916 to prevent "the outbreak and spread of dangerous epidemic diseases" in the Asansol Mining Settlement.

The Mining Settlement with an area of 413 sq. miles situated in the district of Burdwan comprises the greater part of the subdivision of Asansol, the most western subdivision of Bengal.

Within the settlement are included about 265 collieries (only 165 working at present), two big iron works, a large brick and tile works, and a paper mill, 490 villages and the two municipalities of Asansol (population 21,727) and Raniganj (population 14,536); the total population of the settlement, according to the census of 1921, being 329,353 besides a floating colliery population of 100,000.

The Board's sanitary staff consists of 6 sanitary inspectors in charge of 13 sanitary assistants, 3 anti-malarial investigators, 3 midwives, and a sub-assistant surgeon in charge of school hygiene. The unit of administration is the "Circle" of the sanitary assistant which is about 36 sq. miles. The duties of each sanitary assistant are—(1) notification of epidemics; (2) suppression of epidemics; (3) vaccination; (4) collection of vital statistics; (5) supervision of burning ghats and burial grounds; (6) improvement of water supplies; (7) lectures on elementary hygiene to school children.

Anti-malarial investigation, medical inspection of school children and aid to women in child-birth, are carried on by the other staff.

The chief epidemic diseases in the Asansol Mining Settlement are cholera and small-pox.

The following statements (1) to (4) are self-explanatory :—

(1) *Cholera.*

| Year. |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | Total number of deaths from cholera during the year. |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| 1918  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 225  |
| 1919  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,901  |
| 1920  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 170  |
| 1921  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 617  |
| 1922  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 169  |
| 1923  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 183  |
| 1924  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 317  |
| 1925  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 89   |
| 1926  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 570  |
| 1927  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 120  |

Average annual number of deaths in the Asansol Mining Settlement during the last 10 years (1918-1927) .. .. . 425

(2) *Cholera cases and deaths during the year 1927-28 in the Asansol Mining Settlement.*

|                       |    |    |    |    | Number of cases. | Number of deaths. | Case mortality. |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Collieries            | .. | .. | .. | .. | 93               | 35                | 37.6            |
| Villages              | .. | .. | .. | .. | 141              | 74                | 52.5            |
| Asansol Municipality  | .. | .. | .. | .. | 40               | 12                | 30.0            |
| Raniganj Municipality | .. | .. | .. | .. | 21               | 4                 | 19.1            |
| Total                 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 295              | 125               | 42.4            |

(3) *Small-pox.*

|         |    |    |    |    | Number of cases. | Number of deaths. |
|---------|----|----|----|----|------------------|-------------------|
| 1923-24 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 50               | 6                 |
| 1924-25 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 202              | 28                |
| 1925-26 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,129            | 126               |
| 1926-27 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 361              | 51                |
| 1927-28 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,374            | 162               |

(4) *Small-pox cases and deaths in the Asansol Mining Settlement during the year 1927-28.*

|                       |    |    |    |    | Number of cases. | Number of deaths. | Case mortality. |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Collieries            | .. | .. | .. | .. | 79               | 7                 | 8.9             |
| Villages              | .. | .. | .. | .. | 256              | 38                | 14.9            |
| Asansol Municipality  | .. | .. | .. | .. | 15               | 3                 | 20.0            |
| Raniganj Municipality | .. | .. | .. | .. | 11               | 3                 | 27.3            |
| Total                 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 361              | 51                | 14.1            |

During the year 1927-28, Rs. 1,70,881 was the total expenditure incurred by the Asansol Mines Board of Health, and cess was levied during the year on mineowners at Rs. 2 per 100 tons based on the average raising of coal during the past three years and on royalty received 26 per cent. of the annual average road cess payable for the past three years. The total assessment of cess on mineowners for the years 1926-27 and 1927-28 was Rs. 1,19,562 and Rs. 98,446, respectively; while the assessment on royalty receivers was Rs. 20,841 and Rs. 16,892 during the years 1926-27 and 1927-28, respectively.

Statement showing the general condition of coal trade for the ten years 1918 to 1927, in the Asansol Mining Settlement.

| Year.      | Number of working collieries. | Average daily number of labour employed in collieries. | Raising of coal in tons. | Estimated floating population. |
|------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1918 .. .. | 174                           | 31,051   | 5,300,589                | —                              |
| 1919 .. .. | 171                           | 31,304   | 5,747,163                | —                              |
| 1920 .. .. | 180                           | 31,827   | 4,197,029                | —                              |
| 1921 .. .. | 217                           | 31,564   | 4,250,305                | —                              |
| 1922 .. .. | 233                           | 30,971   | 4,268,934                | 100,000                        |
| 1923 .. .. | 204                           | 29,936   | 4,589,296                | 100,000                        |
| 1924 .. .. | 216                           | 30,071   | 5,004,439                | 100,000                        |
| 1925 .. .. | 210                           | 28,787   | 4,885,554                | 50,000                         |
| 1926 .. .. | 187                           | 28,628   | 5,128,280                | 100,000                        |
| 1927 .. .. | 165                           | 27,928   | 5,509,248                | 100,000                        |

Quarters are provided for the Chief Sanitary Officer and also for sanitary assistants and sanitary inspectors stationed in the 13 "Circles" in the mining area. A well-equipped laboratory and a highly qualified bacteriologist are being maintained by the Asansol Mines Board of Health since five years assisted by a grant from the Indian Research Fund Association.

### III.—Housing.

18. *Nature of accommodation provided in each class.*—The Chief Sanitary Officer mentions in his report that in the year 1922 the Asansol Mines Board of Health issued standard plans and specifications for the construction of miners' dwellings of different designs and materials, e.g., thatched, tiled and pucca roofing—with the proviso that all future constructions and renewals must conform to those standards. A census taken in March, 1925, showed that 14 per cent. of the houses conformed to the standards and all the new constructions and renewals undertaken since have been completed according to the standards the Board has laid down. A house now consists as a rule of a sleeping room not less than 10 ft. × 10 ft. × 10 ft. and of a covered verandah 7 ft. wide, the latter serving the purpose of an open living room in which the occupants ordinarily reside, cook their food, etc. There is no window provided in the standard plan and this defect should be removed at an early date. I saw new huts, 100 in number, made according to the new designs in Ninga colliery which is a new colliery. They have pucca flooring, arched pucca roofing and each block made in a row of ten huts arranged on four sides of the square except on long block of 30 huts. Of the other seven collieries visited, Jambad colliery of North Adjai Coal Co., Ltd., showed the best housing condition where floors were dry and attempts for better housing have been made since 1924; the rooms could have better light and ventilation, but the rules of the Asansol Mines Board of Health regarding standard houses as they stand at present do not permit; these should be changed at an early date. There were 30 single tiled rooms and the miners (specially Santhals) prefer to live in detached houses. The condition of housing was the worst in Deshagarh colliery belonging to the Equitable Coal Co., Ltd. I found all the floors kacha, roofs leaking, and most of the huts unrepared and uncared for; even in the new ten rooms built two years ago there were no doors and floors kacha—the excuse given was that the miners would not have pucca flooring and roofing. There is no rent charged for the houses. There is water supply from wells, but they are at long distances, and very few in number. Recommendations for the construction of wells for provision of drinking water supply in the collieries is made by the Chief Sanitary Officer and the construction of such wells has to conform to the standard sanitary plan laid down by the Board. On the recommendation of the Chief Sanitary Officer, the Asansol Local Board has constructed wells for the supply of good drinking water in the villages. More than half the villages now possess local board wells.

The conservancy arrangements are far from satisfactory; there was a good deal of refuse lying about and not much attempt seemed to be made at proper drainage or roads.

## IV.—Health.

23. *General health conditions of workers.*—(i) During the years 1926-27 and 1927-28, there were 6,086 and 5,646 deaths with a ratio of 18·48 and 17·14 respectively per mile of the population—329,353 in the Asansol Mines Board area.

| Cause of death.                 | 1927-28. | 1926-27. | 1925-26. |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Respiratory diseases.. .. .     | 1,045    | 1,101    | 1,107    |
| Fever .. .. .                   | 922      | 722      | 667      |
| Cholera .. .. .                 | 125      | 462      | 206      |
| Dysentery and Diarrhoea .. .. . | 167      | 77       | 193      |
| Influenza .. .. .               | —        | —        | —        |
| Small-pox .. .. .               | 51       | 162      | 126      |
| Other causes .. .. .            | 3,335    | 3,562    | 3,245    |

The above statement shows that respiratory diseases account for more than one-fifth of the total deaths. I went down underground in Minga colliery 1,300 ft. With all its new machineries and new appliances, there even the difference between the wet and dry bulb was less than one degree.

(ii) The following statement shows the number of births during the last six years, but it should be noted that very few births take place in the collieries as most women workers go to their homes at the time of delivery.

| Year.           | Number of births. | Number of deaths. | Excess of births over deaths. |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1922-23 .. .. . | 9,303             | 6,091             | 3,212                         |
| 1923-24 .. .. . | 8,655             | 5,897             | 2,758                         |
| 1924-25 .. .. . | 8,570             | 6,103             | 2,467                         |
| 1925-26 .. .. . | 9,945             | 5,544             | 4,401                         |
| 1926-27 .. .. . | 8,733             | 6,086             | 2,647                         |
| 1927-28 .. .. . | 8,156             | 5,646             | 2,510                         |

During the years 1926-27 and 1927-28 the birth rate was 26·16 and 24·76 respectively. The number of still-births reported during these two years was 69 and 70. Of 856 deaths which occurred among adult married women, 47 were due to child birth giving a death rate (due to child birth) of 5·8 per 1,000 births. During the two years 1926-27 and 1927-28, 1,208 and 1,123 infants (under one year) respectively, died, giving a ratio of 138 per thousand births for both the years. There are said to be 400 indigenous dais in the mining area, and arrangements are being made for training them by opening classes and giving them fully equipped midwifery bags.

(iii) *Working conditions*—(a) *at work places*, i.e., collieries, the conditions depend upon the sympathy shown by the management, and, in my opinion, should be improved a good deal by better ventilation underground, shorter and regular hours of work, better housing, liberal water supply and efficient conservancy arrangement combined with good roads and drainage. The labourers usually work underground in 8 hours shifts without taking any food there, but there is two hours' rest in 10 hours shifts on the surface. A man usually supplies two tubs of coal of 30 cubic ft. each equal to 13 cwts., and each tub is paid at the rate of 7 annas 6 pies; a loader gets 2 annas 3 pies per ton, a trammer, 1 anna 9 pies per tub, and the daily labourer on surface gets per day—unskilled, 9 annas, and skilled, 12 annas; while a woman gets 5 annas a day. Woman labour underground has been reduced from the 15th July, 1929, according to the Act. The percentage employed at present is 71 men to 29 women, and will gradually be reduced to nil in the case of the latter in ten years.

(b) *At home.*—The workers live the lives of poor agriculturists.

(iv) *Dietary.*—Mostly consists of rice, dal and occasionally vegetable, ghee very seldom, oil once a week; atta is taken by very few, and rice water is thrown away by non-Santal labourers. A labourer usually spends Rs. 8 per mensem on his food when single, and Rs. 6 per mensem if living with his family. Men usually earn Rs. 12 to Rs. 16 per month, and women Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per month. The miners usually take an early meal—6-7 a.m., and then in the evening at 7 p.m. According to most of the mines' managers, miners live from hand to mouth, and in one of the mines the indebtedness among the labourers was 50 per cent. and in another 5 per cent. of the labour employed; the colliery managers usually advance them from 8 annas per head to Rs. 5 per head; in some exceptional cases Rs. 20 are advanced. I have given the economic conditions and daily earnings in detail of the labourers in the mines as the question of their dietary depends greatly upon their earnings. I consider the present diet taken by them to be insufficient in quality and quantity for the amount

of physical work done and specially when no fat or milk product, or fresh vegetable is taken, the results on the physical bodies of the labourers ultimately must be disastrous. Another factor standing in the way of savings of labour is the presence of "Grog shops," and their situation and the method of payment, i.e., daily or weekly, because where daily payment is made, as in the case of collieries under European management, both men and women drink daily; while in the collieries where weekly payment is made, drink is taken by the labourers once a week, on Sundays or Mondays usually.

The Government allows Rs. 6 for buying a maund of rice and Rs. 5 to the contractor for making liquor out of it, and the balance of Rs. 9 goes into the Government treasury. Children below the age of 12 are not allowed inside the grog shop, but their parents give to them as they wait just outside these shops.

One shop inspected sells liquor worth Rs. 3,000 per mensem, and about 200 to 250 persons attend daily. The income of the Government from this shop alone is Rs. 2,000 per mensem.

(v) *Physique*.—There were very few men, women or children whom one could call physically fit for hard work as mining.

Most of the labourers go home to their fields for ploughing from the 15th June to the 15th September, and again for harvesting from the 20th October to the 20th January. January is the healthiest month, while September and October are the worst from a sickness point of view, and the percentage of sickness is about .66 a day, i.e., one person is sick among 160 workers a day, which shows a very high percentage of physical fitness, but the actual inspection does not bear this out.

(vi) *Effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities*.—Usually the proportion of men and women employed in collieries varies from 2 : 1 or 3 : 2, and the classes employed mostly belong to the aboriginal races of Sonthals and Bauris where free love plays a great part and ethical standard according to civilization is not high.

24. *Extent of medical facilities provided*.—A medical man's advice and medicines are provided free by the employers and nothing is done by Government or other agencies. In three out of eight collieries inspected, the medical man was a qualified one and mostly he is engaged by 2 or 3 collieries so that usually he is only a part-time man.

26. *Sanitary arrangements*.—There is no latrine provided in any of the collieries and pigs act as scavengers.

29. *Diseases*.—No attempt or enquiry has been made by the Asansol Mines Board of Health during the last 12 years of its existence to find out anything on the lines done in this direction by the other countries. Some attention should be paid to this important work in the immediate future, and it will prove more profitable to the employers and employees than the research on cholera carried on at present in the Asansol Mines Board laboratory.

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A NOTE BY DR. G. L. BATRA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL, DATED THE 16th FEBRUARY, 1922, ON THE SANITARY CONDITION OF PRINTING PRESSES IN CALCUTTA PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO "LEAD POISONING" AS INVESTIGATED BY HIM IN 39 PRINTING PRESSES OUT OF 506 PRESSES EXISTING IN CALCUTTA AT THE TIME.

There are 506 presses in Calcutta; of these 27 come under the Factories Act. All the printing presses under the Factories Act were inspected and another 12 were selected from the balance and inspected.

2. *Description of Buildings*.—(a) Generally speaking all the presses coming under the Factories Act have got decent buildings, though some of the presses have got unsuitable buildings to be used as printing presses, e.g., Model Printing Works, Indian Daily News, Trail & Co., City Printing Press, Metcalfe Press and the Exchange Printing Press; it will be difficult to improve their sanitary condition unless a lot of money is spent on the buildings.

(b) Regarding the other 14 smaller presses, on the whole the buildings are suitable for the present staff employed and here also I will defer my remarks about lighting and ventilation under the head No. 6.

3. *Kind of Energy Used.*—(a) Electric power is used in all coming under the Factories Act except in Messrs. Lall Chand & Sons and Government of India Presses, Temple Street and Hastings Street, where the energy is produced by steam. Edinburgh Press and the Calcutta Corporation Press and the Indian Daily News Press have an oil engine each as reserve.

(b) Energy used in the remaining 14 presses inspected was electric in seven and the rest seven were worked by hand and feet machines only.

5. *General Condition of Men Working.*—General condition of men working is fair on the whole with a few exceptions, but the main thing one is concerned in is the question of lead poisoning among the compositors, linotype men and type-casters. In the textbooks it is shown that the lead poisoning is indicated by the blue line on the gums, gastro-intestinal disturbances ("colic" arising from the navel combined with alternative diarrhoea and constipation is typical of lead poisoning), pain in joints, general neurasthenic symptoms in the preliminary stage and leading to lead paralysis and the main change in the blood is the basic granulation of erythrocytes. To be positive about a case of lead poisoning one should examine for the presence of lead in urine by quantitative analysis combined with the examination of blood for the presence of the basic granulation of erythrocytes. These last two tests will mean a lot of laboratory work and other assistance besides the time required to examine a few hundred cases.

*Compositors.*—When I started looking for lead poisoning I examined a few compositors in each press, examined their gums and asked about their general history of pain in joints or colic. With this method of examination for lead poisoning and with the statement made above regarding definite diagnosis of lead poisoning it will be seen that my conclusions regarding lead poisoning will require corroboration by more laboratory work.

The blue lines on the gums were noticed in a larger percentage among the compositors in a badly ventilated press than in a well lighted and ventilated press as will be seen in the comparative statement.\* Besides this I noticed that the condition of teeth was invariably bad among all the classes of compositors and worse among the Muhammadans as compared with the Hindus and again worse in the younger generation as compared with the older generation (due, I believe, to the fact that the older generation was particular to use the teeth-sticks and observe strictly the washing of hands before meals, etc.). Holding the type in the mouth, while changing, may have also something to do with the blue lines on the gums.

The habit of tobacco and betel-chewing has little to do with the condition of the teeth as I saw on several occasions that the condition of bad teeth did not always correspond with the betel and tobacco chewing. The blue lines on the gums were observed also among the binders, readers and pressmen working in the press—though the percentage was far less and this was noticeably observed in the readers' room in the Government of India Press, Hastings Street, which is in the same hall as in the compositors' divided by an open wire gauze partition and the partition does not go right up to the roof. I state this with a view to show the possibility of inhalation of lead dust by others not actually employed in the handling of lead.

The condition of teeth among the compositors I divide under three stages as observed by me. The first stage is the blue line on the gums, the second is the erosion of the gums at the roots of the incisors combined with the deposition of tartar and pyorrhoea in general and the third is falling off of the teeth.

The percentage of bad teeth and blue line on the gums is less among the binders, pressmen and the readers as can be seen in the comparative statement,\* e.g., in the Government of India Press, Hastings Street. Forty per cent. with blue gum lines among the compositors, 10 per cent. in the readers, 14 per cent. in clerks, 19 per cent. among binders and two out of four linotype men examined had blue lines with history of arthritis, colic and cardiac condition. Four out of 8 type-casters had blue gum lines. In Messrs Thacker Spink & Co.'s Press 20 per cent. compositors had blue gum lines. Two out of four linotype men and one of these had arthritis. Two out of two monotype machine men had blue gum lines; both of these gave history of arthritis and colic and 20 per cent. in the readers' room. Pyorrhoea is very frequent among all classes. In the Statesman Press, 12 out of 15 linotype men had blue gum lines and 10 gave history of arthritis and colic. Fifty per cent. of compositors had blue gum lines and 20 per cent. of these gave history of arthritis and colitis.

In the Calcutta Corporation Press, pyorrhoea is present among nearly 80 per cent. of workers, 25 per cent. with blue gum lines among compositors and in the Government of India Press, Temple Street, among the typecasters, 13 out of 18 had blue gum lines and amongst the bookbinders there were more cases of blue gum lines, due, I think, to the fact that the refreshment rooms and the taps are situated in the main buildings on the top storey, which means that men at lunch time from the bookbinding department do not care to wash their hands before taking their food. The difference was so

\* Not printed.

noticeable in the two classes of compositors that even the Deputy Superintendent noticed this, and as we had been to this building at lunch hour we noticed that the compositors were at their work and did not break up for lunch.

This fact is a proof to my mind to show the desirability of making the compositors wash their hands before taking their food and I may point out here that nowhere, not even in the Government presses, any attempt is made to provide soaps, towels, etc., for washing the hands of the compositors and other operators.

It will be seen from the above remarks that in the persons observed by me the blue gum lines are not quite typical of lead workers only, but it was seen also among the binders, pressmen, readers, etc.—though in a very much lesser degree. Besides pyorrhœa, deposition of tartar and erosion of gums, etc., were not so frequent among binders, etc., as among compositors and other lead workers; therefore one is driven to the conclusion that lead must have something to do with the teeth of the compositors. Immunity from lead poisoning among the Indian may be due to the fact that the Indians, as a rule, being vegetarians are not so susceptible as the people in the other parts of the world where flesh is taken more commonly. To support this theory, I quote the following from Osler and McCrae's book on "A System of Medicine"—page 86, 1907 Edition.

"It is of interest to note that some of the lower forms of life seem to be more or less immune to the action of lead, and the higher types of animals differ greatly in their susceptibility. In the latter, it is probably largely a question of the facility with which they make the soluble and absorb the more insoluble forms of lead. For example, Mr. Menell states that he has observed that dogs and cats live but a short time about the mine where he is at present while the cows in the neighbourhood came regularly to drink the turbid water below the place where the ore is washed, and although the sediment from this water contains as much as 3 per cent. of lead sulphide, the cows show no alterations of health. Similar observations have been made before. The explanation probably is that herbivoras have a relatively small amount of hydrochloric acid in their stomach contents, while carnivoras have a relatively large amount; the latter, therefore, can get much larger amounts of insoluble lead salts into solution as chloride."

Another factor may be playing its part in the condition of bad teeth in the case of Bengal generally—"Urban Bengal particularly"—i.e., the taking of soft food all the time and in all the forms, because there is very seldom any bread or hard thing taken requiring the exercise of teeth and the same thing applied to the flesh; as whatever form of flesh diet is taken it is eaten in a softer form which does not require any mastication.

Betel-chewing, tobacco-chewing and the lime taken more than usual with betel-leaf may cause a certain amount of decay of teeth. Betel (ready for chewing), as usually sold in the bazaar, is not sold in a hygienically clean form, and no attention is paid from what source and from whose hands it is taken.

Very few compositors were noticed wearing glasses, but anæmia was very common.

*Linotype Workers.*—This class of workers is generally well paid and better equipped with education than the compositors. He appears to be very well paid, but if a little attention is paid to the kind of work he had to do, one will see that it requires a great concentration of mind for 8 to 10 hours a day continuously in typing; he has to work at a very rapid rate and look to the proper running of the machinery. He is more likely to inhale the fumes from the lead pot, which has no cover over it to carry away the fumes, though linotype machines are kept near the windows to have good ventilation. Among the linotype workers I noticed, besides the blue gum lines, cardiac conditions, arthritis, gastro-intestinal disturbances and anæmia very common and nervous system highly strung. I think a closer and careful examination of this class of worker should form a subject of separate enquiry as I am convinced from a cursory observation that the linotype workers' lives are very short-lived ones.

*Type Casters and Monotype Men.*—The type casters suffer from the effects of lead fumes in a very short time, as shown in the enclosed comparative statement, e.g., in the Government of India Press, Messrs. Thacker Spink & Co.'s Press, Alliance Printing Press, etc.

*Pressmen and the Binders.*—Pressmen seem to do well and are well built, due to the nature of their work, but some of them have got the blue lines on their gums, though they have nothing to do with lead. Same remarks apply to the binders. This fact will prove that the blue lines on the gums are not positive signs of lead poisoning in this country and the matter requires further study. I may state here that I have got myself a blue line on the gums and so has my child, for which I cannot account for.



It was noticed among the binders that they are well dressed and they look after their hygienic conditions better than the other classes of men employed in the presses, and they all come from Dacca, especially those employed in the big presses seem to have the monopoly.

6. *Approximate Dimensions showing Lighting and Ventilation and Flooring in each Room individually.*—Approximate dimensions of all the rooms are given in the annexed comparative statement,\* and it will be seen from the statement\* that the ventilation is fair on the whole, except in one or two cases. But when we come to the question of lighting there are a good many presses which have artificial lights.

The compositors' rooms are generally placed in well-lighted rooms, but the press rooms are sometimes the darkest rooms, e.g., the Edinburgh Printing Press, Trail & Co.'s Press, City Printing Press, Metcalfe Printing Press, and the Calcutta Corporation Press.

The binders' rooms are generally well lighted and well ventilated, but the binders love to sit with windows shut and keep out all the air they can.

Flooring was fairly good on the whole.

7. *Provision of Water, Latrines, Urinals, etc.*—Water taps are generally provided in all the presses, but most of them have connections with the mains, i.e., water runs from 6 to 10 a.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.—which is a defect, especially in the summer, considering that the usual working hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Latrines and urinals are provided in all, except that the latter are not provided in the smaller presses. Only one press, viz., Sakha Press, had no urinal or latrine. A few urinals and latrines were found in an unsatisfactory condition and in some of them even the flush was not working.

Rest rooms, refreshment rooms and tea shops were found only in Messrs. Lall, Chand & Sons' Press, Government of India Presses, Temple Street and Hastings Street, and the East Indian Railway Printing Works; but there is always some open space or quadrangle belonging to the presses utilized by the workmen.

8. *Hours of Work.*—Hours of work are generally from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an interval of half an hour.

9. *Shifts or Overtime.*—The overtime everywhere is generally from 7 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 8 p.m. and the shift system is seen in the newspaper presses.

10. *Payment.*—There are generally monthly payments made, except in Government Presses and among a certain class of workers in private printing presses.

12. *Conclusions and Suggestions.*—(i) After seeing 39 printing presses out of 506 in Calcutta I conclude that only a few printing presses are situated in insanitary positions and not all, as can be verified from the comparative statement.

(iii) Regarding the advisability of compelling the proprietors of printing presses to introduce messes, hostels, etc., all the 41 presses seen by me have water taps and latrines (except one, viz., Sakha Press), but tea shops and refreshments are only in four big presses, viz., two Government of India Presses, Messrs. Lall Chand & Sons' Press, and the East Indian Railway Press. Water arrangements can be improved by compelling the proprietors to have reservoirs for filtered water and thus ensure a constant water supply.

The conditions of urinals and latrines will improve quickly if inspected regularly by the Health Department of the Calcutta Corporation.

The bigger presses should have refreshment rooms and sweetmeat vendors' attached to them. The definition of "bigger presses" should be when they employ more than 35 persons (including clerical staff and peons).

(iv) There should be printed notices placed in prominent places showing "the evils of lead poisoning" and how to avoid them.

(v) Soap and towels should be provided in a suitable and convenient place for workmen to wash their hands, and it should be made compulsory for the compositors to wash their hands before leaving for lunch time and home. The manager should take an intelligent interest in his employees and explain to them the advantages of good health and how to preserve it. Special regard should be paid to the condition of teeth and gastro-intestinal troubles.

(vi) Linotype workers and other lead workers should be protected from the fumes by suitable flues so made that they carry away the fumes. At present there are no flues constructed over the linotype machines—only their being placed near the windows is relied upon, and this very window ventilation may increase the danger instead of mitigating it if the direction of wind is such that fumes blow towards the operators. The same thing holds good for the monotype men and the type casters, although the flues are provided here; but they are above the level of the operator's

\* Not printed.

head and face and before the fumes escape he is sure to inhale some of the fumes and the quantity will depend on the operator's method of standing and attending to his work, also the direction of wind.

The Caledonian Press has ordered flues for its 15 linotype machines and they are going to work it by an exhaust fan.

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#### E.

*Extracts from the Report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, with his letter dated the 5th August, 1929.*

### III.—Housing.

18. *Nature of Accommodation Provided in each class.*—(i)—Originally the coolies were given thatch and bamboos and they built for themselves their traditional type of house, the employer paying them for their labour.

The coolies thoroughly appreciated this as it enabled them to have just the kind of house that they wanted and were accustomed to.

(ii) In recent years houses with iron frames and corrugated iron or asbestos roofs and walls made of ekra with mud plastering, bricks, or wood, have been constructed partly from health considerations and partly because with the growth of the coolie population and the decline of the amount of waste land in the Duars not under cultivation thatch is not so plentiful in the tea garden area as it used to be.

These are sometimes erected for the coolies by the engagement of contractors.

The question of the best material for the sides of a house from the health point of view is still undecided although some of the medical officers are strongly of opinion that walls which can be destroyed and renewed annually are very much healthier than more substantial ones as germs and insects which might live for long periods in the latter are destroyed every year.

19. *Utilization by Workers of Accommodation available.*—As might be expected, the workers use no other accommodation than that which they construct themselves at the garden expense.

21. *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing, e.g., Subletting; occupation of Employers' houses by Tenants in other employ; Eviction.*—No problems arise regarding subletting as all accommodation is free, nor do coolies who live on one garden work on another. All the gardens have signed a labour agreement not to entice the labour of other gardens so that if a coolie gets tired of his garden for any reason he migrates to another garden and lives there, but the manager will only take him on after informing the previous garden.

There is no eviction.

### IV.—Health.

23. *General Health condition of Workers.*—The general health condition of the workers, in spite of the fact that they live in a tract which was a malarious death trap 25 year ago and is still very malarious is extremely good. They lead a healthy open air life, do not have to work at high pressure and nobody is forced to work if he does not want to.

On wet days, for instance, the labour musters are a quarter or less of normal, and in the busy season the average number of hours worked is eight with 1½ hours' rest at mid-day.

(i) The death rate has shown on the whole a steady decline, the following being the figures for the decade ending 1928 :—

| Year.      | Labour population. | Deaths. | Rate per mille. |
|------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1918 ..    | .. 216,000         | 6,080   | 28·07           |
| 1919 ..    | .. 255,000         | 12,199  | 47·86           |
| 1920-21 .. | .. 190,000         | 5,547   | 29·15           |
| 1921-22 .. | .. 184,000         | 4,595   | 24·93           |
| 1922-23 .. | .. 196,000         | 5,007   | 25·54           |
| 1923-24 .. | .. 206,000         | 6,012   | 29·21           |
| 1924-25 .. | .. 205,000         | 5,497   | 26·27           |
| 1925-26 .. | .. 206,000         | 4,774   | 23·19           |
| 1926-27 .. | .. 217,000         | 4,984   | 22·91           |
| 1927-28 .. | .. 228,000         | 5,119   | 22·40           |

These figures compare very favourably with the provincial figures which for 1927-28 were 25·6 per mille and with the figures for the thanas of this district which do not grow tea where the average death rate at present is about 35 per mille.

(ii) The birth rate for the same period is as follows :—

| Year.           | Births. | Rate per mille. |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1918 .. .. .    | 8,547   | 39.48           |
| 1919 .. .. .    | 7,521   | 29.51           |
| 1920-21 .. .. . | 7,396   | 38.87           |
| 1921-22 .. .. . | 7,331   | 39.78           |
| 1922-23 .. .. . | 8,570   | 43.72           |
| 1923-24 .. .. . | 9,074   | 44.09           |
| 1924-25 .. .. . | 8,915   | 43.34           |
| 1925-26 .. .. . | 8,830   | 42.90           |
| 1926-27 .. .. . | 8,907   | 40.94           |
| 1927-28 .. .. . | 8,081   | 39.73           |

The provincial birth rate in 1927-28 was 27.7 per mille so that these figures also compare favourably.

Infant mortality (children under one year of age).

| Year.           | Deaths. | Ratio per 1,000 births. |
|-----------------|---------|-------------------------|
| 1918 .. .. .    | 763     | 91.26                   |
| 1919 .. .. .    | 828     | 110.09                  |
| 1920-21 .. .. . | 689     | 93.15                   |
| 1921-22 .. .. . | 601     | 81.98                   |
| 1922-23 .. .. . | 955     | 111.43                  |
| 1923-24 .. .. . | —       | —                       |
| 1924-25 .. .. . | 877     | 98.37                   |
| 1925-26 .. .. . | 800     | 90.60                   |
| 1926-27 .. .. . | 812     | 91.16                   |
| 1927-28 .. .. . | 727     | 80.05                   |

This again compares favourably with the provincial ratio for 1927-28 which was 178 per 1,000 births or more than double the figures for the Duars.

(iv) The staple food of the workers is rice, but this is supplemented by maize, pulses, fresh fruit, meat and vegetables, large numbers of cattle, goats and pigs being killed weekly in the various bazaars.

Most families have small gardens round their houses in which they grow vegetables and such fruit as pineapples and plantains.

The tea garden also buy paddy land in the vicinity which is let out to the coolies for growing their own rice.

(v) The physique of the labourers is on the whole very good, and that of old residents compares most favourably with that of newly imported labourers.

(vi) Detailed enquiries show that there is little or no disturbance of the sex ratio.

I give the figures for three typical gardens for 1927-28 :—

| 1927-28.                                  | Men.  | Women. | Children. |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|
| Gopalpur Tea Estate (Indian managed) ..   | 614   | 609    | 758       |
| Dalgaon Tea Estate (European managed) ..  | 1,043 | 1,118  | 974       |
| Karballa Tea Estate (European managed) .. | 982   | 976    | 1,037     |

It will be seen that on two of the gardens the men and women are practically equal in number while in the third the women are in excess.

Prostitutes are unknown, and the morality of these simple folk is, as usual, very strict.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities Provided.*—(i) Groups of, from 6 to 15 gardens under European management, are under the charge of a fully qualified British medical officer.

There is a dispensary on each garden with a Doctor Babu and staff in attendance.

All attendance and medicine is given free and on many gardens there are sick wards for in-patients. The Doctor Babu goes round the coolie lines daily with medicines and treats any coolie who is sick and comes forward.

The Chief Medical Officers visits each garden in his group periodically, generally once a week and inspects the garden dispensary and is on call at any hour of the day or night to attend serious cases.

Sick pay is usually given in the case of an illness which lasts more than a few days.

Government and the local self-Government authorities do not provide any dispensaries on the tea gardens themselves, but there are public dispensaries at various places in the tea garden area, more especially in centres where there are large *hats* (weekly markets).

25. *Extent to which Medical Facilities are Utilized.*—(i) There is a considerable reluctance among the coolies to avail themselves of the medical facilities provided, though this is gradually disappearing.

They prefer to use their indigenous medicines and methods, many of which are primitive and harmful in the extreme, and only to go to the dispensary when they have become really ill.

Sometimes caste prejudices prevent a man from subjecting himself to treatment, on Western lines.

(ii) Women are especially loath to come to the dispensary for the treatment of female diseases, but the Doctor Babu and even the Chief Medical Officer is called in sometimes in difficult confinement cases.

For ordinary ailments they show no more reluctance than do their men folk.

26. *Sanitary Arrangements.*—Latrines have been provided on several gardens, but the labourers absolutely refuse to use them, nor is there any need from the public health point of view for latrines in this rural area.

More might be done in the way of chlorinating wells as bowel troubles form a considerable part of the sickness.

The beneficial results of chlorination may be seen from the figures of Karballa Tea Estate where since this piece of sanitation was started in 1925, the dysentery and diarrhoea cases have been :—

1925—636 ; 1926—444 ; 1927—320 ; 1928—258.

27. *Extent and Nature of Official Supervision.*—(i) There is no Board of Health, but there is a health centre in 13 out of the 17 police stations in this district with a staff consisting of an Assistant Health Officer or a Sanitary Inspector, a Health Assistant and a medicine carrier which carries out general sanitation duties in any area where an epidemic threatens, such as vaccinating, giving cholera inoculations, chlorinating water supply, etc. They also inspect the food for sale in bazaars, and markets to make sure it is fit for human consumption.

(ii) It is one of the duties of the civil surgeon to inspect tea gardens, but he has not got much time for this work and the average number inspected annually in the last decade is about eight.

29. *Disease.*—There are no industrial diseases due to work on tea gardens, no soreness even is caused to the fingers of the pluckers but large numbers of the coolies suffer from ulcers on the legs, commonly called Hill Sores, the cause of which is not known, but is not attributed to tea bushes.

Malaria is the commonest cause of death in the Duars, and accounts for 6 deaths per mille of the labourers, chest complaints cause 3.47 per mille, dysentery and diarrhoea 3.76 per mille, and phthisis 1.42 per mille.

No other disease causes more than .3 per mille of deaths. Dispensary figures show that very nearly half the labour force is treated for malaria during the year.

31. *Maternity Benefits.*—There is no scheme in existence, but as already mentioned the competition among gardens to attract and keep labour makes conditions very uniform, and enquiries show that almost universally expectant mothers are given full pay for some time before delivery, and this is continued until fully recovered after the birth, and also a bonus which varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 12.

Very often she gets a small allowance weekly until the child is one year old which ensures that the child is seen frequently by the manager and is consequently kept clean.

If necessary, free milk is given and an attendant is paid by the employer to look after the mother and child.

It must be remembered that the husband is capable of earning very good wages all this time and that the coolies are able to save considerable sums of money even when they are idle and work short hours so that a mother on a tea garden is by no means an indigent person. Also, she is of hardy aboriginal stock, and her period of incapacity is very short both before and after child birth.

If the mother dies an attendant is employed by the garden and paid three annas per day to foster-mother the child, the hope being of course that the child will in time be a recruit to the labour force of the garden.

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#### IV.—Health.

30. *Sickness Insurance.*—The Government of India addressed local governments on the subject of sickness insurance in their letter No. L-1518, dated 20th September, 1928.\*

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\* *Vide Appendix V to the Memorandum of the Government of India.*

The Government of Bengal took no action on this letter, as it was anticipated that a detailed questionnaire on the subject would be issued by the Royal Commission. When, however, it was ascertained that no such questionnaire would be issued, the local Government consulted commercial bodies, registered trade unions, divisional and district officers, and the departments of Government interested in the subject on both the letter of the Government of India and the corresponding items in the list of subjects issued by the Royal Commission.

The replies indicate considerable diversity of opinion on the subject. The preponderating majority of opinion is to the effect that the time is not yet ripe in India for the introduction of any scheme of sickness insurance. Several district officers have shown considerable sympathy with the underlying principles of such insurance, and interesting comments have been made on the introduction of voluntary schemes, the utilization of the Co-operative Department for such purposes, and the compulsory provision of medical facilities in factories of a certain size. There is, however, practically unanimity of opinion that no comprehensive scheme of social insurance should be introduced in India. The local Government are in entire agreement with this view. The application of the Geneva Draft Conventions and Recommendation is entirely out of the question in India at the present stage of industrial development.

The Government of India, while recognizing that the general introduction of sickness insurance is impossible, think that the possibility of introducing sickness insurance within well-defined limits should be further explored. The question under consideration is therefore whether it is desirable or possible to introduce any scheme of sickness insurance within such limits. The local Government have carefully considered this suggestion in the light of the views expressed by the Government of India, and also of the various opinions which they have received from their officers and local commercial and labour bodies, and the first point which they desire to make is that, were sickness insurance applied within such limits as would probably be regarded as workable, then the result would be that the benefits of insurance would be accorded to the class of workers in least need of them. There would be no difficulty in prescribing the "well-defined limits" mentioned by the Government of India, were it considered desirable on general grounds to introduce sickness insurance. The great majority of factory workers are already within the official cognizance of the Factories Act, and the organization of railway transport, dock transport, lascar, plantation and municipal and government labour is probably already sufficiently good to make workers in these industries susceptible of treatment on a sickness insurance system. Organization or the potentiality of being brought within an organized system, however, seems to the local Government to be the least of the issues involved. The question is whether it is advisable on grounds of public policy to introduce compulsorily a scheme or schemes which would benefit a very small proportion of the population at the expense of the rest.

In paragraph 5 of their letter, the Government of India enumerate certain factors which must receive attention in connection with any system of sickness insurance. These are:—(1) The extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities; (2) the extent to which medical facilities are likely to be acceptable to the persons insured; (3) The extent to which insured persons suffering from sickness are likely to remain within the area within which the organization applicable to them can effectively operate; (4) The proportion which the expense of administration (which includes the provision of some machinery for the settlement of disputes) is likely to bear to the total cost of the scheme; (5) the extent to which the classes whom it is proposed to insure are willing and able to meet the charges falling upon them; and (6) the extent to which State assistance can be granted.

The first of the above factors has to be considered from two points of view. One is the extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities for workers remaining in the area of their work. The other is the extent to which such facilities can be provided in the workers' own homes. So far as the former point is concerned, the bigger industries in Bengal already undertake medical treatment for their workers, in many cases on a very generous scale. In tea gardens and the jute mill industry, for example, doctors, medicines, dispensaries, in fact medical attention of every variety, are generally provided free. To this extent, therefore, employers may be reckoned to have contributed amply, in some cases handsomely, towards a system of sickness insurance. So far as medical attention in the workers' own homes is concerned, the Government of Bengal are not in a position to formulate an opinion, for the reason that the great majority of industrial workers in the presidency come from other provinces. The provision of medical attention under an insurance system to such workers would, therefore, not primarily be the concern of the Government of Bengal.

It is, however, the concern of the Government of Bengal that such medical facilities as can be provided should be so apportioned that they give the maximum benefit to the population of the presidency as a whole. To expend resources, whether of government or of industry, on part of a class which is already much better provided for than many other classes is not sound policy. Factory workers, indeed workers in organised industry have already been accorded safeguards not available for unorganized workers. They are safeguarded from accident by the Factories Act and from the results of accident by the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Government of Bengal have recognized that, in the case of those Acts, the criterion of organization must apply to some considerable extent, otherwise the Acts would be unworkable. The same argument does not apply, however, in the case of sickness insurance, for the provision of resources for medical aid can be made applicable to all classes through other means than sickness insurance. The first line of progress in this respect is not legislation for organized workers, who form a very small percentage of the population, but for all workers, irrespective of organization, and all persons whether workers or not, who have not yet been given adequate medical facilities.

As regards the second factor mentioned by the Government of India, exact information as to the extent to which medical facilities are likely to be acceptable to the persons insured is not available. Dispensaries based on the western practice of medicine have been provided in the past 50 or 60 years by both government and employers in all parts of India, and labour has gradually become accustomed to western modes of treatment. The large number of patients that are annually treated in government and private hospitals and dispensaries conducted under the western system of medicine is ample proof that the existing medical facilities are appreciated. There is not yet, among the working classes, however, that universal trust in the prevailing modes of treatment on western lines, which would justify the introduction of a system of compulsory sickness insurance. In the jute mill areas of Bengal, for example, where it is the rule of employers to provide well-equipped dispensaries, it has been repeatedly reported that patients under treatment have sought independent advice in the bazaars from practitioners who have no registerable qualifications. The same is true of the tea garden areas. Moreover, it is the prevailing custom in the case of serious illness for persons to leave for their own homes, where, although possibly there are few or no facilities for treatment on the lines given in the mill dispensaries, the patients hope to recover by the use of indigenous methods and the care bestowed upon them by their own family circle. It has been argued that patients leave for their homes not for sentimental reasons, but because they cannot afford to live in the area of work without wages. This is not the case, as it is well known that they often insist on leaving in spite of wages being paid. The migratory habits of the workers would, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, be fatal to the introduction of any system of compulsory insurance, at least without a far more elaborate organization than the present circumstances of industrial and medical development warrant.

Another vital objection to the introduction of compulsory sickness insurance at the present stage in India lies in the fifth factor enumerated by the Government of India, viz., the willingness and ability of the persons to be insured to meet the charge falling upon them. Were a scheme of compulsory insurance introduced, requiring half the cost of the system to be contributed by the workers, there is no doubt that the workers would strongly object to the contributions. This is practically the unanimous opinion of all those who have replied to the local Government's reference on the subject. Even were the contributions on the most modest possible scale of, say, one pice per every rupee of wages, there would almost certainly be strong objection and consequent labour unrest, and, at the present stage, such objection would not be without reason, for workers in the bigger industries have become used to the free provision of medical facilities, and also to freedom of choice on their own part as to whether they may utilize these facilities or seek treatment from private practitioners. So far as employers are concerned, it is anticipated that there, also, would be strong objection to paying separate contributions for an insurance scheme, especially on the part of those who already provide medical facilities or who contribute to such hospitals and dispensaries in their own areas as are attended by large numbers of their workers.

The introduction of any compulsory scheme of sickness insurance is, therefore, considered premature in India at present. Sickness insurance is not one of the first rungs in the ladder of amelioration of the workers' conditions in India. In its own interests, industry has already done much to safeguard the workers' health, and the Government of Bengal do not consider that it would be in the best interests of voluntary effort in this direction to compel contributions for sickness benefits in an organized system. Such compulsion indeed might have unfortunate reactions on all voluntary welfare work. From the workers' point of view, also compulsory contribution to a sickness insurance scheme is to be deprecated till the workers have

received some measure of general education, and can be better organized. Sickness insurance, even in a state system, is not a project to be lightly undertaken with big masses of illiterate people. Its success requires a certain appreciation of the ends to be achieved, which appreciation is not prominent in Bengal, as is obvious from the very primitive state of workers' organizations.

For the above reasons the Government of Bengal have not taken into serious consideration the framing of any scheme on which they could make an estimate of the proportion which the expense of administration would be likely to bear to the total cost of the scheme. So far as the final factor, mentioned by the Government of India, viz., the extent to which state assistance can be granted, is concerned, they can give a definite reply. The Government of Bengal could not undertake to give any contribution to any sickness insurance scheme so long as the present financial settlement continues to exist. Since the introduction of the reformed scheme of government, the Government of Bengal have been unable to undertake any major scheme of public betterment, because of the inelasticity of the financial settlement made as the result of the reforms, and during the last 10 years the number of schemes which have been prepared and which await financing has been so great that the likelihood of the Government being able to make any contribution towards a system of sickness insurance is negligible, even did they consider such a scheme workable at the present stage of development. Moreover, as already indicated, on general grounds of public policy, they could not accept any financial responsibility for a scheme aimed at the advantage of a class which is in a very large minority in the province while the question of the provision of medical facilities for the population as a whole remains both urgent and unsolved.

The Government of Bengal would welcome an extension of voluntary effort on the part of employers in combating sickness, and would gladly encourage the institution of simple schemes of sickness insurance as between employers and workers. Were official supervision required, probably the Co-operative Department could be utilized; that department might also be utilized for advice. It is anticipated, however, that the provision of provident and pension funds would appeal more to the workers than insurance for sickness, and there is already legal provision for such funds. Industry in India, however, has of its own volition responded well to the call for medical relief, and before legislative sanction should be given to what even in the west have been later elaborations of industrial welfare, it is considered that more emphasis should be placed on more elementary necessities, such as the extension of the safety and hours provisions of the Factories Act to small factories, the general diffusion of compensation for accidents, and the provision of a measure of elementary education.

While the Government of Bengal consider the institution of any scheme of sickness insurance premature at present, they recognize that, in due course some measure of the nature contemplated by the Government of India will have to be undertaken. When such a measure is contemplated, they consider that a special public enquiry should be held into this subject alone. In every country where health insurance has been undertaken, much time and money have had to be expended in preliminary enquiries, and such enquiries are more necessary in India because of the relatively unorganized character of the material to be dealt with and the lack of precise information on many of the main issues bearing on social insurance of all kinds. Legislation, when undertaken, should also be central as the Government of Bengal consider it very undesirable that in a country where inter-provincial migration is so common, there should be any differences in law or administration between the various provinces in a social measure of such importance as sickness insurance.

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#### I.

31. *Maternity Benefits*—(i) *Extent and working of existing schemes*.—The first enquiry into the conditions of women's labour in Bengal industries, with special reference to maternity benefits was held in 1921-22 by Dr. Dagmar F. Curjel (Mrs. Wilson), whose report was published as Bulletin No. 31 in the series entitled "Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour," published by the Government of India. In 1924, the Government of India asked for a report showing how far employers had voluntarily undertaken maternity benefit schemes, and the Government of Bengal in their letter No. 6886 Com., dated the 16th December, 1924, furnished the required report. The substance of the report was reproduced in Bulletin No. 32 of the Industries and Labour Department of the Government of India entitled "Indian Maternity Benefit Schemes."

The following extracts from the annual reports of the chief inspector of factories for the years 1924, 1926 and 1928, show what has been done since :—

*Extract from the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal,  
for the year 1924.*

A charitable dispensary for women and children was started a few years ago by the Bhatpara municipality. It is in charge of an Indian lady doctor and, considering the limited funds available, has done much good amongst the workers in the district, the average daily attendance during the year having been 16.3 women and 33.3 children.

*Extracts from the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal,  
for the year 1926.*

Maternity clinics on the lines of that of the Tittaghur jute mills have been started by the Kankinarrab and Angus mills and trained nurses appointed to organize and carry out the work.

*Baby Nursery or Creche.*—An enclosure has also been erected in one of the departments (of a jute mill) as a creche for small children within easy access of the mothers when working in the mill. At the time of the inspector's last visit, 12 small children were found within the enclosure where they had been placed by their mothers without compulsion on the part of the mill manager. This is a decided encouragement and other mill managers who had attempted such isolation but without success have now promised to renew their efforts on similar lines.

*Extract from the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal,  
for the year 1928.*

A fully qualified nurse from England and a certified midwife from the Eden hospital, Calcutta, have been added to the medical staff at the Angus Company's jute mill and engineering works at Bhadreswar. The staff, excluding clerks and menials, now consists of a European physician and surgeon-in-charge, a European nurse, an Indian midwife, five qualified Indian doctors, two trained compounders, two electrical assistants for the operating theatre and laboratory work, two dressers, two hospital assistants and four general assistants. Improvements have been carried out in the dispensary building, the treatment and dressing rooms, the operating theatre and the electrical treatment room. The medical relief and attention obtainable by the employees of this company has no equal in the province and, it would be safe to say, no superior in any industrial concern in India. It is not possible in this report to deal adequately with the splendid work which this fine staff is doing, not only among the employees of the company but also in the surrounding district. Expert medical and surgical treatment of almost of almost every form is available to all comers free of charge.

(iii) *Possibility of legislation.*—In 1924, the Government of India circulated for opinion a Maternity Benefit Bill introduced by Mr. N. M. Joshi in the legislative assembly on the 23rd December, 1924. The Government of Bengal consulted the usual local industrial and labour interests on Mr. Joshi's Bill, and their opinion was sent to the Government of India in their letter No. 4912 Com., dated the 4th July, 1925, relevant extracts from which are given below :—

*Mr. N. M. Joshi's Maternity Benefit Bill, 1924.*

Mr. Joshi's Bill revives the discussion which took place on the same subject in 1920-21, when the League of Nations invited the Government of India to report whether the provisions of their draft convention on the employment of women before and after childbirth made at Washington in October, 1919, were applicable to conditions in India, and if not, whether they proposed adopting measures to any similar effect. The main provisions of Mr. Joshi's Bill are the same as the main provisions in that draft convention. His proposals regarding the financing of his measures go beyond those of the convention inasmuch as they would make Government the agency for paying benefits, and would institute a Government levy on employers; but in 1920-21 the feasibility of financing such a scheme by a compulsory Government levy was among the points discussed; and there is, in effect, no important constructive element in Mr. Joshi's Bill that is new to the controversy.

The Government of Bengal in 1920-21 expressed sympathy with the intention underlying the draft convention, but considered that the measures proposed would fail in this country to serve that intention, as some would prove unworkable and



others would be circumvented by labour itself. The grounds given for this conclusion were substantially the same as those stated in the assembly on the 3rd February, 1925, by the Hon. Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra in his description of the Government of India's report to the League of Nations in 1921, and need not again be set out here. His Excellency in Council considered that the only course likely to prove useful would be the working out by employers of private maternity benefit schemes suited to the varying conditions in each industry; no action by legislation of any kind was deemed practicable; and the conditions in respect of childbirth in Bengal industries, though not ideal, were not considered to be a matter for very grave concern.

His Excellency in Council adheres in general to the views expressed by him in 1920-21, and in some items holds them with more definition. Since that date he has had before him the published report of Miss Curjel, a sympathetic student of the conditions of women in industry in several countries, who made a twelve months' tour of the major industries of Bengal in 1921-22, and recorded findings on various aspects of women's work. Miss Curjel's report distinguishes the regular domestic state in which women workers live in tea gardens and in coalfields from the abnormal social conditions in which most women work in jute mills. In tea gardens there appeared to her to be no need for special regulations regarding women's employment before and after childbirth; while in the coalfields it appeared that mothers had adequate support during childbirth in their own homes and absented themselves from work for an adequate period during childbirth; a woman's employment in neither case being jeopardized by the fact of absence for childbirth. In jute mills the non-domestic character of most of the women employed rendered maternity conditions unsatisfactory, but at the same time constituted an obstacle to their improvement; and in particular, no endeavour to achieve an improvement was likely to succeed if it consisted in the provision of monetary benefits. The account given of conditions in coalmines and tea gardens is borne out by other enquiries instituted by Government and by recent controversy: and His Excellency in Council now holds the conclusion that, whatever be the case with jute mills, there is no case for legislative interference with maternity conditions in coalmines or tea gardens in Bengal. That there is scope in these industries for private welfare measures (the existence of such measures is acknowledged in Miss Curjel's report, and further specified in the assembly debate on the Bill) is a fact apart from this conclusion.

The case of jute mills calls for more particular attention. For the reasons already referred to, the Bengal Government hold that Mr. Joshi's Bill, if passed, would prove a dead letter in that industry. They consequently oppose the Bill *in toto*, but in so doing their attitude is that they would agree to legislative interference in the case of jute mills, if any measure having an appreciable chance of success, and not improperly burdening the industry, were devisable. Among the conditions of success, in the opinion of this Government, are the following: (1) the benefits given should be in kind and not in money; (2) the agency should be the employer and not an outside functionary or organization; (3) the methods adopted should be primarily educative in character, a leading defect of existing conditions being the absence in the women concerned of a sufficient desire for the welfare aimed at; and (4) the immediate contact in the work both of doctoring and educating, should be that of a woman of qualifications with the gift of winning the affection and respect of the work-women; and not hampered in this direction by any official status.

His Excellency in Council feels that nothing to this effect is at present achievable by legislation. The measures that might succeed in present conditions will depend mainly on goodwill and the exertion of personal influence on the side of the employer; a legislative direction that such and such steps shall be taken would, pending a considerable excursion in experiments, be premature; and the interference involved would forfeit personal enthusiasms.

The interest in this subject evinced by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and the evident willingness of many employers to spend money in seeking a solution, are the hopeful features of the case. Three experiments in maternity welfare schemes have, in fact, been made in jute mills since Miss Curjel wrote her report; one in the Kelvin mills, another in the Barnagore mills and the third in the Titagarh mills. Those in the two former were experiments in the granting of monetary benefits to women during absence before and after childbirth, and they proved a failure owing mostly to evasions of the condition that a woman should not work during the receipt of the benefit. The Titagarh scheme was more elaborately conceived and substituted benefits in kind for benefits in money. The benefits include an institution in the nature of a clinic on the mill premises, classes for indigenous *dais*, for each attendance at which they receive 2 annas, and general classes for women and girls at which they are taught mothercraft and sewing. The experiment achieved little at first, but has recently met with

growing success. Experiments of this kind are the thing needed in present circumstances, and their conduct by employers themselves is the condition of their feasibility. The Bengal Government will do all they can to encourage their extension and it may well be that eventually assistance from public funds will be called for and made available.

The Bengal Chamber of Commerce draw attention to the promising results that have attended the Titagarh experiment and recommend that Mr. Joshi's Bill should be recast so as to provide for compulsory "clinics" in industrial concerns, or in groups of concerns, financed by Government with or without a compulsory levy on employers. For the reasons already given His Excellency in Council considers such a proposal premature and is unable to support it.

Most of those consulted, including the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, are of opinion that legislation on such a subject, if taken, should be central and not provincial. The only pertinent reason given, in the opinion of this Government, is that given by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, namely that if the matter were left to provinces to deal with, there might be unevenness of legislation between province and province, and consequent trouble with labour in the provinces that proved conservative. On more important items of control of labour conditions, such as those which constitute the body of the Factory Law, His Excellency in Council holds that legislation should be uniform *ab initio* for the whole of India, but he is inclined to think that in this particular subject the variety of conditions obtaining between province and province (conditions differ considerably within Bengal itself) make it expedient that legislative action should be left to the provincial Governments under the general control of the Government of India, and he is unable to share the Bengal Chamber's apprehension that such a procedure in this particular subject is likely to have unsatisfactory results.

Conditions in tea gardens in Bengal are similar throughout, and it would have been proper that the legislation proposed, had it been warranted, should apply to all organized tea estates in the province. His Excellency in Council is not sufficiently aware of conditions in other provinces to give an opinion regarding estates outside Bengal.

This letter has discussed the Bill in terms of the three industries in which the large majority of industrial women are employed in Bengal; but the conclusion that no legislative action on the subject is practicable or desirable applies also to the industries in which the residue are employed. The Bill has been opposed in its main provisions on general grounds; several pertinent criticisms of detail will be found in the replies which are enclosed\*; but on such ancillary points His Excellency in Council has deemed it unnecessary to touch.

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J.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR BY  
J. M. MITRA, REGISTRAR OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, BENGAL.

#### V.—Welfare.

Co-operative work on a scale sufficient for us to deduce any conclusion has not been tried, but there is scope for co-operative effort in organizing supplies of necessities of life and also for co-operative banks amongst labour force and co-operative benefit societies. They often have to raise money at high rates of interest.

There are excellent co-operative stores attached to Ichapur Rifle Factory and Kanchrapara Railway Workshop. As regards co-operative banks the work amongst scavengers and sweepers lead us to think that extensive co-operative work leads to some improvement in moral tone resulting in less borrowing for wasteful purposes, in more steady outturn of work, but want of staff has prevented me from extending this line of work.

Recently a society amongst the labourers in Chittagong has been started with a view to encourage mutual assistance and savings on their part and also to make provision for the grant of loans for repairs of their implements and for other necessary purposes. The society also proposes to put up a workshop to provide work for those who do not easily find employment and also for those who are thrown out of employment. The response so far received from the labourers has been very satisfactory.

Want of staff has hitherto prevented us from taking up intensive work among labouring population. Another factor which has operated against the formation of co-operative societies is the impermanency of labour force in big labouring areas,

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\* Not reprinted here.

and the fact that the majority of the labour force do not belong to this province ; but these ought not to be a bar to the introduction of extensive experiments. In view of the fact that the labour force is not permanent it would be necessary to obtain the full co-operation and assistance of the managing staff.

## XII. Wages.

108. *Indebtedness*.—I have had some enquiries made into the question of indebtedness among the labourers employed in :—(1) Colliery districts ; (2) metropolitan jute mill area ; (3) jute-baling firms in the interior ; (4) engineering firms in Howrah, and also among (5) scavengers and sweepers employed by the Calcutta Corporation and Dacca Municipality ; (6) railway labour at stations and railway labour employed at workshops.

From enquiries made it appears that the labourers almost universally borrow money from their own particular moneylenders and they are either the mill sirdars, mill durwans, local grocers and the Kabuli (itinerant moneylenders from the Frontier and Afghanistan).

The people generally borrow money on what is called " hatchitas " (pro notes) and in cases of loans of fairly heavy amount the moneylenders insist on the borrower to find some personal security. It has also been ascertained that the moneylenders who do business amongst the labourers rarely have recourse to the law courts. Wages are paid weekly and the creditors contrive to realise interest and as much of the principal as they can on pay days. The up-country people who come to work in the jute mills frequently sink away home when they cannot escape the rapacity of the moneylenders.

*Colliery districts*.—From enquiries made I find that the labourers in the colliery areas are the least indebted. Santhals and Bowries living near about the colliery areas work mainly in the collieries. These generally supplement their income by cultivation. Another reason for their being better off than the labourers in the jute mill areas is that they work regularly and earn regular wages. Unfortunately these people are very addicted to liquor and much of the indebtedness is due to this vice. The grocer is the supplier of credit amongst this class of labour but credit is given in the shape of foodstuffs and very rarely in cash.

*Labour in the jute mill areas*.—Enquiries have been made from amongst the labourers of several jute mills. It is reported that as many as 75 to 90 per cent. of the labourers are in debt.

The rate of interest on borrowing is between 72 to 150 per cent.

Generally speaking, loans up to the extent of four weeks' wages are given by the Kabuli and the mill durwan without any additional security but in cases when a large amount of money is taken, personal securities are insisted on. Weekly payments are insisted on as I have noted before, by the creditors doing business amongst this class of people. Among the causes of indebtedness are impermanency of labour, sickness and infrequently intemperate habits. It is a significant fact that this class of people annually remit several lakhs of rupees to their homes. The remittances are mostly for the maintenance of their relations to meet cultivation expenses of the fields in their native villages and sometimes for purchase of lands.

It should be noted that these people have no other source of income, besides their wages in the jute mills. The average debt per head of a labourer amongst 30,000 was found on a rough calculation to be Rs. 18·9.

*Scavengers and sweepers (Calcutta)*.—Enquiries have been made from amongst the scavengers and it is reported that 95 per cent. of them are indebted. It is also reported that once a scavenger or sweeper gets into debt he can hardly ever get out of it. The Kabuli is the principal creditor of those people.

Intemperate habits, absence from work for some months at a time are the main causes of debt amongst these people. To these causes may be added exorbitant funeral expenses, marriage expenditure and the average income per head is about Rs. 15 per month. Amongst these people males and females and even grown up children earn wages.

It has been ascertained that these people spend anything between Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 in a marriage or sradh ceremony.

In Dacca town there are about 200 scavengers and sweepers and they earn from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 a month. They have got supplementary income as they work part time in the houses of private people. It has been reported that they are in debt to the extent of Rs. 25,000, and the average debt is Rs. 125 per head. The rate of interest paid by them is about 12½ per cent. per month. The main causes of indebtedness are drinking, uneconomical habit of living and exorbitant expenses for ceremonial purposes.

*Seamen.*—From enquiries made it appears that in the dock department, 85 per cent of the employees are in debt and the average rate of their indebtedness is Rs. 25. In individual cases it ranges from Rs. 15 to Rs. 700. The wages range from Rs. 60 per month in the case of deck serang to Rs. 18 to Rs. 25 in the case of laskers.

In the engine-room department, 95 per cent. of the employees are in debt and the average rate of indebtedness is Rs. 30, whereas in each individual case it comes up from Rs. 20 to Rs. 1,000. The wages range from Rs. 60 in the case of an engineer to Rs. 18 in the case of a trimmer.

In the saloon department, 75 per cent. of the employees are in debt and the average rate of their indebtedness is Rs. 35, whereas in each individual case it comes up from Rs. 25 to Rs. 1,000. The wages range from Rs. 80 in the case of a butler in charge to Rs. 16 in the case of a mess-room mate.

The cause of the indebtedness of the seamen is mainly due to the fact that there is no permanency of appointment. The seamen are appointed for 12 months with an option of 3 months' service and as abuses exist in recruitment they gradually run into debt. To obtain employment, the seamen have to pay premiums to licensed shipping brokers and ghat serangs and in some cases to the serangs who make the appointments. The serangs have to pay exorbitant amounts which in their turn they realize from the poor and helpless crews.

The average rate of interest paid on loans varies from 75 to 150 per cent.

Most of the Indian seamen live at Taltolah and Kidderpore. There are about 25 private moneylenders living at Kidderpore and Taltolah quarters who carry on moneylending business at an usurious rate of interest. From a rough calculation it appears that the total amount loaned out will amount to Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs.

*Labour in jute-baling firms.*—Labour imported from up-country are generally in debt to the contractor who imports them. These people generally have two homes to run at a time one at the labour centre and one in their native village. The money they earn is barely sufficient to keep their family at home and therefore they are always in debt. The rate of interest amongst these people also is between 37 per cent. to 150 per cent.

The local labourer is naturally better off inasmuch as he generally has some other source of income, however exiguous it may be.

*Labour in the tea gardens.*—In tea gardens it appears that the managers of the gardens advance money to the coolies free of interest for marriage, *sradh* and other expenses. The management only take into consideration the number of working members of the family when the advances are made.

*Engineering firms in Howrah.*—From enquiries it appears that not less than 90 per cent. of workmen is indebted at a usurious rate of interest. Most of the workmen live in rented houses in a very wretched condition. Most of the workmen are Bengali Hindus and Musalmans. Very few have got subsidiary income, and with the exception of a few, nobody owns any house or any land for cultivation. The average indebtedness is more than Rs. 150 and the rate of interest varies from 37½ to 300 per cent. The office durwan or similar person in the office meets urgent requirements for which 300 per cent. is charged but the most usual rate appears to be 75 per cent. Handnotes are executed generally though cases of pledging silver ornaments are noticed. A labourer's income varies from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 a month. A labourer is required, generally, to maintain from 5 to 7 persons. Loans are incurred for various purposes such as illness and ceremonial occasions, e.g., marriage, *sradh*, etc. Indebtedness does not appear to be due to immoral habits and most of the labourers maintain their own relations and friends when in helpless condition.

*Railway coolies.*—Enquiries are made at Santahar a most important railway centre in Northern Bengal. The labourers are employed by the contractor, who employs sardars for the purpose of recruitment, and for supervision of work. The contractor advances money to the sardars, and all labourers get their payments through sardars. The sardar advances freely to the labourers, and on an average each man owes from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30. The labourers all take loans from Kabulis at a high rate of interest. After payment of their dues there is hardly any balance left for them to maintain themselves in comfort. They are very suspicious about outside people and the enquiring officer reports that whenever they are asked anything they say they know nothing and everything is done by the sardars for them.

*Railway workshops at Dacca and Kancharapara.*—In Dacca railway workshop there are about 500 employees, and most of them are local Bengali Muhammadans. Their average debt amounts to Rs. 100 per head. The rate of interest varies from 6½ per cent. to 12½ per cent. per month.

In Kancharapara workshop the indebtedness is not very high. About 60 per cent. of the labourers are members of the co-operative society. Still some of the members have to borrow from outside. It is reported that owing to the joint family system they are unable to meet their expenses from their income.

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REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN OF  
LABOURING CLASSES IN BENGAL.

*What the preliminary report said.*—In my preliminary report, after quoting census figures for the number of operatives in the various forms of industries, I gave a short history of the past efforts in the matter of provision for educational facilities for the children of labouring classes, mainly employed in the jute and cotton mills around Calcutta. We saw how the enactment of factory legislation as a result of the recommendations of the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908 was followed by an enquiry made by Mr. Maclear, Inspector of European Schools. The direct result of this enquiry was the establishment of a single school at Tittagarh for the children of labourers at the two jute mills in the place.

The preliminary report next dealt with the present position as obtained chiefly in the industrial centres round Calcutta. We saw there that though facilities for the education of mill-hand children were not as abundant as one would like to see, there were indications of a genuine attempt being made in many quarters to make the life of the would-be workers in mills a little better than before, by giving them some elementary education.

*The scope of the present report.*—Since I submitted my preliminary report in July, 1929, I have had occasion to see many of the schools attended by mill-hand children in the industrial area round Calcutta and managed—(1) by municipalities as free primary schools under the Biss scheme; (2) by mill authorities; (3) by private individuals or agencies.

I also saw from Asansol some schools meant for colliers' children in the Raniganj coalfields. I next went to typical tea garden schools in the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts and to the railway school at Pahartali, Chittagong. As the trading centres at Chandpur and Narayananj were reported to have no school primarily meant for the children of labouring classes, I did not visit them. When visiting schools I availed myself of the opportunity of discussing the question with the gentlemen whose names appear in Appendix B.\* In the present report I shall try to give a faithful picture of what I saw at different centres and to formulate the ideas which I gathered from my conversations with the various gentlemen whom I met in the course of my tours of inspection.

*Division of labour centres.*—The various labour centres in Bengal may conveniently be divided into four well-defined groups:—

(1) *Industrial areas* round Calcutta—what is called the Industrial or Metropolitan belt comprising the districts of Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly and including the mills and engineering works on both sides of the river Hooghly.

(2) *Collieries* in what is known as the Raniganj coalfields in the Asansol subdivision of Burdwan district.

(3) *Tea plantations* in the hilly and *Terai* (plains) portion of Darjeeling, and in the Dooars of Jalpaiguri.

(4) *Railway centres* at Kanchrapara (E. B. R.), Lillooah, Howrah (E. I. R.), Kharagpur (B. N. R.) and Pahartali, Chittagong (A. B. R.). There are other minor railway centres at Asansol and Ondal (E. I. R.), Saidpur (E. B. R.) and Bhairab (A. B. R.) but the labour force employed there is not very large.

*Problem of each centre separate.*—On account of different reasons the problem of all the centres is not always the same—for instance, the tea industry is primarily an agricultural pursuit and the labourer is more or less attached to the soil, living with his wife and children and cultivating in his spare time the plot of land given to him by his employer for raising his rice or maize crop. He is thus in a majority of cases a permanent dweller on the estate, whereas the worker in a jute mill lives at best in a rented tenement along with many others of his type, without the amenities of a home life, for a few months of the year only, and leaving his work for home, up in Bihar or the United Provinces, after having saved some money towards this holiday. Again, the miner in the coalfields is in most cases an unskilled labourer, whereas the workers in the various railway workshops are mostly skilled men doing work which requires quite a fair amount of expert knowledge and intelligence. Further, labour in tea gardens consists more of women than men, while it is contrariwise in the case of jute mill areas. Thus, when dealing with the question of education of the children of labourers the different centres will require different treatment.

*Some important points to be kept in view.*—Before, however, we proceed to deal with the question of education in each centre, we have to keep in view a few important factors. They are as follows :—

(1) In order to make better provision for primary education there is just now a Bill before the Provincial Legislative Council called the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Bill, 1929, which contemplates the ultimate introduction of free and compulsory primary education in the Province.

(2) Labour employed in industrial centres is (i) skilled and (ii) unskilled. According to the census of 1921, of the skilled labourers only one-fourth were born in Bengal while of the unskilled labourers only 2/11 are Bengalis. The rest of the labour force, both skilled and unskilled, are immigrants from outside Bengal.

(3) Among immigrants to industrial centres there is always a large excess of males over females. In fact the female population is seldom more than 50 per cent. of the male labouring population. In other words, quite a large proportion of the male labourers live without wife and children. This is not the case, at least to such a marked degree, in tea plantations and railway centres where the male labourers have mostly their wives and children with them, and thus have some sort of a home life.

(4) There is a marked change in the attitude of the employers of labour towards their employees getting elementary education. From an attitude of actual hostility to the introduction of compulsory primary education among labourers in the days of the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908, there has been a salutary change to one of sympathy and co-operation. There is a considerable amount of feeling among the employers that perhaps elementary education may keep the labourers away from the influence of the professional agitator, as ignorance and illiteracy often lead to wild rumours and bazaar gossip gaining incredible currency, within a very short time, in places where large numbers of labourers are congregated. There is also the feeling that no welfare work among operatives is possible until they have been able to neutralise their native superstition by some amount of enlightenment following a knowledge of the three R's.

(5) Unlike England and other European countries where the father is, in the majority of cases, the only breadwinner in the family—the wife and children being dependents on his earnings, out here in India, the father, the mother and also the child are winners of the bread by the sweat of their brow. Thus in the tea industry, nine-tenths of which is agricultural and thus not within the purview of the Factory Act, children's labour is very largely requisitioned among the tea bushes and those who should have been at school are required to bring money to the common till by working on the garden.

(6) An unlimited supply of good teachers is always a problem for every stage and department of education. It is specially so in the case of schools for workers and their children. If broad-minded sympathy, a wide outlook and a fair amount of general knowledge be the *sine qua non* of a good teacher in a school attended by children of the *bhadralok* class, how much more so are they needed for one dealing with the children of such primitive people as the *Oraons*, *Mundas* and *Santals*. There is actually a great dearth of teachers for tea garden schools and no improvement is possible unless that question is satisfactorily tackled.

(7) There is very little of effective supervision of the schools in labour centres. In most cases the schools, particularly those imparting a rudimentary knowledge of three R's, languish for want of proper guidance and sympathetic encouragement. An Inspector with imagination and a zeal for his work can possibly make education more popular with these unsophisticated people than anybody else. In order to be able to do his work efficiently he must be tactful, smart, young and intelligent enough to impress the employers.

*Two types of schools in labour centres.*—Schools in labour centres naturally divide themselves into two types, namely (i) those for the children of skilled labourers, e.g., machinemen, carpenters, weavers, turners, vicemen, etc., and (ii) those for the children of unskilled labourers.

It has been found that *sirdars* (overseers) in mills and tea gardens, and other skilled labourers, besides being financially better off than those who are unskilled, are of a more ambitious character and solicitous of bringing up their children in their own line and if possible, better equipped for life than themselves.

*Syllabus of studies, technical or non-technical.*—Following the above differentiation, there is a difference in the syllabus of studies followed in the two types of schools, those for the children of skilled labourers following in many instances a syllabus more or less of a technical character, e.g., those at the Ichhapur Rifle Factory, Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory, Ludlow Jute Mill, Kanchrapara Technical School, Kharagpur Technical School and Pahartali Apprentice School.

The others are of a non-technical character giving only a rudimentary knowledge of the three R's, e.g., those at the Bally, Tittagarh and other mills, the free primary schools under Mr. Biss' scheme in Municipal areas, and the tea garden and colliery schools.

We now come to a treatment of the question of education in the different centres mentioned in the earlier part of this report.

*Education in the Industrial Belt.*—As has been previously noted, a very large proportion of the labour force in the industrial belt is immigrant. The greatest numbers come from Patna, Gaya, Arrah, Monghyr, and Shahabad in Bihar and from the adjoining districts of Balia, Ghazipur, Benares, Azamgarh and Jaunpur in the United Provinces, Cuttack and Balasore also send a large contingent. Of late years people of the depressed classes from the Telegu-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency and from Bilaspore and neighbouring places in the Central Provinces have also come in appreciable numbers to the jute mills on the banks of the Hooghly. The jute mills are the largest employers of labour. Of the other industrial concerns employing imported or local labour, cotton mills, jute presses, iron foundries, engineering works, brick-fields, oil and flour mills are the most important.

The peculiar characteristic of this large labour force is that the majority of them come to stay in the mills for comparatively short periods of time and have, therefore, little or no stake to lose in case of a conflict between capital and labour.

Again, apart from the broader question of education being found necessary to create a feeling of mutual understanding between labour and capital, it has been the experience of many who had to deal with the coolies that no kind of work conducive to the welfare and uplift of the masses is possible unless there be some education in them. For instance, I was told at the Bansberia Jute Mill that the workers would not much appreciate any health, hygiene or educational films in the cinema shows, often exhibited at the mill, for the benefit of the workers, simply because they could not follow the printed texts on the screen, giving the purport of the films. Thus the only things that could amuse and exhilarate them were pantomime and comic sketches shown on the screen. The Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal and Assam, than whom there is no greater authority to speak on the subject, says in his report for the year 1928, "The development of welfare work must necessarily be slow, primarily on account of the illiteracy which prevails among factory labour as a class. Want of education prevents them from taking advantage of activities started for their benefit, and besides, there are age-long jobberies and corrupt practices which place insuperable difficulties in the way of many much-needed reforms. The first step, therefore, towards real progress must necessarily be the introduction of a free and compulsory education." This is a direct challenge to the policy enunciated by the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908, and if after the lapse of about a quarter of a century there is a call for a change of policy, it is necessary that the call should be responded to with alacrity.

In my preliminary report I have given an account of the different authorities which manage schools in industrial areas. So far as the employers are concerned, though the management and maintenance of schools has been undertaken by a very limited few, still there is a decided inclination towards making provision for educational facilities for the workmen and their children. The fact is, in almost every case, it is a question of personality. Wherever the manager of a mill or some other officer connected with the mill, takes a lively interest in educating the workmen and their children, there is a thriving school. For instance, in the Ludlow Jute Mill a scheme of education ending in the training of qualified young adults as apprentices, has been drawn up at the personal intervention of the Manager, Mr. F. T. Washington. Again, at the Angus Mill, the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. J. H. B. Norrie, Ch. M., F.R.C.S., who is the guiding spirit of everything beneficent for the workers and their children—fully equipped and quite up-to-date hospitals and operation theatres, well-furnished and well-staffed schools (for boys and girls), gymnasium, including outfit for boxing, etc., equipment for boy scouts and girl guides, lending libraries, cinema shows, good roads, pure drinking water, anti-malarial works, etc., has not only taught the labourers to live a decidedly better life than before, but has actually transformed the whole place into an ideal station. Such a humanising influence cannot but have an effect for the better on the labour force. Similarly, the two schools at Ichhapur Rifle Factory and at Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory are doing excellent work in the matter of preparing their boys for the sort of work that they will be called upon to do in the factories later on. On the other hand, there are the mill schools at Bauria (Fort Gloster) and Bally where the responsibility of the management ended with the provision of a brick-built house, in each case, and a certain number of teachers, more or less qualified for their work. That there was practically no effective supervision of the Manager, in each case, was quite apparent even from a casual glance at the schools. It thus depends so much on the personal interest of the manager to make a school successful or otherwise.

In the matter of spreading education among the workers' children, the Howrah Municipality has been doing some substantial work under the Biss Scheme. Some of the schools started under this scheme have been placed in close proximity to mills and engineering works and I have seen some marked result of the civilizing influence of education. I do not speak of the schools attended chiefly by children of machinemmen, carpenters, vice-men, etc. These would have gone on to ordinary schools had there been no Free Primary School in the locality, but I speak specially of those schools which are attended by children coming from the lowest rung of the social ladder, e.g., *Chamars, Doms, Lallegis, Kahars, Pasis, Mehiars, Gonds*, etc., all depressed classes. I was struck by the amount of neatness and general culture exhibited by these boys, most of whom had not been under tuition for more than three years. If this is possible with the help of good teachers, the social worker need not despair of reclaiming these dregs of human society.

The Champdany and Bhadreswar Municipalities in the Hooghly district have also begun to start these Free Primary Schools and their work also is proving beneficial to the mill-hand children.

In the Howrah Municipality there are two night Muktabs (Muslim primary school) managed by a private agency, the Muhammadan Educational Board, consisting of some energetic young men who work in mercantile firms in the daytime and look after these schools in the evening. I inspected one of these night Muktabs and I was very favourably impressed by the good work that was being done to give some elementary education to the large number of Muslim boys and young men who were otherwise engaged during the daytime. They were divided into:—(1) Those who work in mills as wage earners; (2) Those who work as apprentices in engineering and other works; (3) Others.

Their age varied between 8 and 35 and the average income of their parents was about Rs. 20 per month. The departmental curriculum for primary schools on an Urdu basis plus a rudimentary knowledge of English was being taught to the boys. Here is an example of social service which many others may with great advantage to the country and the industries follow.

In my rounds through the industrial towns I went over some of the coolie lines built by the employers of labour and some by private persons. Though there is an insufficiency of light and air in both types of houses, the latter are far worse than the former and it was often a marvel to me how the men (in some cases with wife and children) could manage to live in such surroundings. I daresay these surroundings were much inferior to what the labourers had in their native homes. It is no wonder that the squalor and filth prevailing in such surroundings bring in their wake, drink, disease and sometimes, death. To my mind the only remedy to all these ills is a wide extension of compulsory education among the mill-hands.

*Education in Collieries.*—The coal-mines are situated almost exclusively in the Asansol subdivision of the Burdwan district. The mines are worked by immigrants from Chota Nagpur and Santal-Parganas and to some extent by a local depressed class called the Bauris. The immigrant coolies live in coolie lines built near the mines, but the Bauris generally come from their homes in neighbouring villages. Of the colliery schools mentioned in my preliminary report, the one at Damodarpur was found to be abolished. Of the others some are located in villages and some near the mines. I went over the coalfields with Mr. J. A. Beale, sub-divisional officer, Asansol, and saw some of the schools. The one at Sanctoria has a fine three-roomed brick house, recently built by Rai Sahib Upendra Nath Mandal, himself a colliery manager in the service of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. The school has a roll strength of 56 pupils, 50 per cent. of whom are in one way or other connected with the collieries. The Ghusick Colliery Upper Primary School near Kalipahari Railway station is on the estate of Messrs. Martin & Co., and has 50 pupils on the rolls. Of these 21 are actually miners' sons. The others are also in some way connected with the collieries. My impression of the coalfields was that there had never been any organized attempt to bring the miners' children to school, either by employers or any other agency. The chief inspector of mines in his Annual Report of 1927 also complains that "generally speaking facilities for education are poor in the vicinity of mines."

*Education in Tea Plantations.*—In Bengal the tea plantations are divided into three groups—those in the hills of the Darjeeling district, those in the Terai or plains portion of the same district and those in the Dooars of the Jalpaiguri district. There are some stray gardens in Chittagong, but they do not count much. The tea garden schools in the hill portion of the Darjeeling district are mostly managed by the Church of Scotland Mission, Darjeeling, of which Reverend H. C. Duncan is the superintendent. The schools get a Government grant of Rs. 12 and from the gardens Rs. 8 per mensem. The managers of the tea gardens are absolved of all responsibility after the school house is provided and the monthly contribution is paid. The language taught is Nepali and the teachers are supplied, in most cases, by the Mission.



The arrangement is incapable of future expansion as the Mission is unwilling to be burdened with the management of any more schools. If, therefore, an expansion of the scheme is desired the management will have to be shifted on to the garden managers. In the Terai portion the schools are managed by the garden authorities as a general rule. Similar is the case with the Dooars schools. It may be noted here that the scheme of education for the garden coolies formulated by Captain Kennedy and adumbrated in my preliminary report, has been in force in the Jalpaiguri Dooars only, there being no such scheme for Darjeeling.

It is felt by almost all the managers of tea gardens whom I have met that an elementary education would help to wean these primitive people from their superstitious and improvident habits and make them still better labourers. But they would deprecate the idea of immediately making primary education compulsory in tea-gardens and suggest that for the present if every garden be made to run a primary school for the education of its labourers and their children the problem would be largely solved.

It is argued that tea being largely an agricultural pursuit there is no bar to the children being employed in the gardens. Their labour is necessarily cheaper than that of the men or women, but if they have to be compulsorily detained at school, their place will have to be filled by adults who must be paid much more than the children would earn. Thus the cost of production would mount up, causing a further loss in the already depressed tea industry. It is difficult to ascertain how far this view is tenable but at any rate, the demand for compulsory primary education in tea gardens will require another decade to gain in strength and insistence. Tea plantations cannot, perhaps, come advantageously within the purview of the approaching legislation for another decade or so. The same cannot, however, be said about collieries where the areas are not marked well enough to exclude those not connected with collieries and consequently it may not be necessary to exclude areas of collieries from the operation of any future compulsory Primary Education Act.

*Education in Railway Centres.*—In railway centres the very nature of work presumes a certain amount of skill and expert knowledge to deal with machines, etc. There is thus congregated a generally better class of men in railway centres than is found in mills and tea-gardens. The demand for education, therefore, is decidedly greater here and consequently we find not only large primary schools at such centres but also schools of a higher status. On the top of this higher class of schools or, at least, parallel to them are technical schools of a more or less specialized type to train up mechanics, fitters, turners, carpenters, electricians, etc., for their ultimate absorption in the different railways. The problem in railway centres is not so much to bring pupils to schools as to cope with the daily growing demand for larger educational facilities. Thus at Kharagpur there is not only a big high school with a population of 770 boys but also a primary school of 181 boys. A scheme is under discussion for a second large primary school at this centre and there is also a technical school here. At Pahartali the railway high school (roll—330) was till lately a middle English school and the pressure on accommodation in the building is already too great to permit of efficient teaching. The apprenticeship training classes at this centre take in not more than 40 apprentices, who are put through a course of training extending over four to five years. Boys between the ages of 16 and 18, who pass a qualifying admission test, are taken in and paid the following wages for each working day :—

|                  | Rs. a. p. |    |            |
|------------------|-----------|----|------------|
| 1st year .. .. . | 0         | 8  | 0 per day. |
| 2nd „ .. .. .    | 0         | 9  | 4 „        |
| 3rd „ .. .. .    | 0         | 12 | 0 „        |
| 4th „ .. .. .    | 1         | 0  | 0 „        |
| 5th „ .. .. .    | 1         | 4  | 0 „        |

Workshop attendance is from 8.40 to 11.30 in the morning and 12.30 to 4 in the afternoon. Evening classes are held for taking the boys through a course of mensuration, arithmetic, geometrical and machine drawing, estimating, free-hand sketching and applied mechanics.

At present there are 38 apprentices on the rolls of whom 25 are sons and wards of railway employees.

These training classes represent more or less the technical schools at other centres, Kanchrapara has a high school (roll—327) and also a technical school, besides primary schools for both railway employees' sons and outsiders. Lillooah is midway

between Howrah and Bally and has no educational institutions for Indians. The numerous schools at Howrah and Bally cater for the sons of railway employees working at Lillooah.

There are schools at the minor railway centres at Asansol and Ondal, Bhairab and Saidpur.

40.† *Facilities for General Education in Industrial Areas.*—(i) *For children not in employment* such facilities are abundant at every centre. The information is given in a tabular form below :—

| District.           | School. |         |          |
|---------------------|---------|---------|----------|
|                     | High.   | Middle. | Primary. |
| 24-Parganas .. .. . | 8       | 4       | 33       |
| Howrah .. .. .      | 15      | 7       | 49       |
| Hooghly .. .. .     | 5       | 3       | 24       |

So far as educational facilities for the general public are concerned, there has never been a want, as the supply always keeps pace with the demand. Private enterprise in the matter of providing educational facilities has always been commendable in Bengal.

(ii) *For children employed in factories* the following institutions exist in the different industrial areas :—

| District.           | Middle. | Primary. |
|---------------------|---------|----------|
| 24-Parganas .. .. . | 1       | 21       |
| Howrah .. .. .      | 4       | 17       |
| Hooghly .. .. .     | —       | 24       |

(iii) *For adult workers* three primary schools have been returned from 24-Parganas and five from Hooghly. The schools for adult workers are generally held at night to suit their convenience. Some of them also attend boys' primary schools held at night. For instance, in the night Muktab I visited in Howrah Municipality, I found quite a number of grown-up young men reading with the boys. As a rule, however, there is great apathy in the adult workers for any kind of instruction.

41. *Facilities for Industrial and Vocational Training.*—Except for the facilities for technical training that are provided at the Ichhapur Rifle Factory, and the Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory, and the Government Weaving School at Serampore, there is little or no organized provision for industrial and vocational training in the industrial centres. The Calcutta Technical School aims at "imparting theoretical training with laboratory practices in technical subjects to those actually employed in trades and industries in Calcutta and neighbourhood," but for new candidates for an industrial or vocational career the only course open is to get themselves apprenticed to some engineering or other industrial concern, often after paying heavy premiums. This course is also possible for those only who have some relatives or supporters already in the employment of such concerns.

42. *Effect of Education on Standard of Living and Industrial Efficiency of Workers.*—As I have already noted in the earlier part of my report, I was agreeably surprised to see the effect of education on the children of certain municipal free primary schools in Howrah. That this could not be said of all schools visited by me was due to the absence of enthusiasm and imagination in the teachers entrusted with the work of educating the boys. I am more than ever convinced that the formation of habits can very largely be influenced by the personality of the teacher. But the improvement noticeable in the children of some schools could not possibly be expected to create much impression on their parents immediately, and we can only hope for a better state of things when these children will be fathers of families. It will really take years to bring home to the average worker the benefits of a clean, healthy and sober life.

With regard to industrial efficiency it only stands to reason that education would improve it. In fact, Mr. Washington, of the Ludlow Jute Mill, as well as Dr. Norrie, of the Angus Mill, emphatically endorsed the view that the educated worker was more efficient than the illiterate. Amongst skilled workers there is a strong desire to see their children sufficiently educated to take their place when they retire. With the ambitions amongst the unskilled the desire is to make a better provision for their children in life than they could do for themselves. Thus the level of industrial efficiency rises in proportion to the spread of education.

†This figure and those in the subsequent headings refer to the final list of subjects.

With the tea garden, coolies' children, however (especially in the Darjeeling hills), the effect of education has been to make them look down upon the work of their parents. After a year or two at school they will be anything other than a tea garden coolie—a *chokra* in a hotel, a motor-driver, a shopkeeper, a hawker, or simply a loafer. Many a garden manager complained to me about this, but they think that when education becomes universal or more general than at present, this phase will disappear.

*Conclusion.*—From what I have seen of the schools and their pupils, and from my discussions with the various gentlemen whom I have met, I am inclined to think that there should be :—

(1) A definite policy behind a progressive and well-thought-out scheme for extending primary education among the labouring classes and their children by means of—(a) Free night schools for adults; (b) free day schools for children. Attendance should be made compulsory for those in industrial areas.

(2) A separate inspecting agency, composed of young, energetic and resourceful officers who could make a favourable impression on employers and could get things done by them.

If, however, the attendance at night schools for ordinary instruction of workers in jute and other mills be found irksome and distasteful after a hard day's work (and it is very likely that this will be the case), I should suggest that steps be taken at every important mill, or group of mills, for the provision of ocular education by means of organized cinema shows and magic lantern demonstrations. This is bound to be popular with the adults and may help in keeping them away from the grog-shop. For adult workers in tea gardens, where labour is more or less of a leisurely type, the ordinary night schools may perhaps do with occasional shows of cinema films and magic lantern slides.

With regard to day schools for boys, I should also suggest that as a connecting link to them, each mill should be made to have a *creche* for babies and young children, where, besides being properly looked after by nurses and attendants they may be instructed according to kindergarten methods. This preparatory training will easily induce them to come to schools when they reach the proper age.



## VII.—Safety.      VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

*Extract from a letter from the Government of Bengal, dated 3rd December, 1929.*

I am directed to forward herewith copies of the papers noted as follows :— (1) Memorandum on " Safety " (43) to (50); (2) memorandum on " Desirability of Legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880 " (54); (3) letter No. 3954 Com., dated the 2nd August, 1929, on Workmen's Compensation except (54); being the memoranda of this Government on VII—Safety, and VIII—Workmen's Compensation, in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Commission.

2. The opinion of the Government of Bengal on all the items under " Workmen's Compensation," except No. (54), was forwarded to the Government of India in letter No. 3954 Com., dated the 2nd August, 1929, and that Government was requested in paragraph 2 to communicate copies to the Commission.

### VII.—Safety.

#### A.—Factories.

43. *Existing Regulations in Factories, Mines, Railways and Docks.*—All establishments registered as factories under Sub-section 2 (3) (a) and (b) of the Factories Act are regulated, as regards safety, by the provisions of Chapter III of the Act, and Part IV of the Bengal Factories Rules.

All sections of Chapter III of the Act receive the proper measure of attention from the Factory Inspection Department, but the principal means of enforcing safety measures are those provided in Sections 18 and 18A of the Act. Where industries are well established and types of machinery standard, fencing and safety devices are standardized in a Departmental Order Book of the Factories Office, and inspectors are responsible for the enforcement of the orders. The principal industries dealt with in this manner are jute mills, tea gardens, cotton mills, oil mills and match factories.

Other authorities operating within factories for the purpose of ensuring the safety of workers are electric inspectors for accidents arising out of the generation and transmission of electricity, fire brigade inspectors who function under the provisions

of the Licensed Warehouse and Fire Brigade Act of 1893, and boiler inspectors. The existing safety provisions of the Factories Act are considered adequate. No difficulty has been encountered by the Factory Inspection Department in their enforcement, and the powers they confer for securing safety are ample.

#### B.—Docks.

Apart from the Board of Trade regulations applicable to sea-going vessels, the only regulations at present in force for the protection of dock workers against accidents are those of the Calcutta Port Commissioners. The Government of Bengal quite recently had under consideration the question of the protection of workers employed in loading and unloading goods and coaling ships at docks, wharves, etc., and their views were communicated to the Government of India in their letter No. 445 Mne., dated the 24th January, 1929, the pertinent paragraphs of which are reproduced below :—

" On the general question of the desirability of protecting workers engaged in loading or unloading ships, the Local Government have already expressed their views in their letter No. 969 T. Mne., dated the 17th October, 1928, which contained their views on the questionnaire issued by the International Labour Office, which was forwarded with the Government of India, Department of Commerce's letter No. 319 S (27), dated the 1st September, 1928. From the letter referred to above, it will be seen that the Government of Bengal are prepared to support legislation for the protection against accident of such workers. The only regulations at present in force in the Port of Calcutta are those which accompany the enclosed reply of the chairman of the Calcutta Port Commissioners. The local government agree with the Calcutta Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the present position, under which regulations are issued under an Act of the local legislature, is unsatisfactory, and that regulations should be framed on an all-India basis.

With regard to the form such legislation should take, I am to say that the local government support the British precedent, whereby regulations for the safety of dock workers are framed under the Factory and Workshop Acts. Both the Port Commissioners and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce are opposed to this on grounds which are not made clear in their letters. The local government do not consider that the Indian Ports Act is a suitable place for the inclusion of such regulations, nor do they think that the passing of a special Act enabling the port authorities to frame regulations for the protection of dock workers is necessary. Amendment of the Ports Act, or the passing of special legislation, would require the creation of new departments to enforce the regulations, whereas each local government has already a suitable inspecting agency for such work in their factory departments. These departments are conversant with safety work in factories and mines, and safety work in docks, wharves and quays does not differ from that in factories; indeed, especially in Bengal, where a large number of factories are situated on waterways, the Factory Inspection Department has already to undertake many duties which would devolve upon it under docks regulations. The creation of a new department or new departments to enforce docks regulations would thus be entirely unnecessary; they would also in all probability be much less efficient than the existing factory departments, the officers of which are already safety experts."

The local government are of the opinion that the legislation should apply to all classes of dock workers whether employed on board ship or on shore. Workers in dock workshops are, of course, subject to the safety provisions of the Factories Act, and those employed in the generation and transmission of electricity come under the provisions of the Electricity Act. It is reported that in the case of dock labourers, not under statutory regulations at present, the dock authorities constantly impress on serangs and others in charge of labour that all necessary safety precautions should be taken. Departmental inquiries are held in all serious cases of accidents, and, as a result, the supervising staff are impressed with the necessity of taking proper precautions against accidents.

44. *Incidence of Accidents in Factories, Mines, Railways and Docks* (Note.—No figures are available for accidents in docks).—In all factories covered by the Factories Act, managers are compelled to submit returns of accidents in a prescribed form, according to rule 62 of the Bengal Factories Rules. The particulars in this form ensure full information, with a view to the classification of accidents as "fatal," "serious," or "minor" on an "absence-from-employment" basis.\*

The more severe type of accidents occur in districts in which the more important industries are established. This indicates not so much the greater hazards in those industries, such as jute and engineering, but the greater precision with which the law is observed in respect of the reporting of accidents as the result of better management

\* For statistics of accidents in Bengal *vide* page 332.

and control. The increase in the total number of accidents year after year is an index of the increased efficiency of the department, not only in securing the registration of new and long established factories, but also in enforcing the safety provisions of the Act, for, although the total number of accidents has increased, the number of severe accidents has diminished.

46. *Accident prevention (including "Safety First" propaganda).*—The chief influences in the prevention of accidents are :—(a) the powers of inspectors under the Factories Act to compel managers to erect fencing and to take precautions against accidents; (b) the voluntary interest of managers in safety measures and safety precautions; and (c) the interest of insurance companies, as the result of the operation of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Measures under (a) form the principal routine work of inspectors of factories. Orders issued under the safety provisions of the Act and Rules, and the prosecutions which follow from disregard of them, are the most positive and effective influences in the prevention of accidents in Bengal. In several of the larger jute mills and engineering concerns, especially railway workshops, a considerable amount of "safety first" work is carried out voluntarily by managers or welfare committees.

As an item in the departmental work of the factories office, no "Safety First" propaganda has yet been inaugurated. Railway workshops have devised posters of their own, directing the attention of employees to dangers arising from certain circumstances, but the factories department doubt whether these measures have any real merit in preventing accidents. The experience of the department is that notices, verbal orders, and warnings of that nature are always ineffective, because of the prevailing illiteracy of the workers. The one effective method of securing safety is the enforcement of safety devices under the Act. The utility of "Safety First" propaganda, however, is not discounted, but it is likely to be much more effective when the workers as a class become literate and more amenable to factory discipline. A certain fatalistic outlook on the part of the workers is also said to be a barrier to "Safety First" propaganda as undertaken in the West.

47. *Accidents in non-regulated Establishments.*—No definite information is available regarding accidents in non-regulated establishments, because apart from fatal accidents, the managers of such establishments are under no compulsion to report to any authority.

On the average, about half a dozen accident reports per annum are sent in to the factories department in connection with serious and fatal accidents to workers in such establishments. These reports are generally sent in by the police as the result of arrangements made between the chief inspector of factories and the police authorities many years ago. All accidents thus reported are investigated by an inspector, who recommends measures to the police or to the district magistrate in order to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. If the inspector considers that there has been negligence on the part of the manager or other persons, he lends his experience and opinion as an expert, if necessary, for prosecution under the Indian Penal Code. From the number of accidents so reported it seems clear that the majority are not brought to notice, especially as it is known that many of the smaller establishments from financial or other reasons do not provide proper safety devices. This suggests an extension of the Act under sub-section 2 (3) (b), a subject which has been dealt with elsewhere, but in many small concerns drastic application of the safety provisions of the Act would lead to serious financial complications. The Government of Bengal do not regard this as a reason for not extending either the Factories or the Workmen's Compensation Act. The chief difficulty in Bengal is the extension of the factories department to cope with small establishments. In the immediate future, probably, some sort of half-way control may have to be adopted, whereby regulations may be framed for the purpose of gradually applying the Act to various classes of smaller factories, with a view to securing the installation, in the first place, of proper safety devices. There are however, other classes of employment which call for some sort of control, e.g., dock workers, which have been dealt with above, and, persons engaged on the construction of buildings and bridges. The Government of Bengal have already expressed their opinion that dock workers should be protected by means of regulations framed on the British model. Similar regulations should be framed for bridges and buildings and for other classes of workers, who are sufficiently organized to be brought within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The principles hitherto observed in the application of the Workmen's Compensation Act have been organization and hazard, and if, as the Government of Bengal have separately reported, these two principles should be widely extended in the case of the Workmen's Compensation Act, it seems logically to follow that they should also be extended in the case of the safety provisions of the Factories Act.

48. *First-aid and Medical Relief.*—There is no provision in the Factories Act, equivalent to the British provision, that managers of factories should provide and maintain first-aid apparatus of any description. In practice, however, the larger

industrial concerns in this Presidency, as well as plantations and mines, provide medical facilities which can be quickly utilized by workers in the case of accidents. Smaller factories and factories established in congested areas, such as Calcutta, rely largely on local hospitals and dispensaries, to the funds of which, in some cases, they subscribe. In many cases, however, workers are reluctant to avail themselves of medical attention provided in hospitals and, it is reported that in the case of large factories they are inclined to stop attending the dispensaries before they are cured and to seek advice from unqualified persons in the local bazaars, often with serious consequences.

In the case of dock workers, special arrangements exist both in Calcutta and Chittagong. In Calcutta, first-aid appliances are kept in all the vessels at Taktaghata, in the Dock Master's Office, and in the workshops, and further treatment is available at the dock dispensary or the nearest hospital. Two hospitals, viz., the Mayo Hospital in the north and the Sambhunath Pandit Hospital in the south, receive subscriptions from the Commissioners. In Chittagong, first-aid materials are kept on dredgers and in the workshops and stores. No special first-aid staff is employed.

The subject of medical facilities in general is discussed elsewhere.

49. *Stringency of Inspection and enforcement of Regulations.*—(i) *In industry generally*—The following figures, to which reference is also made elsewhere, show the steady progress of inspection arrangements and the results during the past six years:—

| Year. | Chief Inspector. | Inspectors. | Assistant Inspectors. | Number of registered factories in Bengal and Assam. | Number of employees in registered factories in Bengal and Assam. | Visits to registered factories by wholtime Inspectors. |        | Number of factories visited by Magistrates, Deputy Commissioners, etc. | Factories unvisited.              |        | Prosecution cases. |
|-------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---|--|--|--------|--|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------|
|       |                  |             |                       |   |  | Bengal.  | Assam. |  | Bengal.                           | Assam. |                    |
| 1928  | 1                | 6           | 3                     | 2,062   | 618,921  | 2,478  | 82     | 271  | 21                                | 292    | 135                |
| 1927  | 1                | 6           | 3                     | 1,984   | 608,453  | 2,969  | 90     | 309  | 160                               | 267    | 120                |
| 1926  | 1                | 5           | 3                     | 1,888   | 599,042  | 2,460  | 81     | 243  | 243                               | 311    | 157                |
| 1925  | 1                | 5           | 2                     | 1,810   | 600,039  | 1,632  | 76     | 248  | 297                               | 318    | 187                |
| 1924  | 1                | 5           | 1                     | 1,685   | 592,574  | 1,162  | 47     | 188  | 315                               | 536    | 28                 |
| 1923  | 1                | 5           | —                     | 1,524   | 567,284  | 1,137  | 60     | 50   | 750                               |        | 16                 |
|       |                  |             |                       |   |  |  |        |  | (Includes both Assam and Bengal). |        |                    |

The increase in the inspection staff in recent years, compared with the increased number of registered factories, is in itself sufficient evidence that the enforcement of the Act had been much more stringent in recent years. The provisions of all chapters, with the exception of those of Chapter IV (Employment), have, as regards enforcement, presented little difficulty to the Factories department. The Act may be said generally, to meet existing requirements in those directions. The only difficulties that have been encountered in respect of the Act have arisen from the hours of employment of workers, a subject which is dealt with separately.

(ii) *In seasonal industries.*—Seasonal industries in Bengal include rice mills, tea factories, and jute presses, and all of these have been given certain relief from certain sections of Chapter IV of the Act. Precision in the enforcement of these sections is, therefore, not of the same importance as it is in the case of the manufacturing industries concentrated in the metropolitan manufacturing area. With regard to such factories, the main concern of the factories department has been with the safety provisions, but, even in this case, a certain amount of latitude has had to be allowed on account both of the inaccessibility of many of the factories and the lack of skilled labour for carrying out fencing orders. The attitude of the department has also been to some extent determined by the capacity of such factories to bear the burden of rigorous enforcement, but, in general, inspection work in such factories in all its aspects has kept well abreast with developments and improvements in industries. Every care has been taken by the inspectors to encourage voluntary effort on the part of managers, and, wherever possible, premature demonstrations of force have been avoided.

The difficulties of inspection work in tea-garden factories are shown in the report of the chief inspector of factories for 1927.

To overcome these difficulties, the Factories Department compiled a special pamphlet in which were explained the most important provisions of the Act which were applicable to different factories. Managers were given a clear indication of what was expected of them, and the opening of a branch office at Jalpaiguri has secured the requisite progress in the enforcement of the appropriate provisions of the Act in the tea industry. Similar results have been secured in other seasonal industries by inspectors touring from headquarters or from Barrackpore, although in the case of these industries no special instructions have been issued.

An important factor with regard to the rigour of enforcement of the Factories Act in industry generally is the adequacy of fines imposed for offences. This has been dealt with separately.

50. *Effect upon safety of hours, health, light and working conditions generally.*—There are no statistics to enable a proper computation of the effect of these factors on safety. Intensive enquiry is necessary on the part of both the Factory Inspection Department and employers. The first step is the proper recording of accidents, and this is possible only in up-to-date and well organized establishments, and, in the first place, can be undertaken only on a sample basis by the Factories Department, working in voluntary co-operation with managers.

### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

The Government of Bengal agree with the following opinion of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, and consider that no legislation is necessary at present —

54. *Desirability of legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880.*—I have less qualification to speak upon this subject, which is outside my special province. The reasons for the passing of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, are well known, and I need not dwell upon them. The effect of this statute is thus stated by A. L. Smith, J. "The workman when he sues his master under the provisions of the Act for any of the five matters designated in it, shall be in the position of one of the public suing, and shall not be in the position a servant theretofore was when he sued his master; in other words, that the master shall have all the defences he theretofore had against the public suing him, but shall not have the special defences he theretofore had when sued by his servant." It was subsequently decided that there was only one defence, that of common employment, of which the Act deprived him, and that to a limited extent.

The most usual of the defences which could be set up by an employer against a member of the public and therefore left to him by the Employers' Liability Act, are given by Ruegg. (*Employers' Liability and Workmen's Compensation*, 8th Edition, page 45).

(a) That the act of the servant causing the injury was committed wilfully, (b) that the servant when he occasioned the injury was not acting within the scope of his employment, (c) that the injury was avoidable, or not caused by negligence, (d) that the injured person was a trespasser or mere licensee, (e) that the injured person voluntarily took the risk of that which caused the injury. "*Volenti non fit injuria.*"

Since the passing of the Workmen's Compensation Act the value of the Employers' Liability Act is mainly in that it enables a workman to obtain a larger sum as damages if he can prove negligence, than he could obtain as compensation. With this object no doubt in view, two clauses on these lines were included in the original draft of the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. I propose to examine the reasons given for and against the inclusion of these clauses. In the "Notes on clauses" circulated with the Bill, it is stated that the majority of injuries probably arise from the act or default of a fellow employee. I very much doubt if this statement can be supported. From an examination of the reports of accidents received by the Chief Inspectors of Factories and Mines and enquiries made by them and from my own experience it would appear that on the contrary only a small proportion of accidents in India are due to this. The proposed sections were generally criticized as unnecessary, and the Joint Committee, in deciding to eliminate them, finally reported as follows:—"The majority of us are not satisfied that it is either necessary or wise to retain these provisions in the Bill. It has not been demonstrated to our satisfaction that the Courts in India will apply the judge-made doctrines of common employment and assumed risk. If these doctrines are accepted by the courts in India, legislation on the lines of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880 (43 and 44 Vict., Cap. 42), will have to be considered. But in that event the defences of common employment and assumed risk, if they are regarded as inequitable, should be removed not merely for

the very limited classes of workmen to whom this Bill will apply, but for all workmen. On the whole, therefore, we are of opinion that it is wiser to restrict the scope of the present Bill to workmen's compensation and to avoid anticipating a difficulty which may not arise, and for which the Bill, as drafted, contained only a partial remedy."

In my opinion, the doctrines of common employment and assumed risk are inequitable, and the case for or against an enactment depriving an employer of these defences rests principally upon the answer to the question whether the Courts in India will apply them. The Deputy Legal Remembrancer informs me that he has only been able to find two reported cases on the point, both of the Allahabad High Court, in both of which the doctrine of common employment was applied. This seems to show that the courts will apply these doctrines but that the occasions on which they have been asked to do so are extraordinarily few. On the whole, it is doubtful whether there is any pressing need for legislation on the subject.

If it is considered necessary to legislate, I would make one or two recommendations.—(1) The proposed Act should not be in the vague form of the English Act the effect of which is to put the workman in the position of a member of the general public and to leave the courts to decide what that position is. The defences of which it is proposed to deprive the employer should be specifically and definitely stated as was done in the draft clauses included in the Workmen's Compensation Bill. These clauses appear to be very suitable. Some commercial interests objected that the second which deprives the employers of the defence of "assumed risk" was unnecessary in consequence of recent decisions upon the common law, but even if that be the case it is a great gain to have the law set forth in definite and unmistakable terms. If the position is left uncertain it will be a fruitful source of litigation and a great hardship to workmen. Litigation need not be greatly increased by the grant of a new statutory right, if the Act is well drafted, as was shown by the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act.

(2) Employers when consulted in 1922 pressed for a limit to be placed upon their liability as is done by the English Act. As, however, the only purpose of such legislation is now to supplement the Workmen's Compensation Act where the workmen can prove negligence, and to enable him to obtain a larger sum, it would be illogical to make the limit that in force in England, viz., three years' wages, which is less than the compensation payable under the Workmen's Compensation Act for permanent total disablement. If, however, the limit is to be higher, it is for consideration whether it should not be a sliding one having some relation to the extent of disablement. I doubt if there is any real case for a limit at all. The workman is only put into the position of a member of the public, upon whose right there is no limit. There was much misunderstanding of the scope of the English Act at first. It was regarded in some quarters as revolutionary, which of course was absurd, and the limit was probably introduced as a sop to employers. I can see no logical justification for it.

*Extracts from a letter of the Government of Bengal to the Secretary, Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour.*

No. 3954 Com., dated the 2nd August, 1929.

*Proposed Amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.*

2. The scope and character of the amendments tentatively suggested by the Government of India, and the request contained in the last paragraph of their letter that any other amendments that may suggest themselves to the local Government or those consulted by them, should be forwarded with the local Government's reply, require, in effect, a review not only of the principles on which the original Act was framed, but also of its effects.

The Governor in Council has accordingly taken the opportunity of the Government of India's reference not only to reply to the specific issues on which he was asked to offer an opinion but also to review the working of the Act as a whole in the Presidency of Bengal. This letter may, therefore, be regarded as containing the official views of the Government of Bengal on the subject of workmen's compensation for presentation to the coming Royal Commission on Labour.

3. In reviewing the working of the Act during the five years of its currency, the Governor in Council would first remark that it has been an unqualified success. The principle of compensation for accidents was readily accepted by organized industry in this Presidency, a fact which suggests that the Government of India had correctly interpreted the prevailing opinion on the subject when they determined to introduce the measure. The success of the Act is due in the main, to the conservative principles on which it was framed, so far as the scope of its provisions and the scales of compensation are concerned, and to the procedure which was devised with a view to



minimizing litigation. When the original proposals of the Government of India were under discussion, doubts were expressed in several quarters as to whether, in the peculiar circumstances of Indian labour, legislation, which, in better industrially organized countries, had led to much troublesome litigation, could be applied in India with any success. These doubts have been effectively dispelled, for not only has the Act led to no major difficulties with respect to its scope, but the litigation arising from it has been trifling, both in volume and in character. The Act, indeed, so far as litigation is concerned, is perhaps the most successful in the whole range of workmen's compensation legislation, and, in the opinion of this Government the highest credit is due to its original framers for their foresight and sagacity. The ease with which industry has adapted itself to its new duties, and the smoothness with which the official agency of administration created by the Act has worked, are of inestimable value for the future, for, in a subject of this nature, the complications of which have made many employers in other lands so restive, the important stage is the initial one. The Governor in Council is happy to find that in India this stage has been successfully passed, and he trusts that the extension of the Act, which he recommends later in this letter, may be accompanied by the same harmony on the part of both employers and the administration.

4. The figures that have been forwarded annually to the Government of India in the Report of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation show how far the Act has been utilized in this Presidency. A summary of these figures, compiled from all the annual reports hitherto submitted, is appended to this letter, and from this it is clear that knowledge of the Act has spread very rapidly in the short period of its existence. Thus, one application for award of compensation under section 10 was filed in the six months during which the Act was in force in 1924, while the numbers in subsequent years have been: 1925, 26; 1926, 54; 1927, 111; 1928, 121. The total compensation deposited with the commissioner in 1924 was only Rs. 22,642-2 annas. In 1925 it was Rs. 1,05,714-13-9; in 1926, Rs. 1,28,566-1-7 in 1927, Rs. 1,55,340-13-7; and in 1928, Rs. 1,49,873-3-4. It appears clear, however, that knowledge of the Act has not yet spread to all the classes whom it was framed to benefit, and this is particularly obvious in the case of occupational disease. The first occupational disease, a case of lead-poisoning, was reported only in 1927. Three more cases were reported in 1928, and it is significant that all these cases were reported from the one concern, viz., the Bengal Government Press, which, perhaps, is one of the most finely-equipped in India. It is inconceivable that if four cases of lead-poisoning occurred in this press, similar cases should not have occurred in other presses in Bengal, many of which leave much to be desired so far as ventilation, safety and welfare generally are concerned.

5. The experience of the last five years indicates that the extent of the use of the Act depends on several inter-related factors. One is the class from which the workers are drawn; another is the degree to which workers are organized in trade unions; a third is the organization of industry, i.e., whether industry is concentrated or scattered, and a fourth is the extent to which employers voluntarily accepted liability in the early stages of the Act. Thus, in the Ranigunge coalfield, where a large number of the workers are aboriginals, the Act is even now not well known. The commissioner for workmen's compensation reports that the number of agreements presented for registration in the early stages of the Act, arising from accidents to workers in the Ranigunge field, did not approach the number of accidents in which liability was indisputable. Knowledge of the principles of the Act is now extending, partly, it is reported by the Calcutta Claims Bureau, owing to the influence of lawyers, who have been active in filing claims on behalf of clients. Thus, again, in concentrated industries, such as the jute industry, railway workshops, and stevedore labour, the Act has been fully utilized. In all these industries, also, liability was accepted at the very outset by the employers. In the jute industry, also, as in the case of lascars, trade unions have interested themselves in the Act, and have helped not only to secure its benefits for the members, but to spread knowledge of its principles.

6. Two other factors require mention with regard to the extent of the use of the Act. One is the interest which lawyers have shown in it. When the original proposals were under consideration in 1922-23 the opinion was freely voiced that a Workmen's Compensation Act would lead to the growth of a parasitic class of lawyers, who would devote themselves entirely to this type of work, and who would accordingly exert themselves not only to interest workers in their rights, but to initiate litigation. Experience has not borne out this expectation. Lawyers have not been active either in spreading knowledge of the Act or in encouraging litigation, although, as noted above, it has been reported that in the Ranigunge and Jheria coalfields, within the last two years, lawyers have helped in giving publicity to the Act by the filing of claims. The other factor may be termed "natural percolation". During the currency of the Act, hundreds of workmen have received compensation. Most of these, indeed, have at some time or other, appeared personally before the Commissioner, and in this manner not only have other workmen learnt their rights, but also

the method of securing them. It is anticipated that in due course natural percolation of knowledge of the Act will be more effective than any other factor. This, however, will take time. At the present stage, it may generally be said that workers in organized and concentrated industries do know all the circumstances of the Act, but that those employed in isolated areas or in industries, the units of which are small concerns, do not use the Act owing to ignorance. To ignorance, also, must be attributed very largely the fact that the occupational disease provisions of the Act have been so little used during the last five years.

7. A criterion of the efficacy of the Act would be a statistical comparison of the extent of claims actually made with possible claims. No such statistical comparison, however, is possible for the reason that, although it is in the interest of all employers who have insured their risk to see that all *bona fide* claims are paid, employers in a large number of small concerns, such as oil mills, rice mills, printing presses, and iron foundries, have not insured, and it is probable, as indicated above, that in these—particularly in the mofussil areas—workers either do not know their rights, or employers their duties, or that the full legal rights of workmen are compounded for small lump sums. Although no actual statistical comparison can be made, the Calcutta claims bureau has shown that, for insured industries, the percentage of cases in which compensation has been paid, as compared with the total number of possible claims, is steadily increasing, and that the percentage of cases filed as "no claim" is steadily decreasing.

8. The Governor in Council has noted in the correspondence that has resulted from the reference of the Government of India that no voice has been raised against the existing Act as a whole. From this it is safe to infer that the burden of workmen's compensation has not borne heavily upon industry in this Presidency. The cost of the risks, whether insured or uninsured, has been insignificant, as compared with the total cost of production. No case has come to light in which a small concern has been financially handicapped by a large award of compensation. So far as insured employers are concerned, the premia have been based on past experience of risks. The Act has led to little or no increase of work to them, as they have been advised regarding the disposal of every claim by the insurance companies as organized in the Calcutta Claims Bureau.

Uninsured employers have more responsibility under the Act with regard to both procedure and risk, and it is probable that, with increasing knowledge on the part of workmen of their rights under the Act, insurance will become much more general. One effect on industry which should be mentioned is that the safety rules in the larger factories have been more rigidly enforced. Steps have been taken to make it generally known among workmen that disobedience to rules, particularly those regarding the cleaning of machinery in motion, entails forfeiture of the right to compensation. How far this right should be forfeited on the plea of wilful disobedience to such rules is discussed later.

10. Only one other subject has to be discussed in connection with this general review of the Act. This is the machinery of administration. Immediately after the Act was passed, the Government of Bengal decided to appoint a full-time Commissioner for workmen's compensation for the Presidency. They selected a judicial officer of the Indian Civil Service for the post, Mr. M. H. B. Lethbridge, and deputed him to study the subject in England prior to his joining the post. In the short interval between the Act coming into force and Mr. Lethbridge joining his post, from the 1st July to the 14th October, 1924, district judges in the chief industrial districts, the additional district judge of Howrah, and the chief judge of the Court of Small Causes of the town of Calcutta, were appointed commissioners. During this period, however, practically no case arose. Mr. Lethbridge has been in continuous charge of the office ever since, and the Government of Bengal have no hesitation in ascribing the smooth working of the Act to the system of appointing a full-time judicial officer as Commissioner; his work, they would also record with appreciation, has been facilitated by the ready co-operation of the Calcutta Claims Bureau in the disposal of all types of cases. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Calcutta Claims Bureau each has suggested an extension of the system adopted in Bengal in other provinces. The Governor in Council is not concerned with the organization in provinces other than his own, but he may be permitted to state that his experience of the Bengal system of administration entirely bears out the view expressed by these bodies.

11. *The Scope of the Act.*—When the original proposals of the Government of India were under discussion, the Government of Bengal were in entire agreement with the view that the scope of the Act should be limited to those branches of industry which were both organized and hazardous. This limit, determined mainly by

administrative considerations, was regarded as a tentative one only, in view of the fact that the measure of 1923 was of an experimental character. The Government of Bengal have consistently been in favour of the widest possible application of the provisions of the Act. In theory, and this theory should be the ideal to which the Indian legislation should aim, every manual worker should be eligible for compensation for loss of earning power, and dependents for loss of the wage-earner by accident incurred in the course of employment. The Government of Bengal, therefore, think that every reasonable step should be taken as early as practicable to realize the ideal, and they are also of the opinion that, although the period over which the Act has operated is short, the experience of this Presidency, while abundantly justifying the prudence of the Government of India in the framing of the original measure, clearly points to the possibility of a very considerable extension of the classes of workmen to whom the Act applies. The fact that no major difficulty has been encountered in the administration of the Act in Bengal, and that its enforcement has neither borne heavily on industry nor created any disharmony therein indicate that expansion is both called for and possible. The principle of compensation for accidents to workmen has been definitely established in this country, and the very fact that it has been unanimously accepted as just encourages the Government of Bengal to believe that the Government of India would now be justified in extending the Act not only to every organized industry, whether hazardous or not, but also to all industries which, though not so fully organized as those to which the Act was originally applied, could without difficulty be sufficiently organized to bring them within the provisions of the legislation. The Governor in Council is inclined to think that too much emphasis has been laid on this element of organization in connection with workmen's compensation legislation. For the administration of the Act, the most essential procedure on the part of employers is the keeping of a list of names of their workmen. This, as a matter of fact, most of them do for the purpose of paying wages, although in many cases the actual lists are maintained by contractors or sub-contractors. On this assumption, it is regarded as not outside the bounds of possibility even at present to bring all manual workers within the scope of the Act, except agricultural labourers and domestic servants. Such wide extension, however, at one time might probably lead to confusion, and the Government of Bengal would prefer at the present stage to follow the very general criterion which the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which opposes further extension at present on the ground of limited experience of the present Act, has enunciated, namely, that Schedule II should be gradually extended to all workmen engaged in branches of industry which are sufficiently organized to justify the extension. This criterion is a wide one and susceptible of very elastic interpretation, but I am to suggest below a number of classes of workmen which in the opinion of the Governor in Council could, and should, be made eligible for compensation on the ground of "sufficient" organization.

12. Before giving these classes I am to say that His Excellency in Council is glad to note, that in the many replies that he has received on the subject, very little notice has been taken of one consideration mentioned by the Government of India, namely, that the employer in an unorganized industry is not, as a rule, in a position to pay compensation for serious accidents. This plea he entirely rejects; he regards compensation for accidents, whether paid direct by employers or indirectly through insurance premia, as a normal charge on all industries, and the extension of the Act to small industries, he considers, would not only bring employers to a realization of their duties towards their employees, but would also encourage them to provide proper safety appliances and to learn wider lessons of business organization. The same arguments, the Governor in Council would point out, were used in the initial stages of factory legislation in India, when it was freely contended that limitation of hours or compulsory provision of safety devices would ruin industry in India, both great and small. Factory legislation has had no such evil result, and the extension of the Factories Act is no longer opposed on such grounds. Once the first Factories Act was passed in India, it soon became apparent that the worst abuses of labour were on premises not within the scope of the Act, and reputable employers learnt that the best safeguard to good conditions in their own factories was the extension of the Factories Act to smaller factories where unscrupulous employers competed with them on unfair terms. Similarly, with respect to compensation for accidents, His Excellency in Council is of the opinion that the plea that the small man cannot afford to pay his just dues to his workmen is not sustainable. The small employer has no superior claim to the large employer in respect to normal obligations towards his labourers; his limited resources give him no prior right to force his employees to work in bad surroundings with unguarded machinery. He must, therefore, be prepared to pay such charges as the community prescribes to be just, otherwise he must stay out of or leave industry altogether.

13. With respect to the extension of Schedule II, I am to say that the Governor in Council has had some difficulty in reducing the many suggestions which have been communicated to him to workable limits, but he would note that the fact that

so many suggestions have been received is a very suggestive indication of the readiness with which the social consciousness accepts the inherent justice of the principles enshrined in the Act. After analysis of the suggestions, and an examination of the various classes of workers employed in Bengal, he recommends for insertion in Schedule II the following :—

(i) Workers on plantations ; (ii) dock workers ; (iii) all Government, municipal, district and local board employees, " employed " in the general sense of Section 2(n)(ii) of the Act ; (iv) all manual workers, not otherwise covered, engaged in connection with the generation or distribution of electrical energy ; (v) all persons engaged as drivers or conductors of motor transport, and all persons engaged in the repair of motor vehicles who are not otherwise covered by the Act ; (vi) all employees engaged in constructing, maintaining, altering or repairing aerial ropeways ; (vii) all employees engaged in the maintenance, repair or demolition of buildings more than one storey above ground level (as at present) or any permanent bridge ; (viii) employees on all inland steam vessels ; (ix) employees on flats, barges or other means of river transport, owned or used by registered factories, or public authorities or registered in the port of Chittagong or Calcutta, and of ferries, subject to the Bengal Ferries Act (No. 1 of 1885), or to the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884 (as amended up to 15th December, 1927) ; (x) employees in all printing presses, whether these presses are statutory factories or not ; (xi) employees engaged in earth works and excavations, exceeding 20 feet or more below the level of the adjacent ground, and in quarries ; (xii) employees in brickmaking works ; (xiii) employees engaged in the construction, maintenance and repair of canals, locks, sluices, regulators, head-works and siphons ; (xiv) employees in factories which are declared by local governments as factories under Section 2 (3) (b) of the Indian Factories Act.

17. In summing up the above proposals, I am to say that the Governor in Council does not anticipate any insuperable difficulty in extending the Act to the classes of workmen recommended above. Such extension is not only just in itself, but it will also perform the useful social function of educating employers not at present covered by the Act in their duties towards their employees. It will also aid in the promotion of better organization of industry in general. His Excellency in Council has been impressed by the very liberal attitude which employers whom he has consulted have adopted towards the scope of the Act, and he is convinced that where unforeseen difficulties are met with in future, Government will meet with ready co-operation from employers in devising means to surmount them. He is not persuaded that as the Government of India say, the wide extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act depends on compulsory insurance. Were this the case, probably no extension would be possible for many years to come. On the other hand, he is of the view that only by extension of the Act will insurance become general, for, in the case of many small employers, only experience will compel them to insure. The lack of such insurance, moreover, he considers no reason for refusing to extend what is an accepted principle of elementary justice to manual workers as a whole.

18. One subject remains to be discussed in connection with the scope of the Act ; that is the inclusion of lascars. In this case, there is no dispute in principle. No one has doubted the injustice of lascars being under legislation, which, in the great majority of cases, they cannot use, and complete proof of this lies in the readiness with which the shipping companies have accepted the suggestion that the Indian scales of compensation should be included in the Articles of Agreement. The position, however, is still unsatisfactory, for the reasons given by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.

19. Two courses are possible to remedy this position ; one is that the British Government be asked to pass the necessary legislation to exclude lascars from British legislation, the other is to amend the pertinent sections of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act relative to agreements so as to give the lascar exactly the same position with relation to compensation as other Indian workers. The local Government prefer the second course, if it is within the competence of the Indian legislature. The fact that all shipping companies have voluntarily adopted the stipulation in the Articles shows that commercial opinion would readily favour this course ; moreover this solution would also guarantee to the lascar the benefits of the Indian Act when he was engaged on a foreign vessel.

20. The next question which the Government of India ask on the scope of the Act is " Should any provisions be introduced for securing workmen against possible loss by reason of the inability of their employer to pay any compensation that may be due ? "

This question has already been partially answered. The Governor in Council does not believe that the further extension of the Act, especially to the industries to which he recommends it should now be made applicable, depends on compulsory

insurance, nor does he agree that the extension of the Act even to quite unorganized industries should be limited by this consideration. He is of the view that, till the habit of voluntary insurance is fairly general, it would be useless to attempt to introduce compulsory insurance. Voluntary insurance is by no means general in India, but the general diffusion of a liability to pay relatively large sums of money, which liability can be guarded against by the payment of small recurring sums, would, in his opinion, do much to encourage the habit of insurance. Moreover, the Governor in Council is not prepared to admit that, till the various Governments of India and the Government of India themselves are prepared to administer insurance direct on a national scale, any system of social insurance should be made compulsory.

21. With regard to the specific issue before him, the great majority of those whom His Excellency in Council has consulted agree that the introduction of any system of compulsory insurance is impossible, although quite a number recommend that guarantees, similar to those already contained in section 14 of the Act, should be given. The most important fact bearing on this subject, however, is that, on the evidence of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in Bengal and of the Calcutta Claims Bureau, not a single case has so far come to light in this Presidency in which a workman has failed to get the compensation due to him. The statements of these authorities apply both to insured and uninsured employees. Hence, even though the Act has been in operation only five years, there appears to be no case for the introduction of special provisions to guarantee workmen. His Excellency in Council would particularly invite attention to the clean record of employers for these years, which, in his opinion, is a clear justification for recommending the widest possible extension to the Act to other branches of industry.

22. The third and fourth questions asked by the Government of India arise from the scales of compensation. The first is to what extent, if any, should recurring payments be substituted for the lump sums at present payable under the Act. As The Government of India point out, the most striking feature of the Act is the preference it shows for lump-sum payments. Such payments apply in the case of both complete permanent and partial permanent disablement. In the case of temporary disablement, allowances are payable at intervals, but there are provisions for commutation. In the case of lump sums payable to a woman or to a person under a legal disability, the Commissioner is empowered to exercise his discretion as to the method of disposing of the compensation.

23. From the mass of opinions which have been submitted to him on the general issue, His Excellency in Council notes a very big majority in favour of recurring payments. In particular, the preponderating opinion of district officers is in favour of this principle, and in most of the instances where they have rejected it, they have been influenced solely by administrative convenience. The registered trade unions also favour recurring payments. In some cases, a half-way system has been suggested, that a proportion of the compensation be paid as a lump sum, and the remainder invested. Employers mainly favour the lump-payment system, though in their case, again, the main influence has been administrative convenience. Suggestions have been made on several sides, including employers, that commissioners for workmen's compensation should be given discretion to pay lump or recurring sums. The consensus of opinion is to the effect that periodical payments are theoretically desirable, but that lump payments are administratively more feasible.

24. The Governor in Council has been particularly impressed by the views of the commissioner for workmen's compensation and the Calcutta claims bureau on this subject. They declare with emphasis that the lump-sum system has been largely responsible for the smooth working of the Act. The commissioner says—“The system of lump-sum payment for permanent disablement is largely responsible for the smooth working of the Act, and the unexpectedly small volume of litigation to which it has given rise”; and the Calcutta claims bureau says—“Too much emphasis cannot be given to the fact that one of the main reasons why the present Act has worked so smoothly and has been so remarkably free from difficulty, is the principle of paying lump sum compensation as opposed to pensions. If this principle were changed, it is extremely likely that considerable difficulty and litigation would arise.” The commissioner recognizes that recurring payments are a more efficient form of compensation, but the Calcutta claims bureau believes that lump-sum payment is quite suitable for the Indian workman, as it enables him to return to his village and buy land or engage in some form of business. The bureau does not agree with the usual charge of improvidence made against Indian workmen. The Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation analyses with care the individual items on which lump payment is possible, and he comes to the following conclusion :—

“I am of opinion that lump-sum compensation should be retained in the case of fatal accidents. Though I have given much thought to the matter, I can devise no workable intermediate scheme between the present and a provision of the British type. For permanent partial disablement, I would also retain lump-sum compensation, but for permanent total disablement I recommend the introduction of pensions.”

25. The Governor in Council has devoted much thought to the Commissioner's opinion, and while not opposing it entirely, he is not disposed to press it. He recognizes that in an issue of this kind it is exceedingly difficult to dogmatize, particularly as it involves some fine points of social philosophy with respect to the extent to and manner in which the Government should interfere with the allocation of what is the legal and just due of an insured workman, or the dependents of a workman who has been killed. At the present stage of the Act's existence, he thinks that the proof furnished regarding the lack of litigation merits great weight, especially as he considers that a considerable extension of the Act is desirable. He has carefully considered the suggestion that commissioners should be given discretion to give lump sums or to invest the proceeds in all cases, and not only in those which the amending Act of 1929 empowers them to do. He has, however, come to the conclusion that, in view of the limited currency of the present Act and of the desirability of extending it as far as possible in the shortest possible period, first regard must be paid to administrative convenience. It has been conclusively proved that the present system works well; he, therefore, favours its continuance, even although the form of compensation may not be in every case the most effective. He recommends that, in the case of death and permanent partial disablement, lump-sum payment be retained, as in the Act; he also prefers this course in the case of permanent total disablement, although he would not oppose a provision to the effect that the commissioner should be given discretion to give lump-sum payments or recurring payments, especially if other provinces were of this opinion. He recognizes the force of the commissioner's contention that it would provide some test of the feasibility of pensions in India, but he doubts if, on the present scales of compensation, the recurring payments would be sufficiently big to confer greater material benefit on the disabled workman than lump payments would. Whichever system is adopted, I am to emphasize, that, if pensions are permissible, the onus of distribution must in all cases rest on the commissioner, as it is essential for the smooth working of the Act that the liability of employers be discharged completely in the most expeditious manner possible.

26. The second question connected with the scales of compensation, which the Government of India have raised, is, "Should the scales of compensation be enhanced either for the more poorly-paid workman or in general?" In this connection, the Government of India invite attention to the Recommendation of the Seventh International Labour Conference, and point out that, were it adopted, the scales in India would have to be raised in the case of temporary incapacity; substantial enhancements probably would also result in the case of permanent incapacity or death. The Government of India think that probably an enhancement would be justified in the case of more poorly-paid workmen, and that, whether the scales in general were raised or not, the minimum scales of compensation resulting from the application of Schedule IV of the Act might suitably be raised.

27. On the question of the revision of scales, there has been much divergence of opinion among those who have replied to the reference of the local Government on the subject. District Officers, Government authorities, and trade unions generally favour enhancement of the scales on the lines of the Geneva Recommendation. The Calcutta claims bureau, a small number of district officers, and some of the commercial bodies, oppose any enhancement. The commissioner for workmen's compensation is inclined to think that, in the case of temporary disablement, the compensation might be raised to two-thirds of the pre-accident wages. This, he thinks, is justified on the ground that many employers already give full wages during temporary disablement. Were this accepted, proportionate enhancement of lump sums payable for death and permanent disablement would follow. The Governor in Council has been particularly impressed by the volume of opinion expressed in favour of raising rates for the more poorly-paid workman. It is clear that in this respect the Government of India have correctly interpreted the prevailing opinion on the subject. In particular, the local commercial bodies have expressed very liberal views and His Excellency in Council has no hesitation in accepting the Government of India's provisional opinion. The method of enforcement which he recommends is that suggested by the commissioner for workmen's compensation, viz., that the scale of assumed wages should be arranged in the following manner:—

|  | Assumed wages. |
|--|----------------|
|  | Rs.            |
| Wages less than Rs. 12 .. .. .                     | 12             |
| Wages not less than Rs. 12 but less than Rs. 20 .. | 20             |
| Wages not less than Rs. 20 but less than Rs. 25 .. | 25             |

and so on by fives up to the present maximum. This scale not only provides more ample compensation for the more poorly-paid workmen, but also prevents the "writing down" of wages generally.

28. On the issue of general enhancement, I am to say that the views of the Governor in Council have been determined mainly by his recommendations regarding the extension of the Act. These views, more than once voiced in previous paragraphs, have been clearly enunciated in connection with the scales of compensation in the letter of Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, Chairman of the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta, who says—"There would, however, appear to be a practical objection to any increase, if the extension of the Act to more workmen is held not to be feasible on account of the poverty of employers. Any increase in the amount of compensation would increase the difficulties of extension, and it is more important that the scope of the Act should be widened, and that more should benefit by it rather than that the benefits obtained by a few should be enhanced."

Were the scope of the existing Act to remain unaltered, His Excellency in Council would have no hesitation in recommending enhancement of the scales to the Geneva level, which, in his opinion, adequately represents what compensation for accidents should be, and to which, he considers, the Indian scales should gradually be raised. He is persuaded that employers who come under the Act at present would not object to general enhancement of the scales, as he has been informed that in many instances the actual scales prescribed in the Act result in smaller compensation being actually paid than what was paid on a voluntary basis before the Act came into force. At the present stage, however, he is more concerned with the general diffusion of benefits than with their increase. He would, therefore, confine enhancements entirely to the more poorly-paid workmen and leave the other scales as they are. He recognizes the force of the frequently voiced argument that the extension of the Act to small industries may cause hardships. This plea, as has already been pointed out, he does not accept as a reason for not extending the Act, but he agrees that the imposition of what is usually looked upon as a burden in the early stages should be tempered with reason. The existing scales are not unreasonable, and the benefits arising from them would be very appreciable in occupations where they do not exist at present. The view of His Excellency in Council, therefore, is that extension should come before enhancement, and he is persuaded that in presenting this view he is correctly representing the views of the informed public from which he has sought advice.

29. The next question on which the Government of India desire the views of the local Government is "Should the waiting period be reduced either generally, or in the case of those workmen who are disabled for more than ten days; and, if so, to what extent?"

Various variations of the "dating back" systems have been recommended; one district officer, for example, suggests a sliding scale, whereby a workman who joins his work on the 11th day after injury will get compensation on the 9th day; if he joins on the 12th day, he will get compensation on the 8th day; if on the 13th, he will get compensation from the 7th; and so on, so that a man who is disabled for more than 19 days, will get payment from the first day. Several suggestions have been made regarding sliding scales of some kind, but if the temptation to malingering is the chief argument against "dating back," then it applies to all these systems. On the evidence before him, His Excellency is not persuaded that the Workmen's Compensation Act has led to malingering in India. Indeed, he has evidence to the contrary, but he objects to the "dating back" system not only because of the danger to malingering, but also because it would not be so simple to administer as the clear-cut waiting-period. The main body of commercial opinion also favours the shortening of the waiting-period, though a strong minority lends considerable support to the "dating back" system. The commissioner for workmen's compensation and the Calcutta Claims Bureau both support the shortening of the waiting-period, as does also the Chief Inspector of Mines in India. On reviewing the evidence as a whole, His Excellency in Council prefers the shorter waiting-period not only for the reasons given above, but also for the fact that the experience of Great Britain is against the "dating back" system, as also is that of America. He recommends that the period be reduced from 10 to 7 days—a reduction which, as is evident from the views he has received, will be accepted readily by commercial opinion. It will also bring the period into line with the waiting-periods adopted in a great body of European and American legislation.

31. The Government of India proceed to enunciate a series of questions on the subject of dependants, the first of which is "should the list of relatives entitled to claim compensation be enlarged?" The second "Should proof of dependancy be required in order to enable a relative to claim compensation?" And the third, "Should the compensation payable vary with the number of dependants and the extent of their dependancy on the deceased workman?"

32. As the Government of India point out, the provisions of the Act relating to dependants were framed mainly to avoid administrative difficulties; hence a certain

amount of arbitrariness in the operation of the provisions was not improbable. Experience in this Presidency has so far shown that the amount of arbitrariness has been negligible; hence, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, there is no urgent need to alter the existing provisions. His Excellency in Council considers that in this, as in other problems connected with the Act, the issue is between what is theoretically desirable and what is administratively convenient. In India a good theoretical case could be made out for amounts of compensation varying according to the number of dependants; administratively such a system would at the present stage of social organization be quite impossible; hence the Governor in Council has no hesitation in answering the third question of the series in the negative. As regards the first two questions he has also been guided by what in the view of his expert technical advisers is administratively feasible for, as has been already pointed out more than once, he is eager to secure extension of the existing benefits under a system which has already been proved workable before approaching the question of theoretical perfection. At present, the commissioner has full discretion to award compensation to any of the dependants, as defined by the Act. This discretion has in this Presidency been fairly exercised, and it may be assumed that it will continue to be fairly exercised in the future. The provision has led to no administrative difficulty; therefore, the local Government think that it should be continued, and they are of opinion that so long as the discretion at present vested in the commissioner continues, it is not of fundamental importance how many relatives are included in the definition of dependants. The limitation of their number, however, adds to the simplicity of administration. Hence, so far as the number of possible dependants is concerned, the criterion which, in the opinion of the local Government, should be adopted is the minimum number consistent with what experience proves to be just, having regard to the family conditions of workers and to the absence of proof of dependency. On this basis, accepting the advice of the commissioner for workmen's compensation, His Excellency in Council recommends that widowed sisters and widowed daughters be included. This he notes is also the view of the Calcutta Claims Buresu, and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. He is doubtful about recommending the inclusion of step-relatives, as suggested by the commissioner; the single instance he quotes is not sufficient proof of the necessity of such inclusion, and His Excellency in Council while not absolutely opposing the recommendation, would not support its inclusion, unless the experience of other provinces in India justified it.

33. From what has been said in the preceding paragraph, it will be inferred that the local Government oppose proof of dependence. Theoretically, such proof is no doubt advisable; actually, it would lead to litigation and delays almost too alarming to contemplate. The Governor in Council unhesitatingly opposes the inclusion in the Act of such proof, not only in the interests of administration, but also on behalf of workers dependants. One of the main features in the life of the Act so far has been its freedom from litigation; in the interests of all concerned, every endeavour should be made to conserve this feature, even at the expense of what may seem to be theoretically desirable, for quickness in the disposal of cases and freedom from legal fees is much more in the interests of workers' families in India than technical judgments on degrees of dependence, and I am to add, this consideration is of vital importance to workers in this Presidency, a very large proportion of whom are immigrants from other provinces. In their case, proof of dependence, in all probability, would lead to complications which in many cases would render entirely nugatory the benefits which the legislation was brought into existence to confer. Were proof of dependence insisted on, the Governor in Council would commend the views of the commissioner for workmen's compensation, who suggest that, at least in the case of widows and children, dependence should be presumed, but that the presumption should be rebuttable. This would mean that, normally, women and children could be awarded compensation, unless the employers or others could prove that they were not dependent on the deceased workman. If proof were required in every case, much hardship would result to women and children, for, as the commissioner points out, they might think it necessary to engage lawyers to establish their claims. Were the onus of proof placed on the person denying a widow's or children's dependence, the probability is that there would be few contested cases. But, as already indicated, the Governor in Council is opposed to proof of dependence of any kind at the present stage.

34. In the succeeding series of questions asked by the Government of India on section 12 of the Act, there is no principle of compensation involved. The entire difficulty has arisen through a decision of the Calcutta High Court to the effect that, while section 12 of the Act, permits indemnification of principals by contractors, it does not permit indemnification from sub-contractors for compensation awarded for injury sustained by a sub-contractor's workman. The Government of India enquire whether section 12 of the Act should be amended:—(a) so as to place the



ultimate liability for compensation on the person directly employing the workman in every case; or (b) so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the principal; or (c) in any other manner.

35. From the opinions which have been expressed on this question, His Excellency in Council notes a preponderance in favour of making the principal solely liable for compensation, but I am to invite the attention of the Government of India very particularly to the carefully considered opinion of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, on this subject.

The suggestion of the Commissioner His Excellency commends to the attention of Government of India, but, while it may be declaratory of the present law, so far as some contractors and sub-contractors are concerned, it does not cover cases of *bona fide* sub-contracts and, in such cases, the Governor in Council prefers placing liability on the principal, the workman being given no election in the matter at all. He also considers it just that the liability should be passed on, but in this case, as the Bengal Chamber of Commerce points out, the issue is not of material importance, as the conditions of contract are adjusted accordingly.

36. The tenth question asked by the Government of India refers to the returns to be submitted under section 16 of the Act. They enquire "Should any penalty be provided in the Act for failure to comply with the provisions of section 16?" They also enquire whether employers should be required to submit returns of accidents in respect of which compensation has not been paid, and, if so, to what accidents this provision should apply. The Government of India point out that at present employers, who intentionally fail to furnish returns, can be prosecuted under section 176, Indian Penal Code, although it has been urged that the difficulty of proving intention renders this section insufficient for the purpose. So far as the experience of this Presidency is concerned, there is no need for such a penal clause, but the Governor in Council considers that, though it has not been proved necessary in Bengal, the administration of the Act as a whole throughout India would probably be facilitated by a penal provision of the nature suggested in paragraph 11 of the Government of India's letter. He notes, indeed, that the Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce support the inclusion of such a provision, although their support arises from an entirely different reason, that, as it is mostly uninsured employers who fail to send returns, a penal provision would form an inducement to such employers insuring against workmen's compensation claims.

37. So far as the second part of this question is concerned, the Governor in Council notes a general—indeed, an almost universal—expression of opinion among those he has consulted that such returns should not be required, except in the case of fatal accidents. He agrees that the submission of returns regarding all accidents would impose a tax on employers not commensurate with the results to be obtained. Employers are already under heavy obligations with respect to accident returns to several Government departments, e.g., the factory, electricity, and mines departments, and, though workmen's compensation extends beyond the industries covered by the Factories, Electricity and Mines Acts, nevertheless, the enforcement of general returns is open to the overwhelming objection already anticipated by the Government of India. On the other hand, the local Government support compulsory returns for fatal accidents—a course suggested by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, and supported by the Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Fatal accidents are already reportable to various authorities, and little inconvenience will be caused by a copy of the report being sent to the appropriate Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.

38. In paragraph 13 of their letter, the Government of India request the views of the local Government on the following question:—

"Should a dependant claiming compensation be relieved of the necessity of approaching the employer for the settlement of his claim?"

39. A minority of those consulted by the local Government think that the existing procedure should not be disturbed; the great majority, including the principal commercial bodies, agree with the opinion of the Government of India. In practice, no difficulty has been experienced on this score by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in Bengal, who reports as follows:—

"I have always read the section as meaning, in the case of fatal accidents, that the employer should be given an opportunity of depositing by consent without issue of summons, and have always endeavoured to secure this, either by referring dependants to the employer or by intervening informally before issuing summons."

As the Commissioner points out, the difficulty will disappear if fatal accidents are reported, together with an admission or denial of the employer's liability; but in order to make the matter perfectly plain, I am to say that the Governor in Council recommends that the Act be amended in the manner suggested by the Government of India.

40. The Government of India also ask what steps should be taken to ensure that dependants, who may have valid claims for compensation, do not lose compensation through ignorance of their rights. They say that it has been suggested that the Commissioner might be empowered to institute proceedings where, through ignorance, no claim is made by an insured person or by his dependants. As against this suggestion, there is the obvious objection that it practically makes the Commissioner, who is a judicial officer, a party to the proceedings. The Governor in Council, agreeing with the majority of opinions expressed in reply to his reference on this subject, thinks that this objection is fundamental, and that the idea should not be further pursued. The solution of the difficulty appears to him to lie in the subsequent proposal of the Government of India, which has been generally approved by responsible opinion in Bengal, that fatal accidents should be reportable with the necessary particulars, and that, where no compensation is deposited, the Commissioner may be empowered to intimate to dependants that it is open to them to take action under the Act. Such intimation would not prejudice the judicial position of the Commissioner. I am in this connection to invite the attention of the Government of India to the views expressed by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, on the subject.

(*Vide* remarks under " Question 13 " in his letter).

I am to say that the Governor in Council approves of the views of the Commissioner, as regards both principle and detail; he does not, however, favour the intervention of other departmental officers, such as Inspectors of Factories and Inspectors of Mines, in workmen's compensation cases, as he considers it undesirable that these officers, whose functions with relation to employers are entirely different, should be brought into the administration of the Workmen's Compensation Act at all.

41. The fourteenth question asked by the Government of India is " Should employers be required to maintain a register of relatives of their workmen ? "

42. The Governor in Council has carefully considered the point of view of the Government of India and has come to the conclusion that, at the present stage, it would not be wise to insist on registers of relatives. This conclusion he has come to reluctantly, purely on the ground of practicability. The maintenance of such registers is very desirable, for not only would they conduce to the better working of the Workmen's Compensation Act, but they would also lead to greater systematization in the control of labour personnel in general than at present. Employers unanimously and emphatically protest against the suggestion of the Government of India. Their protest has the support of many district officers and even of trade unions, but the opinion to which His Excellency in Council gives most weight is that of the department in this presidency which has had most experience of employment registers. The Chief Inspector of Factories writes :—" It is very doubtful if a register of dependants would, or could, be maintained in such a manner that it would be reliable and useful, particularly in respect of casual, contract, and migratory labour, and I consider, on the whole, that it would be impracticable."

44. It is possible that the maintenance of addresses will gradually be adopted in the better regulated industries of their own initiative, but till a tendency towards such better regulation of labour personnel has definitely set in, the Governor in Council considers that the inclusion of a compulsory provision regarding registration would be unduly oppressive. He would not, however, oppose the inclusion of a reserve power in the Act, e.g., in section 32, for the purpose of requiring the maintenance of home addresses.

45. The fifteenth question asked by the Government of India is " Should Commissioners be empowered to call on employers depositing inadequate compensation for fatal accidents to make a further deposit ? " The Government of India point out that at present, where the amount deposited in the case of a fatal accident is inadequate, the Commissioner cannot take steps till an application is made by a dependant. In practice, in Bengal, the procedure which has been followed is the same as that which is now suggested by the Government of India; the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, indeed, doubts if an amendment of the Act is necessary.

Practically everyone whom the Governor in Council has consulted accepts the principle that Commissioners should be empowered to call on a further deposit where inadequate compensation has been deposited, in cases of fatal accidents, and I am to say that he accepts the amendment suggested by the Government of India.

46. The final specific issue on which the Government of India request the views of the local Government is " Should provision be made for the suspension of distribution by the Commissioner, pending the disposal of an appeal against his decision ? " The Government of India point out that section 8 (1) of the Act does not prescribe any particular period during which payment must be made by the Commissioner,

but that it is doubtful whether, without statutory authority, he can withhold the payments for the period necessary for the decision of a disputed issue by the High Court. It is suggested, therefore, that the Act may be amended so as to empower the commissioner to withhold payments in cases where an appeal has been filed against the decision. Similarly, the Government of India suggest that High Courts might be empowered to order that, pending their decision on a particular case, distribution should be suspended.

47. The views of the Government of India have been generally supported in Bengal; indeed, as in the preceding issue, their suggestions represent what has been the actual practice in Bengal.

The Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce both support the suggestions of the Government of India, which are also accepted by the local Government.

48. The Government of India also ask that other amendments, which may suggest themselves to local Governments, or to those consulted by them, should be forwarded. Several such suggestions have been received from the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Calcutta Claims Bureau, and the Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union.

Some of the proposals have been submitted by one or more of the above mentioned agencies, and the local Government would invite particular attention to the suggestion which has been made by the Commissioner, the Claims Bureau, and the Chamber of Commerce, with regard to the appointment of medical referees. The Commissioner points out that at present it is very difficult to settle claims in which there is any difference of medical opinion, without recourse to formal proceedings. If such proceedings are instituted, medical men have to be brought to court of examination, in some cases, a medical man has to be called on to sit as medical assessor. It is the opinion of the Commissioner, as also of the Calcutta Claims Bureau and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, that disposal of cases would be much facilitated, were the Commissioner enabled to refer the parties to a medical referee on whose report the Commissioner could take action. The local Government support the Commissioner's views and recommend that the appropriate provision be made when the Act is amended.

50. I am to invite the attention of the Government of India to the series of suggestions, some of them of a far-reaching character, which has been made by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation regarding the defences which an employer should be allowed to plead and the existing provisions of the Act bearing on disease. With regard to the defences which an employer may plead, a subject also raised by the Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union, the Commissioner makes out a very good case. He proposes to abolish the defences at present permissible under section 3 (1) (b) (i) (ii) and (iii), of the Act in the case of death, permanent total disablement and permanent partial disablement assessed at 50 per cent. of the permanent total disablement. His proposals he supports from his own experience; in the cases where he has found wilful disobedience proved, he felt, although on the evidence he could not find otherwise, that at least in some cases injustice was done. For the actual details of the instances, I am to refer to the appropriate passages in his letter. The abolition of such defences is, as the Commissioner points out, in accordance with the trend of most modern legislation and in conformity with the general principle of occupational risk, that in the conditions of modern industry results of misconduct and negligence are often so terrible that it is unjust that the workman or his dependants should bear the whole burden. The Commissioner also points out that even were these defences abolished, an employer could still rely in cases on the defence that an accident did not arise out of the employment.

51. I am to say that the Governor in Council has had some difficulty in reaching a conclusion on the Commissioner's recommendations. He is doubtful about abolishing the defences of section 3 (1) (b) (i), i.e., the influence of drink or drugs; on the other hand, he is inclined to support the recommendation with regard to wilful disobedience to orders and wilful removal of safety devices, especially as the proposal restricts the abolition of the existing pleas to very serious cases. He feels convinced that wilfulness is not a just plea with respect to actions which may cost workmen their limbs, eyesight, or even their lives, and, though he has only the limited experience of the Act in this Presidency on which to form a judgment, he is disposed to think that the nature of accidents in this country would not, on grounds either of justice or of humanity, justify the rejection of compensation on the grounds given in section 3 (1) (b) (ii) and (iii). The Commissioner's views he recommends to the consideration of the coming Royal Commission on Labour.

52. The Commissioner's recommendations regarding disease are equally carefully presented. He points out that under section 3 (4) of the Act no compensation is payable to a workman in respect of any disease, unless the disease is solely and directly attributable to a specific injury by accident, and that, if the section is narrowly interpreted, the restrictions imposed by Indian legislation go far beyond those imposed by English legislation. He thinks that these restrictions might be relaxed without fear of administrative difficulties. In particular, he thinks that compensation should be made payable for exposure diseases to the extent it is payable in England, and also that compensation for infections should not be restricted to those solely and directly attributed to accidents. He points out that if a man suffers from extensive laceration, it appears unjust to deny him compensation for infection, simply because the germ did not enter the wound when the laceration was inflicted. I am to say that the Governor in Council is disposed to favour the above suggestions on general grounds. The experience in this Presidency of the occupational-disease provisions of the Act, has, however, as already indicated in this letter, been very limited, and the Commissioner's suggestions could more appropriately be considered by the Royal Commission.

Letter dated the 1st May, 1929, from M. H. B. Lethbridge, Esq., I.C.S., Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce Department.

#### *Extension of the Scope of the Act.*

*Question 1.*—(1) The language by which factory workers are included does not cover workmen employed on outside jobs, in particular workmen sent out to fit or repair machinery, drivers of lorries, and crews of steam launches attached to jute mills and presses. Workmen employed for the purpose of making earth works and excavations, such as docks, should be included and I should like to see the Act extended to cover all the coolies employed in and about docks transporting merchandise for import or export, but not actually loading or unloading ships. I understand that one firm in Calcutta employs no less than 10,000 and the work is certainly hazardous. The difficulty in this case is to frame a suitable definition.

(2) This opportunity should be taken to include lascars. The present position is most unsatisfactory. It is true that all firms employing lascars have agreed to insert in their articles of agreement the stipulation suggested by the Government of India. The Commissioner's position in dealing with cases under the stipulation, however, is that of a private arbitrator with no legal standing. His statutory jurisdiction cannot be extended by contract. He has therefore no power to compel attendance, to prosecute for perjury or to enforce an award. There has hitherto been no difficulty under these three heads, but there are two points which have caused some trouble. (i) It is very doubtful if, after a lascar has accepted payment, the Commissioner can object to the amount as insufficient, even if the lascar brings the question up. (ii) In fatal accidents where there is no dispute the employer is not bound to deposit. In both connections the lascars' rights are inferior to those of a workman under the Act, since the amount paid need not come under the scrutiny of the Commissioner, I strongly recommend that the matter be taken up again with the Home Government with a view to bringing lascars under the Indian Act.

(3) I agree that any wide extension of the definition of workman would be impracticable without compulsory insurance and I do not think a general scheme of compulsory insurance could be administered in India.

*Question 2.*—There has been no case hitherto in Bengal of a workman failing to obtain the compensation awarded to him by reason of the insolvency of his employer. Unless, therefore, the scope of the Act is widely extended, I do not consider it necessary to insert any further provision for securing the workmen's compensation.

*Question 3.*—The system of lump sum payment for permanent disablement is largely responsible for the smooth working of the Act, and the unexpectedly small volume of litigation to which it has given rise. On the other hand recurring payments are a more efficient form of compensation.

In the case of permanent total disablement and of dependants, I think it is a straight issue between these two considerations, administrative convenience versus efficient compensation, uncomplicated by any other factor.

In the case of permanent partial disablement there are two other factors which I submit require consideration. On the one hand, lump sum payment has a very valuable effect in discouraging malingering, and what is much commoner than wilful malingering, the lack of will to get well, dwelling on symptoms and unintentional aggravation of disability that so often accompanies a persisting right to compensation.

Doctors constantly recommend immediate settlement as the surest method of promoting recovery and minimizing permanent ill effects. This is especially the case with fractures, where use of the injured limb is all-important. Communication, unless both parties agree, cannot usually be effected soon enough for the purpose.

The disadvantage on the other hand of lump sum payment is that the healing period, during which the workman is totally disabled, is ignored. This period may vary greatly in length, but if the ultimate result is the same, compensation is the same. I think this is a very real hardship, but it seems to be a necessary feature of the system.

These two considerations unfortunately tend to neutralize one another. On the balance, however, bearing in mind administrative convenience, I think that the interests of both employers and workmen would best be served by a continuance of lump sum payment for partial permanent disablement though as regards workmen the question is by no means free from doubt.

Where the workman is permanently and totally disabled, I think a pension is much the most desirable form of compensation and administrative difficulties would not be serious. The number of cases is not large, and as liability ends only with the workman's death, an annuity could be bought for him. These considerations apply with even greater force where the workman is so disabled as to need the constant help of an attendant.

In the case of dependants the question is very difficult, and Question 3 cannot be discussed apart from Questions 7 and 8.

I should very much like to see pensions for widows. If the small sum at present payable be invested by the commissioner and monthly remittances sent, the whole capital is exhausted in a few years. If the whole sum be handed over to the widow there is no security that it will be used for her maintenance. Efficient compensation, particularly of a young Hindu widow, seems to me impossible by means of a lump sum.

On the other hand if pensions are introduced at all, or any differentiation made between classes of dependants, I can see no halting place short of a provision like that of the British Act, in which compensation varies with the number of dependants, and proof of dependence is required. The two desiderata as I have said are efficient compensation and efficient administration. A clear-cut provision with a well defined policy can be arrived at by concentrating on either. Concentration on the latter resulted in the present provision with its invariable lump sum and presumed dependence, which has worked very smoothly. There has been no difficulty or delay in awarding dependants what the law provides, though this may be an arbitrary amount which cannot be adjusted to individual needs and may be very generous or totally inadequate. Concentration on the former would yield a provision admirably adapted to meet individual cases, the compensation varying with the number and needs of the dependants, but almost impossible to administer in a country like India. The door would be opened to infinite disputes and probably to malpractices as well, and the present smooth working of the Act in fatal cases would be gone for ever. I am aware that prophets of evil have been proved wrong before in connection with the Act, but this was attributable to just such arbitrary features as would have to be abandoned. If the fact of dependence were disputed, the evidence for and against would be very difficult to test, and to assess the extent of dependence would be wellnigh hopeless, especially where the joint family system prevails. If every additional dependant meant more money, personation might become common, cousins being represented as full brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces as children, and so on. In such cases unless the employer undertook the trouble and expense of fighting the claim, there would be no opposition.

For these reasons I am of opinion that lump sum compensation should be retained in the case of fatal accidents. Though I have given much thought to the matter I can devise no workable intermediate scheme between the present and a provision of the British type. For permanent partial disablement I would also retain lump sum compensation, but for permanent total disablement I recommend the introduction of pensions. Incidentally this would provide some test of the feasibility of pensions with a view to future extension.

*Question 4.*—In the case of temporary disablement I think there is a fairly strong case for raising the compensation to two-thirds of the pre-accident wages. There is the outstanding fact that railways and many other employers were and still are in the habit of paying full wages during temporary disablement. I am informed by a railway official that they experience no difficulty from malingering in consequence. I do not think therefore, that the argument that malingering would be encouraged should stand in the way of such an increase.

If this is accepted the lump sums payable for death and permanent disablement will require to be proportionately enhanced. If it is not accepted, I still think that some special provision should be made for poorly paid workmen, and that this could best be done by manipulation of Schedule IV. My experience is that workers in receipt of less than Rs. 12 per mensem are almost all women or youths, while a very

large number of ordinary unskilled labourers draw between Rs. 12 and Rs. 20 per mensem. Such wages leave no margin for contingencies. Further I do not think it is right that a workman's assumed wages should be less than his actual wages. Applying this I would alter the scale of assumed wages thus : wages less than Rs. 12, assumed wages Rs. 12 ; wages not less than Rs. 12 but less than Rs. 20, assumed wages Rs. 20 ; wages not less than Rs. 20 but less than Rs. 25, assumed wages Rs. 25 ; and so on by fives up to the present maximum.

*Question 5.*—I think that the present waiting period of ten days is too long, and should be reduced to seven days, with no dating back. I think that the disadvantage of " dating back," viz., that it provides a temptation to malingering is very serious, but a reduction of three days would be a small though material help to workmen.

*Question 6.*—As I have pointed out under Question 3 to make a logical provision for dependants one must either have an arbitrary scheme like the present or make a complete change and introduce a scheme varying the compensation with the number of dependants and requiring proof of dependence, and I do not think the latter is practicable. Hence I would retain the list of relatives in the definition of " dependant " substantially as it is. However, I do not think any harm would be done by including widowed sisters and widowed daughters. The cases where they are the only surviving relatives included in the list, but not actually dependent would be so rare as to be negligible. Also I think there is some case for the addition of stepmother, half brothers, half sisters and stepchildren. I recently had a case in which half brothers and sisters had to be refused.

*Question 7.*—See answer to Question 3. If it is thought desirable to require proof of dependence I would suggest that at least in the case of widows and children if not in all cases dependence should be presumed, but the presumption should be rebuttable. This would enable the employer or other claimants to deny it if they wish, but proof would not have to be given in every case. If proof of dependence had to be given in every distribution case it would be great hardship to women and children. They would have to spend money to establish their claim and might think it necessary to engage lawyers for the purpose and much of the commissioner's time would be taken up in recording unnecessary evidence. The onus of proof should be on the person who denies that a widow or child is a dependant.

*Question 8.*—To make compensation vary with the number of dependants and the extent of their dependence on the deceased workman would from the employer's point of view result in making the employer's liability an uncertain quantity, and he would be unable to deposit until the commissioner had ascertained the amount payable. I do not however, consider this a serious matter. The advantage to the dependants that would ensue if such a scheme could be successfully administered is too obvious to point out, and fully outweighs any inconvenience to the employer. However, the difficulty of administration appears to me to be insuperable. I have already alluded to this in my answer to Question 3. To satisfy himself the commissioner would have to go to the deceased's village, report by a local officer not being receivable in evidence. If the claimants were not divided among themselves there would be no material for cross-examining their witnesses and no check on their claims. Further, the joint family system would make it very difficult to assess the degree of dependence.

*Question 9—Liability of contractors.*—The recent decision of the Calcutta High Court has exposed the anomalous position resulting from the present section. The workman can at his will, place the ultimate liability upon the contractor or upon the sub-contractor, and the former may be merely a middleman with no say in the engagement of the workman or the conditions of his work.

The Government of India recognize that the obvious amendment would be one permitting the liability to be passed on in every case to the person directly employing the workman, but doubt whether this would be suitable to Indian conditions, as in many cases contractors who are responsible for the employment of labour have little control over working conditions, and the main responsibility for the safety of workmen rests with the principal.

In my opinion however this difficulty will largely disappear if commissioners clearly grasp the distinction between " independent contractor " and " workmen." The question in such cases is with whom the workman is under contract of employment, and the best test of this is the degree of control exercised by the alleged employer. A true contractor, while undertaking to produce a given result, is allowed more or less of a free hand in the details of the work and the methods employed. An independent contractor is defined by Sir Frederick Pollock (Law of Torts, 11th Edition, page 80) as one who undertakes to produce a given result, but so that in the actual execution of the work he is not under the order or control of the person for whom he does it, and may use his own discretion in things not specified beforehand. " A master " he defines as " one who not only prescribes to the workman the end of

his work, but directs, or at any moment may direct, the means also, or, as it has been put retains the power of controlling the work." (See also Ruegg's *Workmen's Compensation*, 9th Edition, page 8 et seq.)

Judged by this test, the so-called contractors in mines and other concerns in this country will in most cases be found, I think, to be merely the agents of the persons giving the contract (whom I shall call for brevity the proprietors) for recruiting and paying workmen, and the workmen engaged by them to be under contract of service not with them but with the proprietors. Very often it is true that the "contractors" supervise the work, but they do so really as foremen, owing to the close control over every detail of the work exercised by the proprietors, and are therefore themselves workmen. Usually the contractor is remunerated on the basis of outturn, i.e., his contract is on the face of it a contract for work and not merely for supplying labour, but even this will not suffice to displace the strong presumption arising from the control exercised by the proprietor over the methods and conditions of the work and over discipline. I carefully examined the English cases (which are to be found collected on page 112 et seq. of Willis, 25th Edition) in connection with a disputed case in which this question arose. The practice of getting work done on a piece-work basis by men who engage and pay their own labour does not appear to have come before the British courts in exactly the form in which it is so common in India, but there are cases close enough to show that the degree of control is the all-important test, that a workman may engage and pay other workmen, and that even a written contract, ostensibly for work, is not decisive. In the case in question I found that no workmen thus engaged by contractors, who had a written contract for getting jute pressed in a machine operated by the proprietors and under supervision of the proprietor's direct employees, were under contract of employment with the proprietors. There was no appeal against the decision.

Any one who had read only the Indian Act might easily overlook this distinction altogether, since it depends upon the meaning of "contract of employment" and this is only alluded to in the definitions of "employer" and "workmen", though it is of the essence of them, and in fact the basis of all rights and liabilities under the Act. In view of this, and of the commonness of this peculiar form of contract in India, I would suggest to the Government of India the advisability of inserting an "explanation" after the definition of "workman", stating in clear terms the position resulting from such contracts. Perhaps something of this nature would be suitable. "If A contracts with B for the performance by B of certain work, B to engage and pay workmen, but A retaining full control of the methods and conditions of work, the workmen engaged by B shall be deemed to be under contract of employment with A." This I believe to be declaratory of the existing law, but as the Act has to be administered by many officers who have no time for a detailed study of all its implications, I suggest that it is advisable to state it in explicit terms. That workmen thus indirectly engaged are for practical purposes directly employed by the proprietors is already recognized by insurance companies who compel the proprietors to insure them as such. Existing interests would not therefore be affected if it were declared that this is the actual legal relationship between the parties.

To return to the question under consideration; if this be the true effect, of this very common form of contract, I submit that there is no need to reverse the whole scheme of Section 12 as the Government of India suggest. There is no reason why the ultimate liability should not rest upon the direct employer if he be a true independent contractor, and he is the person upon whom it logically should rest. This can be effected by substituting for "the contractor" in clause 2 of Section 12 the words of the British Act, "any person who would have been liable to pay compensation to the workman independently of this section."

If, however, this view is not accepted and it is thought desirable in India that ultimate liability should rest upon the principal, then I do not see any necessity for giving the workman any election at all. Why not declare, definitely, that the principal in such cases is liable and not the direct employer?

*Question 10.*—I do not think a special penal clause for omission to submit annual returns is necessary.

*Question 11.*—To require employers to include in their returns, figures of all accidents whether arising out of and in the course of the employment or not would be of no assistance, and to call for returns of accidents "arising out of etc." would be open to the obvious objection stated in the Government of India's letter. The only practicable amendment I can think of would be to require employers to state the number of claims rejected on the ground of misconduct. This figure added to the number of claims paid would give the number admitted by the employer to arise out of and in the course of employment. Whether any useful purpose would be served is a question for the Government of India.

*Question 12.*—It is no doubt true that an employer cannot come to an effective agreement with a dependant which will take the place of an award by the commissioner.

Nevertheless, I think that it is possible to give effect to the words "which cannot be settled by agreement" in Section 22 (1). I have always read the section as meaning, in the case of fatal accidents, that the employer should be given an opportunity of depositing by consent without issue of summons, and have always endeavoured to secure this, either by referring dependants to the employer or by intervening informally before issuing summons. I think this is, to say the least of it, more courteous to the employer.

There is a difficulty but it will disappear if employers are required to notify the commissioner of fatal accidents, with an admission or denial of liability, as suggested in paragraph 14 of the Government of India's letter. If the employer has notified his readiness to deposit, a letter intimating receipt of a claim is all that is necessary, while if he has denied liability, a summons can issue immediately. I would therefore answer Question 12 in the affirmative provided that this procedure is introduced.

*Question 13 (paragraph 14).*—For the reasons given by the Government of India I would not give the commissioner power to initiate proceedings, either in respect of fatal or non-fatal accidents.

I am however strongly in favour of the proposal (which I made myself) to require employers to notify the commissioner of all fatal accidents, with a statement whether or no they admit liability. This would effectively prevent employers from evading their obligations without prejudicing the impartiality of the commissioner. The better class of employers I am sure would welcome the proposal since it would prevent the unscrupulous from escaping liabilities which they themselves recognize. The alternative proposal, viz., that inspectors of mines and factories might be authorized to prefer complaints is unobjectionable in itself, but does not cover the whole field (e.g., it would not touch builders' employees, dock labourers, lascars and railway servants). In my opinion the first alternative is much superior.

As regards details, the first point is the period to be prescribed. It must be remembered that an employer is not usually in a position to admit or deny liability at once. If he is insured he must refer the question to the insurance company. Some shipping agents still refer such questions to their owners at home, though it is to be hoped that they will soon obtain powers to dispose of them themselves. Railways again conduct formal enquiries and are slow and cumbrous in their procedure. I think therefore that the accident should be reported first, and the statement regarding liability should follow later, say within a month at most from the date of the accident. The commissioner would have power to extend the time for cause shown, but unless the statement or a petition for time is filed within the time allowed, the employer should be liable to fine.

The first statement would be just a notice that a fatal accident had occurred, giving deceased's name, and the place, date and time, also the home address of the deceased.

The second statement would be an admission or denial of liability; in the latter case, the reasons therefor with a brief statement of the circumstances of the accident.

*Question 14.—Register of relatives.*—In my opinion it would not be practicable for employers to register the names and addresses of their workmen's next-of-kin. Such a register would be of little use unless kept up to date, and workmen, as the Government of India suggests, might object. I think however that it would be practicable and very nearly as useful, to make employers note merely the home address (i.e., in most cases the native village) of their workmen. If the workman was killed, an enquiry through the local Tahsildar or circle officer would soon elicit whether any dependants existed. If the employer were required to notify fatal accidents as suggested in paragraph 14, the commissioner would need this information in order to intimate to the dependants that they could take action.

*Question 15.*—The cases which the Government of India have in mind are presumably those where the deposit is obviously inadequate on account of some apparent error or omission. The commonest example is where the amount has been calculated on actual instead of on assumed wages. In such cases I have always taken action without waiting for an application from a dependant. Very commonly dependants do not live in Calcutta and it is very much in their interest to get the full amount deposited before they are asked to come in. No objection on the merits can be raised in such cases, as it is only a question of complying with the method of calculation laid down in the Act, and no employer has ever raised a technical objection that the commissioner should have waited for an application from a dependant. I have gone further and enquired informally whether allowance has been made for free board and lodging or use of uniform where I know from experience that deceased probably enjoyed such privileges.

Cases in which the commissioner has to ask for a further deposit are fairly frequent, but to judge from my own experience, no amendment of the Act is necessary. I have always conducted the preliminary stages of proceedings as informally as possible, in the spirit of the Government of India's letter No. L. 859, dated the 4th July, 1923.



with the best results. I may add that it not infrequently happens that employers by a similar miscalculation deposit in excess in which case I inform them and allow them a refund.

If the actual rate of wages were in question it would clearly be out of place for the commissioner to take any action without an application from a dependant.

*Question 16.*—It is necessary not only to provide for suspension of distribution pending the disposal of an appeal, but also for withholding payment of any money paid into court under an award by the commissioner (i.e., in claims by injured workmen also) pending appeal. This is an omission in the Act, which should be made good.

In the absence of any such provision it has been my practice to withhold payment on application by the employer until he can obtain an order from the appellate court, or the period of limitation for an appeal has expired.

There has been no case hitherto of a dependant desiring to appeal against an order for distribution. In such cases the application would have to be made at once, as the money is already in deposit, and payment usually follows the award immediately. Where the employer has contested liability there is not the same difficulty, as he is always given some days in which to deposit the amount due under the award, and has this time to consider whether he will make an application for stay of payment.

In addition, I would suggest the following amendments :—

(1) I would introduce a proviso that the employer be not allowed to plead the defences in Section 3 (1) (b), (i) to (iii) (three forms of misconduct) in any case where the accident resulted in death, permanent total disablement, or permanent partial disablement assessed at 50 per cent. or more of permanent total. This amendment would be in line with the trend of workmen's compensation legislation in most countries. It is in conformity with the general principle of occupational risk, that in the conditions of modern industry the consequence to the workman or his dependants of acts of negligence or misconduct are often so terrible that it is unjust that they should be compelled to bear the whole burden. Moreover the practical difficulty of arriving at a true finding when these defences, particularly the defence of breach of rule, are pleaded, makes such an amendment in my opinion very desirable. A large proportion of claims are resisted on the ground that the accident was due to disobedience of a rule that machinery is not to be cleaned while in motion. This rule is made to cover not only periodical cleaning but clearing jams as well. I very gravely doubt whether the workman was really in fault in many of these cases. I have been assured by persons conversant with the facts that so far from this rule always being enforced, workers are often not allowed to stop a machine before clearing a jam. If in consequence he is killed or mutilated he or his dependants are not in a position to rebut the evidence offered by the employer that the rule was regularly enforced. Out of 107 cases in Bengal in which liability was contested and evidence recorded, the question of disobedience of a safety rule was the principal issue in 30. In all except 2 or 3 of these the rule in question was a rule that machinery is not to be cleaned while in motion. In 10 the rule was found not to be proved, in three not to have been effectively enforced and in one the disobedience was found not to have been wilful. In the remaining 18 wilful disobedience was found and the claim dismissed. I feel sure that in some at least, of these cases there was a failure of justice, but there was no reason in any one case for refusing to accept the employer's evidence. This very real danger of failure of justice could be avoided in more serious cases by the amendment I propose.

It must not be supposed that such an amendment would leave the employer liable to pay in all cases where the accident was due to breach of rule. He could still rely in many cases, as he can in England on the defence that the accident did not arise out of the employment. To quote Lord Dunedin's well known distinction : " There are prohibitions which limit the sphere of the employment and prohibitions which only deal with conduct within the sphere of employment." (*Plumb v. C. Cobden Flour Mills*, 7 B. W. C. C. 1). In case of breach of prohibitions of the former class, the employer could successfully resist a claim on the ground that the accident did not arise out of the employment. If the prohibition were of the latter class he would have to pay.

(2) I would recommend provision for referring to medical referees questions concerning the nature and degree of disablement, and how far it was due to the accident. At present it is very difficult to settle a claim in which there is any difference of medical opinion without recourse to formal proceedings. If a formal claim is made, doctors have to be brought to court for examination and in some cases another doctor is called in to sit as medical assessor. To empower the commissioner to refer the parties to a medical referee and act on his report would result in a great saving of doctor's time and of the parties' money, and also of the Commissioner's time.

(3) *Disease*.—"It does not appear to me," said Lord Halsbury (*Brintons v. Turvey* (1905) 7 W. C. C. 1), "that by calling the consequence of an accidental injury a disease one alters the nature or the consequential results of the injury that has been inflicted." But in India if the employer can call the consequence a disease he can get the benefit of the very severe restrictions laid down in Section 3 (4). Where the consequence is not a disease, compensation is payable for it if not "results" from the accident (Section 4) and this word "results" has been liberally interpreted in the English courts. It includes indirect consequences (2 B. W. C. C. 357) and consequences due partly to something else (10 B. W. C. C. 624). But Section 3 (4) lays down that where the consequence is a disease it must be "solely and directly" attributable to the injury by accident. Further the injury must be specific, by which I understand a definite bodily lesion as opposed to a general condition such as "shock" or "lowered vitality." Again the disease must be attributable to such injury and therefore something distinct from it. The effect of the English decisions is that personal injury by accident means accidental injury and may include disease accidentally incurred (*Brintons v. Turvey* supra). Thus the three things "accident," "injury" and "disease," may be treated as one, by what Lord Shaw called the "synthetic treatment" (9 B. W. C. C. at page 379). Under the Indian Act, though "injury by accident" may perhaps be taken to mean "accidental injury" there being no accident distinguishable from the injury (there are grounds for disputing even this), the disease must be distinct from it. Taking therefore, the various possible cases and applying Section 3 (4) we have the following results:—

(i) *Pre-existing disease*.—(a) Where the disease itself has been lighted up or rendered worse by the accident, compensation is payable in England (2 B. W. C. C. 157, 40 S. L. R. 89, 5 B. W. C. C. 36). "Results from" includes "accelerated by" per *Cozens Hardy M. R.* (8 B. W. C. C. at page 430). But if the disease pre-existed, it cannot obviously be said to be solely due to the accident.

(b) Where on account of pre-existing disease some bodily tissue (bone, blood vessel, muscle, etc.) is weakened, and gives way under accidental strain, it may I think be contended that the payment is for the injury not for the disease and would be admissible even under the Indian Act, but liability might be resisted on the ground that but for the disease there would have been no injury. *Clover Clayton & Co. v. Hughes*, 3 B. W. C. C. 275, is the classical English case.

(ii) *Disease subsequent to and casually related to accident*.—(a) *Infections*.—The words "solely and directly" seem to require that both conditions of infection, viz., presence of germ and breach in bodily defences should be directly due to the accident. In England compensation is payable where either is due to accident (10 B. W. C. C. 624, 12 B. W. C. C. 78). Again, if infection is purely local (suppuration, arthritis gangrene) is this a disease? If amputation is rendered necessary by such infection, is compensation for this amputation payable "in respect of a disease?"

(b) *Disease resulting indirectly from accident*, e.g., 2 B. W. C. C. 357, 6 B. W. C. C. 745. No compensation in such cases is payable in India.

(c) *Exposure diseases*.—In such cases it is often very difficult to distinguish "accident," "injury," and "disease." (See 6 B. W. C. C. 398, 7 B. W. C. C. 259 and 9 B. W. C. C. 371). There is no "specific injury" in the sense in which I understand the words, but a general chill resulting in pneumonia, rheumatism, etc. By the "synthetic treatment" compensation is found payable in England, but this section appears to be a bar.

(d) *Disease due to neglect of treatment*.—Where an injury is aggravated in this way, but no morbid condition is set up (e.g., a neglected fracture) the only restriction on compensation is that contained in Section 11 (6). If however, the consequence of neglect can be called disease, this clause also comes into operation.

This analysis shows that the restrictions imposed by Section 3 (4) are very severe and go far beyond the English Act. I think that they might be relaxed without fear of administrative difficulties.

The case of pre-existing disease being lighted up by an accident is perhaps so uncommon as to be negligible, and where diseased tissue gives way under sudden accidental strain compensation is I think payable under the Act as it stands.

I think, however, that compensation should be payable for exposure diseases, (to the extent it is payable in England) and that compensation for infections should not be restricted to those "solely and directly" attributable to the accident. If a man suffers from extensive laceration it seems unjust to deny him compensation for infection, simply because the germ did not enter the wound at the time of the accident. I submit that to ask "Is it just that the employer should bear the consequence of this?" is not the proper question. The question should be "Is it just that the workman should bear the whole consequence?" If the answer is in the negative, provision should be made for compensation, for the employer is or should be, insured, and the burden is transferred to the industry as a whole.

## IX.—Hours.

## X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

## LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

dated the 16th December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of memoranda of the Government of Bengal on the following items in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Royal Commission:—(1) IX—Hours: A—Factories (55) to (57), (60) to (62); and D—Other Establishments (78) to (80); (2) IX—Hours: A—Factories (58) to (60); and X—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children: A—Factories (83) to (85) and (88); (3) X—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children: A—Factories (81), (82), (86), (87) and (89).

2. A report on "IX—Hours: B—Mines (63) to (72), (90) and (91)," is contained in the report of Mr. J. A. Beale, Sub-divisional Officer, Asansol, which was forwarded to the Commission with this department letter No. 1330 T., Com., dated the 21st October/12th November, 1929, and the remarks of Government are contained therein.

3. The local government do not propose to offer any material on "IX—Hours: C—Railways" as they understand that this subject is being dealt with by the Central Government.

4. With regard to sub-item (60) (iv) (*Number of holidays given*), I am to say that no information has hitherto been collected by the Government of Bengal on this subject.

5. With regard to sub-item (89) (ii) (*Advisability of extended application*), I am to say that since the information on this item was originally compiled, the Government of Bengal have extended the Factories Act by means of a notification under sub-section 2 (3) (b) to all small tea factories.

6. As regards "X—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children: C—Other Establishments (92) (*Need for regulations*)" I am to say that the local government are not aware of any abuses relating to women, young adults and children in such establishments, which call for regulation.

## IX.—Hours.

## A.—Factories.

55. *Hours worked per Week and per Day*—(i) *Normal, i.e., as determined by custom or agreement*.—The normal working hours are the hours specified under the relevant sections of the Act. The following statement shows the normal hours of work in the various industries in Bengal:—

| Class of factories.      | Average number of persons employed. | Normal hours worked per day.                 | Normal hours worked per week. |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Textile—</b>          |                                     |  |                               |
| Jute mills .. .. .       | 331,899                             | Single shift, 11<br>Multiple shift,<br>9½–11 | 60<br>38–44*<br>47½–55*       |
| Cotton mills .. .. .     | 13,757                              | 10   | 60                            |
| <b>Engineering—</b>      |                                     |  |                               |
| Dockyards .. .. .        | 3,204                               | 7½   | 46                            |
| General engineering ..   | { 2,957†<br>22,453                  | 7½<br>8½                                     | 46<br>50                      |
| Total .. .. .            | 25,410                              |  |                               |
| <b>Railway workshops</b> |                                     |  |                               |
| Railway workshops ..     | { 21,943†<br>12,124                 | 8<br>8                                       | 48<br>48                      |
| Total .. .. .            | 34,067                              |  |                               |
| Iron smelting .. .. .    | 10,277                              | 8  | 48                            |

\* Alternate weeks. † Government.

*Normal hours of work in the various industries in Bengal—contd. :—*

| Class of factories.               | Average number of persons employed. | Normal hours worked per day. | Normal hours worked per week. |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Seasonal industries—</b>       |                                     |                              |                               |
| Tea factories .. .. .             | 16,149                              | 11                           | 60                            |
| Jute presses .. .. .              | 35,592                              | 11                           | 60                            |
| Rice mills .. .. .                | 10,778                              | 10                           | 60                            |
| <b>Paper and printing—</b>        |                                     |                              |                               |
| Paper mills .. .. .               | 4,101                               | 8                            | 48                            |
| Printing presses .. .. .          | 3,512†<br>6,361                     | 8<br>9                       | 48<br>54                      |
| <b>Total .. .. .</b>              | <b>9,873</b>                        |                              |                               |
| <b>Miscellaneous—</b>             |                                     |                              |                               |
| Electrical generating stations .. | 1,861                               | 8                            | 48                            |
| Kerosine, tinning and packing ..  | 5,205                               | 8½                           | 52                            |
| Flour mills .. .. .               | 1,283                               | 11                           | 60                            |
| Oil mills .. .. .                 | 2,796                               | 11                           | 60                            |
| Gas works .. .. .                 | 927                                 | 8                            | 48                            |
| Paint works .. .. .               | 1,223                               | 9                            | 54                            |
| Chemical works .. .. .            | 2,200                               | 10                           | 60                            |
| Match factories .. .. .           | 5,020                               | 8                            | 48                            |
| Ice factories .. .. .             | 1,039                               | 8½                           | 52                            |
| Glass works .. .. .               | 734                                 | 8                            | 48                            |

(ii) *Actual, i.e., including overtime.*—The Factories Act does not permit of overtime or work outside specified hours, except in the case of exempted factories. There should, therefore, be no difference between normal and actual working hours, except in the case of the exemptions. A statement is attached showing all the exemptions issued under the Act, and also the conditions of exemption. From these conditions it will be seen that the maximum limit of working hours permitted under the exemptions is that the weekly average in any one month should in no case exceed 66 hours.

(iii) *Spreadover, i.e., relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.*—Workers cannot be legally considered to be "on call" outside the specified working hours. Hence, the point of this heading is not clearly understood. Probably it refers to the actual time during which a worker is on duty, as compared with the specified hours. It is the custom in Bengal for reserve workers to be borne on the staff in order to relieve the regular workers for short periods during their spells of work. These reliefs or short periods of rest are arranged amongst the workers themselves, and are not the periods of rest specified under the Act. Fuller information on this subject will be obtained from the various industries concerned, but in the jute mills the percentage of extra labour carried for reliefs is ordinarily round about ten.

56. *Days worked per week.*—The majority of workers in Bengal have the Sunday holiday, and in only a few cases is a week, full 6 days worked. With the exception of continuous process industries, the number of days worked per week in all industries throughout the Province may be taken to be 5½, i.e., from Monday to Friday, and half a day on Saturday.

In the jute mills, the system of work at present in operation is that single shift mills work for 5½ days per week, and multiple shift mills for 4 days and 5 days in alternate weeks. Prior to the 1st July, 1929, the multiple shift mills worked 13½ hours a day for 4 days per week on the shift system, and the single shift mills worked for 5 days per week—4 days of 11 hours and 1 day of 10 hours. All mills under the Indian Jute Mills Association, whether single-shift or double shift, worked 54 hours a week. Since the 1st July last, they have worked 60 hours a week. The multiple shift mills now work 4 days of 13½ hours a day and 5 days of 13½ hours a day in alternate weeks. The single-shift mills work 5 days of 11 hours a day and 5 hours on Saturday.

Shipyards and the larger engineering works, as a rule, work 5½ days a week.

57. *Effect of 60 hours restriction—(i) On workers.*—The 60 hours restriction imposed by the 1922 Act, has had little effect, so far as the larger industries are concerned, as it merely legalized conditions previously in existence. In some of the

smaller industries, however, such as printing presses and oil mills, the Act has reduced the total weekly hours. In the case of maintenance staff and other non-process workers the conditions of the various exemption notifications restricting the weekly hours to an average of 60 or 66 per week in any one month has undoubtedly effected a reduction in the number of hours worked, with probably a consequent reduction in wages.

The extent of the effect of the 60 hours restriction may to some extent be measured by the applications for relief from the 60 hours restriction which have been received by the Government. In the case of gas works, flour mills, jute presses, and pottery works, exemption was granted owing to the nature of the work in these industries, but the condition imposed in these cases was that average weekly hours over any one month should be observed. In the case of gas works, the average was fixed at 56, for the rest at 66.

Applications for various exemptions, including relief from the 60 hours restriction, were also received from the industries noted below, but in these cases exemptions from the provisions of Section 27 were not granted:—(1) Paper mills; (2) tanneries; (3) Shellac factories; (4) tea factories; (5) electrical generating stations; (6) rice mills; (7) glass factories; (8) blast furnaces, coke ovens, and by-product plants; (9) mustard oil mills; (10) printing presses; (11) railway running sheds.

In addition to the official requests that were received, numerous inquiries were made from time to time from inspectors regarding the possibility of obtaining relief from the 60 hours restriction, but formal application did not follow when the information was conveyed that exemption was not possible.

(ii) *On industry.*—The 60 hours' restriction has had no apparent adverse effect on industry.

58. *Effect of daily limit.*—The daily limits for women and children of 11 and 6 hours respectively have given a fair measure of protection and have had some beneficial effect. In some of the non-textile industries, however, such as the engineering and shipbuilding industries, which normally work considerably shorter hours than the textile mills, the Act has led to a want of elasticity in working hours to meet market demands. In their case, i.e., the cases of all industries which are subject to fluctuating demands, probably employees would be sufficiently protected against excessive hours, and the Act made workable, were a weekly and not daily restriction of hours imposed. This, however, will be dealt with separately.

59. *Possibility of Reduction in Maxima.*—This will be dealt with separately.

60. *Intervals.*—(i) *Existing practice (a) In relation to fatigue.*—Chapter IV of the Act, which governs the rest periods in factories, generally speaking, has worked well. The Government of Bengal have no evidence that the periods of continuous work, as permitted by the Act are excessive, or that the prescribed hour or half hour of rest, as the case may be, is too little. In factories where shorter hours are worked, there is a marked tendency on the part of employees to prefer shorter intervals. This arises from the habits of the Indian workman. If an interval during the day is not sufficiently long to enable him to cook his food, he prefers to have quite a short interval with a view to enabling him to come later in the morning and go earlier in the afternoon. Workers take their two principal meals of the day before coming to work and in the evening.

This tendency has been particularly noticeable in factories in the Calcutta industrial area, where the homes of many workers are situated at some distance from the works.

(b) *In relation to workers' meal times.*—It has already been indicated above that unless there is an interval during the day sufficiently long to enable workers to cook and eat their food, they prefer to have shorter intervals in order to be able to come later in the morning and go away earlier in the afternoon. Where this is impossible, however, the prescribed rest period usually coincides with the workers' meal times. This is the case, for example, in the single shift jute mills, which start at 5.30 in the morning and go on working till 11 a.m., and then close down for 2½ hours.

In the multiple-shift mills, however, the meal times of the workers have to be arranged according to their shifts. These are described elsewhere.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.* (iii) *Suitability of hours during which factory is working.*—(These will be dealt with separately).

61. *Day of Rest.*—(i) *existing practice* (ii) *Suitability of the law.*—The general practice in Bengal is to give the Sunday holiday, and this, or a substitute day, is rigorously enforced by the Factories Department. No change in the law is deemed necessary.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made of them.*—The attached statement shows the number and class of labour exempted, the sections from which they are exempted, and the conditions of exemption. Exemptions are granted by the local government on the recommendation of the chief inspector of factories.

Exemptions applicable to all Factories.

| Class of operatives exempted.   | Sections exempted from.                 | Conditions of exemption.   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Persons employed on :—</p> <p>(a) urgent repairs to the plant in all factories which have to be carried out on a Sunday or at times outside of the normal working hours, in order that the main manufacturing process may be continued without interruption during the ordinary working day ; or</p> <p>(b) breakdown repairs carried out in general engineering works or foundries to the motive power or transmission plant of other factories and which are necessary to enable such concerns to maintain their main manufacturing processes during normal working hours ; or</p> <p>(c) repairs to steamers which are essential to enable the vessels to leave or continue their normal operations in a seaworthy condition.</p> | <p>Sections 21, 22, 27 and 28 ..</p>    | <p>(a) a notice, stating the names of persons employed and the precise nature of work, shall be sent in time to reach the Inspector of Factories within 36 hours of such employment, and if the repairs are to be carried out on a Sunday the said notice shall be posted or sent prior to the Sunday on which the work is carried out ;</p> <p>(b) no such person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day or in the alternative a rest period of at least 36 consecutive hours ; and</p> <p>(c) the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty hours.</p> |
| <p>Adult male boiler attendants .. .. .</p>   | <p>Sections 21, 22, 26, 27 and 28..</p> | <p>(a) that no such person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day ; and</p>   |
| <p>Adult male engine drivers.</p>   |   | <p>(b) that the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six hours.</p>  |
| <p>Adult male persons employed on despatching and receiving of goods.</p>   |   |  |
| <p>Adult male oilers .. .. .</p>  | <p>Sections 21, 27 and 28 ..</p>        | <p>(a) that the average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six hours.</p>  |
| <p>Adult male persons employed solely on maintenance work.</p>  |   |  |

*Exemptions applicable to individual industries.*

| Class of factory.          | Total number of factories. | Total number of persons employed. | Approximate number of persons exempted. | Class of operatives exempted.                                     | Sections exempted from.  | Condition of exemption.   |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 1. Rice Mills ..           | 286                        | 10,778                            | 7,621                                   | Persons employed on boiling, spreading, drying and storing paddy. | Section 22—<br>(Sunday employment).  | No person shall work for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day.   |
| 2. (a) Pottery Works       | 1                          | 590                               | 125                                     | Firemen and their adult male attendants on kilns.                 | Sections 22, 27<br>(weekly limit of 60 hours work) and 28<br>(daily limit of 11 hours work). | (1) No person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day; and<br><br>(2) Average weekly hours worked by such exempted persons in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six.                                       |
| (b) Bengal Potteries, Ltd. | 1                          | 549                               | 12                                      | Firemen and their adult male attendants on gas-fired kilns.       | Sections 21 (rest interval), 22 and 28.  | (1) That persons engaged on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts; and<br><br>(2) That no such persons shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a compensatory rest period of at least 24 hours at one time. |
| 3. Paper Mills ..          | 4                          | 4,643                             | 1,396                                   | Adult male persons employed on certain processes.                 | Sections 21 (rest interval) and 22.  | No person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day.  |

*Exemptions applicable to individual industries.*

| Class of factory.     | Total number of factories. | Total number of persons employed. | Approximate number of persons exempted. | Class of operatives exempted.  | Sections exempted from. | Condition of exemption.   |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------|---|
| 4. Tanneries ..       | 5                          | 489                               | 163                                     | Persons employed in—<br>(a) soaking, (b) drying, (c) beating and (d) curing or tanning hides, kips or skins. | Section 22 ..           | (1) No person shall be required to work for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day; and<br>(2) The hours of work of any such person on a Sunday do not exceed six.   |
| 5. Shellac Factories. | 3                          | 702                               | 510                                     | Persons employed on work necessitating continuous production in Shellac Factories using solvent process.     | Sections 21 and 22.     | (1) No person employed on such work shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day; and<br>(2) Average weekly hours worked by any such person shall not exceed fifty-six.  |
| 6. Gas Works ..       | 3                          | 822                               | 245                                     | Male operatives employed in retort houses in coal gas works.   | Sections 22, 27 and 28. | (1) Persons employed on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts; and<br>(2) The average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed fifty-six.   |
| 7. Flour Mills ..     | 8                          | 1,283                             | 930                                     | Men employed as cleaners and machine hands.  | Sections 22 and 27.     | (1) The terms of work of day and night-shifts shall not exceed four and six hours on Sundays;<br>(2) Average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six; and<br>(3) No such person shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day. |



Exemptions applicable to individual industries.

| Class of factory.             | Total number of factories. | Total number of persons employed. | Approximate number of persons exempted. | Class of operatives exempted.                    | Sections exempted from.   | Condition of exemption.  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 8. Tea Factories              | 265                        | 16,149                            | 16,149                                  | All employees .. .. .                            | Sections 21, 22 and 26 (employment under specified working hours) | (1) No person shall be required to work continuously without a whole day's leave for more than fourteen consecutive days at a time ; and<br>(2) The number of persons employed on a particular job shall always be at least twenty-five per cent. greater than the number actually required to do the work at any given time.                                |
| 9. Jute Presses ..            | 112                        | 35,592                            | 35,592                                  | Ditto .. .. .                                    | Sections 22, 26 and 27.   | (1) No such person shall be required to work for more than fourteen consecutive days without a holiday for a whole day ;<br>(2) The average weekly hours worked by any such person in any one month shall not exceed sixty-six hours ; and<br>(3) The hours of work shall be within the limits of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a mid day rest of at least one hour. |
| 10. Iron and Steel Factories. | 2                          | 10,277                            | 3,656                                   | Persons employed on operation of blast furnaces. | Sections 21, 22 and 28.   | (1) Persons engaged on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts ; and<br>(2) No such persons shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a compensatory rest period of at least twenty-four hours at one time.  |

Exemptions applicable to individual industries.

| Class of factory.                                   | Total number of factories. | Total number of persons employed. | Approximate number of persons exempted. | Class of operatives exempted. | Sections exempted from. | Condition of exemption.  |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 11. Waterworks or Water-supply Pumping Station.     | 7                          | 1,011                             | 554                                     | Certain specified classes ..  | Sections 21, 22 and 28. | (1) Persons engaged on such work shall ordinarily be employed on daily eight-hour shifts; and<br>(2) No such persons shall be employed for more than fourteen consecutive days without a compensatory rest period of at least twenty-four hours at one time. |
| 12. Gas Works ..                                    | 3                          | 822                               | 238                                     | Ditto .. ..                   | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 13. Ice Factories                                   | 4                          | 654                               | 308                                     | Ditto .. ..                   | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 14. Chemical Factories                              | 5                          | 1,918                             | 501                                     | Ditto .. ..                   | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 15. Distilleries ..                                 | 2                          | 331                               | 95                                      | Ditto .. ..                   | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 16. Oil Mills using the solvent process extraction. | 1                          | Factory remaining closed.         | Factory remaining closed.               | All employees .. ..           | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 17. Electrical Generating Stations.                 | 13                         | 2,940                             | 2,940                                   | Ditto .. ..                   | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 18. Tanning Extract Factories.                      | 1                          | 135                               | 14                                      | Certain specified classes ..  | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 19. Glass Factories                                 | 5                          | 545                               | 452                                     | Ditto .. ..                   | Ditto ..                | Ditto.   |
| 20. Oil Mills ..                                    | 61                         | 2,796                             | 2,796                                   | All adult persons .. ..       | Sections 21 and 35.     | The hours of work shall be within the limits of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.  |

**B.—Mines.**

63 to 72. *Vide* pages 9 and 10 of the report of Mr. J. A. Beale, Sub-divisional Officer, Asansol, Bengal, forwarded with Bengal Government letter No. 1330 T.—Com., dated the 21st October, 1929, and remarks contained therein.

**D.—Other Establishments.**

(a) *Plantations*; (b) *Docks*; (c) *Other industrial establishments.*

78. *Hours worked per week and per day.*

79. *Days worked per week.*

*Tea Gardens.*—Generally speaking, in tea gardens, there is no custom or agreement regarding normal working hours. Most of the work is paid on a piece basis, and the employees are free to do it in their own time.

In the Darjeeling area in the plucking season—April to November—about 8 hours a day are actually worked, i.e., from 7-30 a.m. to 4-30 p.m., with an hour's rest at mid-day. In the non-plucking season when field work consists chiefly of pruning and cultivation, the day's work can usually be completed in about 6 hours, inclusive of the mid-day rest. The workers have generally finished and gone off to their homes by about 3 p.m. Although no definite time-limit is set to the day's work, sometimes special inducements are offered for workers to continue longer than usual. This happens when labour is insufficient for the working of a garden. These special rates may be looked upon as a kind of overtime wages. One day a week, usually Sunday, is a complete holiday in the tea gardens, and it is only very rarely, during periods of very rapid growth of leaf, that any work is done on this holiday. The workers themselves often voluntarily take more than one day per week.

In the Duars, the number of hours worked is from 4 to 5 hours a day in the cold weather, i.e., the non-plucking season, and from 7 to 8 hours in the plucking season, i.e., the rains.

The average coolie does not work more than 3½ to 4 days per week in the Duars, i.e., about 20 hours per week in the cold weather, and 32 hours per week in the busy season.

The average muster roll in the Duars is reported to be about 60 per cent. of the total labour roll.

In the Chittagong gardens, the normal number of days worked per week is 6 days, although some coolies work 5 days and less. The normal hours worked by men on cultivation is 5 hours a day, or 30 hours a week. The coolies, however, have a daily task, on the completion of which they may go back to their houses.

*Cinchona Plantations.*—In the Government cinchona plantations at Mungpo and Munsong the normal hours worked are:—

|        |       |  |           |
|--------|-------|--|-----------|
| Summer | .. .. | { 6 a.m. to 12 noon<br>1 p.m. to 4-30 p.m. } | 9½ hours. |
| Winter | .. .. | { 7 a.m. to 12 noon<br>1 p.m. to 4-30 p.m. } | 8½ hours. |

The normal hours are worked by those employed on day work, but it is usual to prescribe a definite task for coolies, and the day's work ceases when the task is completed. It is usual for the task to be completed at times varying from 12 noon to 4 p.m., according to the efficiency of the worker. Overtime is paid in only very special cases, and that rarely.

The worker is on call at all hours in case of plantations fires only. The number of days worked per week is 6, but few workers work every day. On the Mungsong plantation, the average number of days worked by coolies per week is less than 4. On Mungpo, the most regular workers work 22 to 24 days a month.

*Inland Steam Navigation (The Inland Steamer Companies).*—On inland steamers and flats, work is irregular and spasmodic, the working hours depending on the conditions of service, tides, fogs, and channels. The average running time of the majority of inland steamers is 10 hours daily, and with two sets of men employed, this gives each man about 5 hours daily, provided the work is evenly allotted. The engine-room crew and navigating staff work about 2 hours daily, making a 7-hour day or 49 hours a week.

It is difficult to calculate the hours of lascars not engaged in the navigation of ships. Their working hours are dependent on the character of the traffic, i.e., whether it is cargo or passenger traffic, and in many cases they do practically no work for days-on-end. It is doubtful if the actual working hours of lascars on inland steam vessels approach an average of 60 hours weekly.

80.—*Desirability of Regulation.*—The Government of Bengal consider that, from the figures which they have received regarding working hours in "Other Establishments," there is no need for regulation.

**IX.—Hours.** (58) (59) (60).

**X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.** (83) (84) (85) (88).

The above headings may be examined together as they are all inter-connected.

An analysis\* of the hours worked per day and per week in factories in Bengal gives the following results :—

A.—*Hours per Week.*—The industries in Bengal which work their labour 60 hours per week are :—

|   | Persons. |
|---|----------|
| Single-shift jute mills employing about .. .. . | 165,000  |
| Cotton mills employing about ... .. .           | 13,800   |
| Tea factories employing about .. .. .           | 16,100   |
| Jute presses employing about .. .. .            | 35,600   |
| Rice mills employing about .. .. .              | 10,800   |
| Flour mills employing about .. .. .             | 1,300    |
| Oil mills employing about .. .. .               | 2,800    |
| Chemical works employing about .. .. .          | 2,200    |
| Total .. .. .                                   | 247,600  |

Of the above classes of factories, three—tea factories, jute presses, and rice mills—employing about 62,500 persons are seasonal, and, with respect to hours of work, must continue to be treated as exceptional. Flour mills, some oil mills, and chemical works are susceptible of special treatment on technical grounds, particularly continuous production. Thus, apart from a number of oil mills and chemical factories, the only factories in Bengal which at present work their labourers more than 55 hours a week are single-shift jute mills and cotton mills. The oil mills and chemical works employ a small number of workpeople, and the cotton manufacturing industry is of relatively small importance in Bengal; hence the possibility of reducing the maximum hours becomes a question mainly affecting the jute-manufacturing industry.

B.—*Hours per day.*—The industries which work the maximum daily hours permitted by law at present are the following: single-shift, and, in part multiple-shift, jute mills, tea factories, jute presses, flour mills, and oil mills. Tea factories and jute presses are seasonal industries. Flour mills and some oil mills are susceptible of special treatment on the ground of continuous production. Oil mills employ relatively few workpeople; hence, again, the problem of reducing the daily limit of hours mainly concerns the jute-manufacturing industry.

— Apart from the industries mentioned in the previous paragraphs, all other industries in Bengal work their labour less than 55 hours a week and less than 10 hours a day.

So far as the weekly limit is concerned, the above analysis suggests that, as far as Bengal is concerned, there would be no difficulty in adopting a 55-hour week. The maximum in about half of the jute mills is already 55-hours; hence it would appear that were the other half of the jute mills, i.e., those working on the single-shift, to adopt the multiple-shift system, and cotton mills to do the same, the 55-hour maximum week could be adopted without appreciable disturbance to production. The situation, however, is complicated by the fact that the existing multiple-shift system in the jute mills has been consistently condemned by the Factory Inspection Department as inimical to the enforcement of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Factories Act. To enforce the maximum of 55 hours a week in the jute-manufacturing

\* *Note.*—Vide statement under item No. (55): *Hours worked per week and per day*

industry, as also in the cotton-manufacturing industry, without further safeguards would almost inevitably lead to the multiple or relay system of shifts being resumed in the jute mills which are at present worked on the single-shift system. It would also probably result in the introduction of a similar system in the few cotton mills in Bengal.

So long as they employ women and children, jute mills, under the existing law, may work their machinery to a maximum of 13½ hours a day or 81 hours a week, on a six-day week. The actual number of hours worked in mills which are members of the Indian Jute Mills Association is determined from time to time by the Association according to the state of trade. Prior to the 1st July, 1929, the mills had been working for several years for 54 hours a week, but these hours were changed on the 1st July to 60 hours a week. The 60-hour week is the maximum which can be worked on the single-shift system, because the same workers are employed in the morning and the afternoon shifts for the maximum period per day and per week permitted by the law. In the multiple-shift mills the 60-hour week still leaves a margin of 21 hours which could be utilized did the state of the market so require. In the 81-hour week, the workers are employed on the relay or shift system in such a way that in theory, no worker may exceed the maximum hours of labour imposed by the Factories Department. At the present time, about half the jute mills in Bengal are operated on the single-shift and half on the multiple-shift system. If, however, the conditions of the market demanded an extension of hours, then the single-shift mills would inevitably be forced back to the multiple-shift system for the reason that they have now no margin of expansion to meet the market, whereas the multiple-shift mills may expand to any number of hours between 60 and 81.

The fact that about half of the jute mills in Bengal have changed from the multiple-shift to the single-shift system of working within the last few years is in itself proof that several managing agents prefer the single-shift system because it makes for more efficient management. The rigour with which the principles of Chapter IV of the Factories Act have been applied has also not been without effect, but the Royal Commission will probably be able to ascertain from the managing agents concerned that the single-shift system is considered more efficient in every respect than the multiple-shift. Inasmuch as the multiple-shift has for many years been condemned by the Factories Department on the ground that it has seriously impeded the enforcement of the hours provisions of the Factories Act, the Government of Bengal have welcomed the movement towards simplification of management in the jute manufacturing industry itself. So long, however, as one-half of the industry adheres to the relay system, the single-shift system is in a precarious position, for at any moment the single-shift mills may be forced on to the old system by the multiple-shift mills, or an appreciable number of them may withdraw from the present hours agreement. It is, therefore, necessary to consider means to ensure the observance of the labour provisions of the Factories Act, without at the same time interfering vexatiously with the industry concerned, and this question is intimately concerned with the possibility of reducing the present hours maxima.

Prior to the passing of the amended Factories Act in 1922, power to control shifts was conferred on Factory Inspectors. The power was included in factory legislation in India originally by the amendment Act of 1891, and the purpose was to regulate the employment of women during the night. The Act passed in 1911 conferred on the inspector power to control shifts with respect to periodical stoppages of work, the limits between which persons could be employed in textile factories, and limits on the use of machinery in textile factories [sub-sections 21 (2), 29 (2), and 31 (2)]. In particular, the Act of 1911 [sub-section 31 (1)] limited the use of machinery in textile factories to 12 hours per day, with the exception that this provision should not apply to any mechanical or electrical power being used solely in aid of work performed by any person employed in accordance with a system of shifts approved by an inspector. When the Draft Conventions and Recommendations adopted at the Washington Conference were under consideration in 1920, the Government of Bengal expressed the opinion that the power to regulate shifts should remain in the Act, while at the same time they emphasized the necessity for prescribing that the hours of labour for each worker should not affect the time during which plant and machinery might be kept going. In spite of the views of the local Government, for some reason, which has never been made clear to them, the power to control shifts was omitted in the amended Act of 1922. At the same time, of course, the regulation of the hours of labour was made more strict.

Prior to the passing of the amended Act in 1922, the attention of the Government of Bengal had on more than one occasion been invited by the Chief Inspector of Factories to difficulties arising from the application of the hours section of the Act in multiple-shift mills.

It may be remarked here that Mr. Adams, the present Chief Inspector of Factories, occupied the same post in 1919, and that even before 1919 he had reported on the difficulty of administering the Act in multiple-shift mills. His predecessor, Mr. Walsh, had also commented on the difficulties of regulating labour in the relay system prevalent in the jute mills even under the simple prescriptions of the original Factories Act. It may, therefore, be said that the continuous and unanimous opinion of inspectors of factories in Bengal is to the effect that the multiple-shift system militates against the effective application of the hours provisions of the Factories Act. After the 1922 Act came into effect, the Chief Inspector in March, 1924, submitted proposals to Government for the prescription of employment registers to take the place of the form previously in existence, and after long discussions, both formal and informal, with the interests concerned, alternative forms of registers for jute mills were prescribed by Government in July, 1925. In the meantime, in June, 1923, the Government of India made certain proposals regarding the amendment of the Factories Act, as amended in 1922, and the Government of Bengal recommended the re-inclusion in the Act of the powers contained in Section 31 of the Act passed in 1911, with the exception that the power to control shifts should vest in the local Government instead of an inspector of factories.

The Government of India did not accept the recommendation of the local government. Informal discussions followed at which it was agreed that a report should be submitted regarding the multiple-shift system after one year's experience has been had of the new employment registers. This report was submitted by the Chief Inspector of Factories in the letter reproduced below, dated the 17th May, 1927 :—

I have the honour to report that the conditions in jute mills consequent on the amendment of the Act restricting the hours of labour of employees, have been carefully watched and the efficacy of employment registers in multiple-shift mills in determining and ensuring compliance with Sections 21, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28 of the Act, ascertained, and I submit herewith, for the information of Government, a statement showing the contravention of these sections as observed in these mills by inspectors since August, 1925. In these respects the employment of women and children is of great and immediate importance since of the approximate total of 242,500 women and 68,700 children employed in the whole of India, 55,500 or 23 per cent. women and 26,400 or 38 per cent. children are employed in the Bengal jute mills. One of the fundamentals of factory labour legislation and the whole of Chapter IV of the Indian Factories Act depend therefore very largely upon the maintenance in the correct state of the prescribed employment register. It has been my experience that in so far as multiple shift mills are concerned, registers are not and cannot be maintained in such a manner as to enable the inspector to determine compliance or otherwise with the foregoing sections, and further that the records given in such registers do not represent the true conditions of such mill labour.

The labour is entirely in the hands of time clerks and sirdars. Upon the former devolves the recording of attendance of employees in the register, and upon the latter the recruitment of labour. The time clerk is occupied with the attendance of hundreds of persons and their registration cannot be done in the time and with that promptitude necessary to enable the inspector to ascertain compliance with the Act. The sirdar produces the children and, in many cases, allows them to be employed whether they are fit, certified or not, and he being illiterate cannot satisfy himself as to the correctness of the entries in the register. He must, however, keep the spindles going, if not directly to maintain continuity of production, to maintain his receipts on a child capitation basis.

The inspector, in order to ascertain compliance with the Act in connection with any employee, must pay two or three visits per day, each being futile without the others, and, that position being appreciated by infractions, the first inspection of the day acts as a warning for the succeeding ones and the irregularities of the latter are easily accommodated in consequence.

Prosecution proceedings have been instituted against mill managers, time clerks, and sirdars, and heavy fines imposed, but infractions still flagrantly occur in the mills convicted. Managers admit the infractions as well as others connected with labour supervision, but they all express inability to put a stop to them under the present multiple-shift system.

From the inspector's position the registers are also almost useless, and he considers the continued exercise of his powers of prosecuting mill managers an abuse of such powers when conviction can never act as a deterrent, and when the remedy does not lie in the hands of the managers but with those responsible for the continued existence of a system which encourages and cannot avoid breaches of the Act.

The difficulties of the situation were expressed as far back as 1913 in my letter No. 2034 of the 3rd November to Government, when the consequential demands on the inspector's time were fully explained.

These views, based on further facts and experience, were again submitted and endorsed in letter No. 1656 of the 22nd August, 1919, to Government, as well as in continuation of letter No. 1777 of the 12th September, 1919, and in which a statement was made to the effect that the introduction of a single shift system would benefit both employers and employed.

This same matter was again enlarged upon in my letter to Government, No. 324 of the 24th January, 1924, and the futility of registers explained, and also the suggestion expressed that if mills did not voluntarily eliminate the evil by the general adoption of the single-shift system, the powers given under Section 31 of the Act of 1911 should be reconferred on inspectors so that the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act could be more effectively administered.

At present approximately 41 mills are now on the single-shift system, involving 105,811, 21,713 and 5,456 men, women and children, respectively, or a total of 132,980; and on the multiple-shift system 44 mills, involving 147,849, 31,114 and 15,329 men, women and children, respectively, or a total of 194,292 employees. The transition in the former mills has been effected with little trouble and few strike difficulties, and as pointed out in paragraph 6 of my annual report for the year 1926, the amount of labour released as a result of the transition was far below that feared by the supporters of the multiple-shift system and that which one would theoretically anticipate; on the contrary, one mill was short of labour within one month of effecting a transition.

Labour troubles on account of resulting unemployment were nowhere in evidence, and the strikes that did occur were on account of consequent adjustment of wages which the workers imperfectly understood.

These facts alone clearly indicate wholesale infractions of the sections of Chapter IV of the Act by mills working under the multiple-shift system.

Further, single-shift mill managers have given expression to the many advantages which they now enjoy and which are generally speaking also appreciated by those managers having to work under the multiple-shift system, with which they have little sympathy. With respect to the latter it is worthy of mention that a mill manager recently convicted and fined, on being asked by the trying magistrate to give any reasons in extenuation of the conditions found, replied to the effect that he was unable to regulate his labour to the requirements of the Act.

In view of this, therefore, it is now for consideration why a system open to so many abuses and involving the welfare of so many employees should be allowed to continue in one industry in Bengal, and it seems apparent that Government having the majority of mill authorities in favour of legislation towards the reduction of working hours, should now so act as to bring such conservative mills within the law, and with this class of factory make possible and practicable Chapter IV of the Act; for the amount of protection given to the labouring class is determined not by the number of labour laws enacted, but by the number of such laws which are properly administered, and by the extent to which their provisions are enforced. There is no other industry in the whole of India which requires women and children to commence work at so early an hour as 5.30 a.m. and to finish so late as 7 p.m., and in view of this I would suggest the amendment of Sections 23 and 24 of the Act to prohibit the employment of these classes of workers before 6 a.m. and after 6.30 p.m., and the daily working hours of women beyond 10 hours. The Act should also be amended to include an equivalent to Section 31 of the Act of 1911, but such power to approve or otherwise a system of shifts should be conferred on the Local Government.

*Irregularities in the employment of labour in Jute Mills using the multiple-shift system from 1st August, 1925, till the 30th April, 1927.*

| Nature of infraction. |  | Number of irregularities. | Number of prosecutions. |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 21                    | Persons were being employed during their midday rest   | 1                         |                         |
| 23                    | Employing children contrary to Act's provisions ..   | 1                         |                         |
| (a)                   | Employing children without medical certificates or tokens.   | 28                        |                         |
|                       | Children were employed below legal age .. ..   | 6                         |                         |
|                       | Children were employed below legal age and also without medical certificates.                          | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Inspector obstructed in his duties. Children were prevented from appearing before him for examination. | 5                         |                         |
| (b)                   | Children were being employed before legal hours ..   | 4                         |                         |
|                       | Children were being employed after legal hours ..  | 1                         |                         |
| (c)                   | Employing children for more than 6 hours a day ..  | 8                         |                         |
|                       |  | <hr/>                     |                         |
|                       |  | 54                        | —                       |
|                       |  | <hr/>                     |                         |

*Irregularities in the employment of Labour in Jute Mills using the multiple-shift system from 1st August, 1925, till the 30th April, 1927.—Contd.*

| Nature of infraction. |  | Number of irregularities. | Number of prosecutions. |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 24 (a)                | Employing women before legal hours .. .. .                                   | 5                         |                         |
| 25                    | Children with tokens of the neighbouring mills were being employed.          | 1                         |                         |
| 26                    | Employing persons beyond or outside specified hours                          | 52                        |                         |
|                       | Persons were being employed without any specified hours of employment fixed. | 5                         |                         |
|                       | Employing persons without and beyond specified hours                         | 2                         |                         |
|                       | Similar offences in respect of the employment of women                       | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Similar offences in respect of the employment of children.                   | 3                         |                         |
|                       |  | 63                        |                         |
| 28                    | Employing persons for more than 11 hours a day ..                            | 1                         |                         |
| 35                    | Not maintaining the prescribed register .. ..                                | 12                        |                         |
|                       | Not maintaining register for maintenance workers ..                          | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Not maintaining children's register .. .. .                                  | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Not maintaining register up to date .. .. .                                  | 21                        |                         |
|                       | Not maintaining register correctly .. .. .                                   | 11                        |                         |
|                       | Not maintaining register correctly and up to date ..                         | 16                        |                         |
|                       | Employment register not being kept correctly and was not produced on demand. | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Employment register not being kept in the prescribed form.                   | 7                         |                         |
|                       | Employment register not being kept correctly and not in prescribed form.     | 1                         |                         |
|                       |  | 71                        |                         |
| 36                    | Working hours were not correctly posted .. ..                                | 5                         |                         |
| Total .. .. .         |  | 201                       | 13                      |

In May, 1928, the Government of India raised a further question connected with the shift-system in jute mills. The letter of the Government of India No. L-1068, dated the 30th May, 1928, is reproduced below :—

" I am directed to request that in considering the question of exercising control over the shift system in jute mills, the Government of Bengal will consider the advisability of taking steps to secure for the women employed in these mills a night period of at least 11 consecutive hours. The Convention concerning the employment of women during the night which was adopted by the first International Labour Conference and which has since been ratified by India requires that a night period of at least 11 consecutive hours should ordinarily be given to women. The Government of India understand that in jute mills a large number of women commence work at the earliest time and finish work at the latest time permitted by the Factories Act and that their night rest is in consequence reduced to a period of 10½ hours. So far as the Government of India are aware, this practice does not prevail in any factories except those working on multiple-shifts ; but they would be glad to have information on this point when the Government of Bengal's proposals have been formulated."

The proposals were discussed with the Chamber of Commerce and a point raised by the Chamber of Commerce was referred for interpretation to the Government of India, who replied in their letter No. L-1068, dated 21st March, 1929 :—

" With reference to your letter No. 309Com., dated the 14th January, 1929, I am directed to state that the Government of India have given their careful consideration to the contention of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that Article 7 of the Convention concerning the employment of Women during the night justifies the continuance of the present arrangement by which women employed in jute mills do not receive a continuous period of rest of eleven hours during the night.



The Government of India did not overlook the special provisions of this article when they asked the Government of Bengal in Mr. Clow's letter No. L-1068, dated the 30th May, 1928, to consider the advisability of taking steps to secure for women employed in jute mills the full rest period of eleven consecutive hours in the night. There is also reason to believe that in introducing the special provisions of Article 7 the framers of the Convention had in mind climatic conditions such as prevail in India, but the Government of India have, for the reasons explained in the following paragraph, some doubt as to whether in all the circumstances of the case, they would be justified in invoking Article 7 as the reason for permitting women employed in the jute mills of Bengal to be deprived of the full period of rest during the night as provided for by the Convention.

Apart from the fact that in reports made to the International Labour Office under Article 408 of the Peace Treaty the Government of India have declared that Article 7 of the Convention is not utilized in this country, when the Convention was under discussion at the International Labour Conference, a proposal was actually made to provide for a reduction in the night rest of women to meet the requirements of factories working double-shifts. This proposal was rejected and it may, therefore, be taken that it was the deliberate intention of the Conference not to make special provision for factories working double or multiple-shifts. I am to enclose in this connection a copy of a letter,\* dated the 4th November, 1927, from the Director of the International Labour Office to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Finnish Government from which it will be seen that the International Labour Office is of opinion that a reduction cannot be made in the period of rest during the night in order to facilitate the organization of work in shifts. In the case of the jute mills the hours of work for women were fixed to suit the system of shifts adopted by the industry, and the benefit of Article 7 of the Convention has not apparently been claimed primarily for climatic reasons but for the continuance of that system.

The Government of India are, however, prepared to agree that there is no objection to the application of Article 7 of the Convention to the jute mills in Bengal provided this is done strictly in the interests of the health of the workers and not merely to facilitate work under any system of shifts. Before arriving at any final decision as to the action to be taken, they would therefore be glad to know whether, in the opinion of the local Government, it can be held that the hours of rest at present adopted for women in the jute mills are in fact in the best interests of the health of the women concerned as contended by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce."

To this letter the Government of Bengal replied in their letter No. 465T.—Com., dated the 21st May, 1929 :—

"With reference to the correspondence ending with Mr. Lall's letter No. L-1068, dated the 21st March, 1929, on the above subject, I am directed to say that the Government of Bengal are of opinion that the hours of rest at night at present adopted for women in the jute mills are not in the best interests of the health of the women concerned. I am to add that the mills are not closed down during the hottest part of the day."

In the meantime it had been announced that the Royal Commission on Indian Labour was to be appointed and no further action on the shift-system as a whole or on the night-rest period of women has been taken, pending the reference of the whole subject to the Commission, and now to the question of shifts and the cognate question of the night-rest period of women have been added the items in the list of subjects issued by the Royal Commission mentioned at the commencement of this memorandum. The local Government have carefully considered the various questions at issue and have come to the conclusion that unless power is conferred on the local Government to control shifts, any recommendation made for the reduction of the weekly and daily maximum hours of work would be nugatory. The multiple-shift system in the jute mills is practically as old as the industry itself, and, particularly, before the passing of the Factories Act of 1911, it undoubtedly saved workers in jute mills from the graver abuses of labour which had been reported from other parts of India. It was devised by jute-mill owners in order to get the maximum out of their machinery. Before the night-work of women was prohibited, it enabled them to work their machinery for practically 24 hours a day, provided they had the necessary light. It also to some extent enabled managers to arrange shifts to suit individual desires of work people, particularly with regard to the distances they had to travel to and from their work in the mornings and evenings. These benefits the multiple-shift system still confers on workers, for, as has been already pointed out, the weekly and daily maximum hours worked in multiple-shift mills are theoretically less than those in single-shift mills, and the shifts may still be so arranged that workers coming

\*Not printed.

from a distance can, to some extent, be accommodated with regard to the shifts which they work. The multiple-shift system is well understood by the workers, and, indeed, in some cases it seems to be preferred by them, although such preference, as has been openly expressed from time to time, is alleged to arise as much from the abuse to which the multiple-shift system lends itself as from its other merits. It is well known that, owing to the complicated nature of the shifts, the multiple-shift system has been the occasion of many illicit gains on the part of time-clerks and sirdars. It is also recognized that the multiple-shift system provides for a larger number of workmen than the single-shift system. Government has no accurate information as to the higher percentage of workmen employed in multiple-shift mills as against single-shift mills, but they believe that the figure varies from about 20 to 25 per cent. It is significant, however, that in spite of the statements which have been made regarding unemployment accruing from a change-over from the multiple to the single-shift system no complaints have reached Government regarding such unemployment, in spite of the fact that during the last few years fifty per cent. of the mills have changed over.

The Government of Bengal appreciate the reasons which have led to the multiple-shift system, and also the force of the contention that it gives to the jute manufacturing industry an opportunity of making the most of fixed plant within the present limits of the law. For many years, however, they have had before them constant complaint from the factory inspection department that the system prevents effective enforcement of the fundamental labour provisions of the Factories Act. The views of the department are not those only of the chief inspector; they arise from the experience of every inspector and every full-time certifying surgeon who has had to administer the Act, and the local Government on analysing the grounds on which their opinions have been founded have come to the conclusion that the complaints of the department are justified.

In the first place, it stands to reason that the multiple-shift system must render the checking of hours exceedingly difficult. This is inherent in it, as is evident from the following typical system of shifts :—

*Time-workers.*

- A.—5.30 to 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.
- B.—5.30 to 9.30 a.m. and 2 to 7 p.m.
- C.—8.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*Piece-workers.*

- A.—5.30 to 7.30 a.m. ; 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- B.—5.30 to 8 a.m. ; 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 3 to 7 p.m.
- C.—5.30 to 9 a.m. ; 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m.
- D.—5.30 to 10.30 a.m. ; 12 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

*Half-timers (Children).*

- A.—5.30 to 10 a.m.
- B.—10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
- C.—2.30 to 7 p.m.

(For a diagram of shifts vide Appendix A).

In the second place, it also stands to reason that there must be more than ordinary difficulty in checking hours in multiple-shift jute mills when the problem of devising suitable registers to secure observance of the Act proves so difficult. The factories department may fairly be looked on as expert in the matter of drawing up such registers, but the fact remains that neither the department nor the jute manufacturing industry itself, which has been constantly consulted on the forms proposed to be prescribed, have been able to find a register suitable to the circumstances.

In the third place, the list of irregularities attached to the letter of the Chief Inspector, dated the 17th May, 1927, quoted above, proves convincingly the Chief Inspector's contention that the system lends itself easily to abuses. Since the Chief Inspector submitted his report in 1927, further analysis has been made of irregularities in jute mills, and the following list is a record of irregularities in the employment of labour in multiple-shift jute mills from May, 1927 to November, 1929.

*Irregularities in the employment of Labour in jute mills using multiple system of shifts from May, 1927, to November, 1929.*

|        | Nature of infraction.  | Number of irregularities. | Number of prosecutions. |
|--------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 21     | Employing persons during their specified rest interval   | 3                         |                         |
|        | Employing women during their specified rest interval   | 2                         |                         |
|        |  | 5                         | —                       |
| 22     | Persons were being employed on Sundays without being given a holiday in lieu thereof.          | 3                         |                         |
|        | Illegal employment of persons on Sunday .. ..  | 2                         |                         |
|        | Persons were being employed on Sundays contrary to Section 22 and Urgent Repairs Notification. | 1                         |                         |
|        | Persons were being employed on Sundays contrary to Section 22 and Exemption Notification.      | 1                         |                         |
|        |  | 7                         | —                       |
| 23 (a) | Employing children without medical certificates or tokens.                                     | 12                        | 3                       |
|        | Employing children without medical certificates and on cancelled certificates.                 | 2                         |                         |
|        | Employing children on cancelled certificates .. ..   | 2                         |                         |
|        | Employing a child carrying a token giving reference to a certificate belonging to another.     | 1                         |                         |
|        | Children were being employed a few days before being certified.                                | 1                         |                         |
|        | A child had been employed without being certified ..   | 1                         |                         |
|        | Employing children below the legal age .. ..   | 4                         |                         |
|        | Children driven out of mill on arrival of the Inspector  | 3                         |                         |
|        |  | 26                        | 3                       |
| 24     | Employing women after legal hours .. .. .  | 1                         |                         |
|        | Employing women contrary to specified hours ..   | 1                         |                         |
|        | Women were found working before 5.30 a.m. ..   | 1                         |                         |
|        |  | 3                         | —                       |
| 25     | Employing children in two factories on the same day..  | 2                         | —                       |
| 26     | Employing persons contrary to specified hours ..   | 20                        | 1                       |
|        | Employing persons outside or beyond specified hours  | 8                         | 3                       |
|        | Employing persons beyond and without specified hours   | 2                         |                         |
|        | Persons found working on wrong shifts .. ..  | 4                         |                         |
|        | Employing a woman contrary to specified hours ..   | 1                         |                         |
|        | Employing children contrary to or beyond specified hours.                                      | 7                         |                         |
|        |  | 42                        | 4                       |
| 27     | Persons were being employed for more than 60 hours a week.                                     | 1                         | —                       |
| 28     | Persons were being employed for more than 11 hours a day.                                      | 2                         | —                       |

*Irregularities in the employment of Labour in jute mills using multiple system of shifts from May, 1927, to November, 1929.—Contd.*

| Nature of infraction. |  | Number of irregularities. | Number of prosecutions. |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 35                    | Registers not maintained .. .. .   | 5                         | 2                       |
|                       | Registers not maintained up to date .. .. .  | 11                        |                         |
|                       | Registers not maintained correctly .. .. .   | 6                         |                         |
|                       | Registers not maintained correctly and up to date ..   | 3                         | 2                       |
|                       | Total weekly hours not shown in employment register  | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Actual hours worked including overtime not shown correctly .. .. .                                     | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Specified hours of work and shift classification not shown   | 2                         |                         |
|                       | Children's register not being kept correctly .. .. .   | 3                         |                         |
|                       | Double employment of children .. .. .  | 1                         |                         |
|                       | Attendance of a child found working not recorded ..  | 1                         |                         |
| 35 & 43 (a)           | Only register for the week current at the time of the Inspector's visit kept. Previous ones destroyed. | 1                         |                         |
|                       |  | 35                        | 4                       |
| Rule 71               | Employing a woman without "employment number check."   | 1                         |                         |
| Total .. .. .         |  | 124                       | 11                      |

In the fourth place, the present full time Certifying Surgeons, Captain O'Connor and Military Assistant Surgeon Pownes, have reported as follows:—"The systems of shifts in multiple-shift jute mills afford every opportunity for employment beyond legal limits and in some mills children are actually working as many as 11 and 12 hours per day. In single-shift mills, where two or more are adjoining, children have every opportunity of working the morning shift in one mill and the afternoon shift in another. Generally speaking it may be stated that in our opinion approximately 25 per cent. of the children employed in jute mills work longer hours than the law permits, thereby affecting and jeopardizing their general health and physique."

The above remarks, it is true, apply to both multiple and single-shift mills, but the regulation of child labour in single-shift mills is easier from the point of view of both the Manager and the Factory Inspector, and the Chief Inspector is of the opinion that were shifts properly regulated, then, in due course, the evil of double employment of children could be reduced to negligible proportions.

In the fifth place, as already indicated, the actual number of detected irregularities is not an adequate measure of the extent of the abuses under the multiple-shift system. It has already been mentioned that the majority of detected irregularities are practically random instances. During inspection, an inspector has not the time to question every adult or every child in a jute mill, but the fact that irregularities are detected in random instances gives reasonable ground for belief that the actual number of detections are only a small proportion of the total. Moreover, the inspector is constantly faced with the antagonism of the *sirdars*, time-clerks, and workers themselves in the detection of irregularities: It is significant that up to the present not a single employee in the jute manufacturing industry of Bengal has voluntarily come forward to give evidence of infraction of the hours provisions of the Factories Act. Trade unions have not yet gained sufficient strength to enable them to take a leading part in the enforcement of the labour provisions of the Act, and in many instances questionable means are employed by *sirdars* and time-clerks in order to hoodwink inspectors. Managers are not to blame for this position. They are eager to avoid conflict with the law and generally do all they can to secure an adequate enforcement of it. Like the inspectors, however, they are faced with the problem that the labour is not desirous of observing in every case the labour provisions of the Factories Act. This, indeed, may be said to be an argument in favour of the continuance of the present system as it may be contended that if the labour provisions of the Act are not desired by labour itself, then there can be little oppressive employment. On the other hand, the attempts to hoodwink the Act are made mainly by the time-clerks and *sirdars* against whom in the present system of working the actual workers themselves dare not protest.

In the sixth place, the judgment in the Howrah mills case, a copy of which is attached (Appendix B) shows that any register which may be devised is likely to be useless. In that case it has been ruled that the words "up to date" in section 41 (A) of the Factories Act may be interpreted so freely as to permit the filling in of a register after a shift has been completed. This ruling removes the only effective means at the disposal of the inspector for checking the hours of workers.

In the enforcement of the labour provisions of the Factories Act, the first essential is co-operation of managers and managing agents with the officers responsible for the administration of the Act. Generally speaking, both managing agents and mill-managers have done their best to enforce the law, but the results as reported seem to indicate that managing agents, mill-managers, and factory inspectors are faced with almost an insoluble problem so long as the present complicated system of shifts continues to exist. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce suggest in their letter No. 2933-1927, dated the 30th September, 1927, that the system of inspection be revised. They say:—"The Committee of the Chamber do not say that the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories does not indicate a satisfactory state of affairs, but, in their opinion, it is more reasonable that the Government should so organize the system of inspection as to make it efficient to deal with the existing and old-established conditions of an industry, than that these conditions should be pruned and shaped to meet its difficulties."

The Government of Bengal cannot accept this view. The record of infractions of the Act is sufficient proof of the difficulty of enforcing the provisions under the relay system. With the exception of those owners who are ready to take the risk of conviction for labour irregularities for the reason that the large gains which accrue from such irregularities are out of all proportion to the fines which are imposed, it is assumed that managing agents and managers do intend to co-operate with the Factory Inspection Department in the observance of the law. That they are unable to do so is not their fault, but the fault of the system on which they work. Neither managers, nor assistant managers, nor overseers, can come to know their labour personally on a multiple-shift system. The workers are moving in and out of the factory during the whole of the day, and when 13½ hours are worked, different shifts of supervising staff have also to be employed. If the managers themselves and their superior staff do not know their labour, it goes without saying that factory inspectors, who visit the mills only occasionally, cannot know the labour. Even were the staff of the Factory Inspection Department to be so increased as to provide one inspector per multiple-shift jute mill in Bengal, the enforcement of the labour provisions of the Act could not be guaranteed. The Government of Bengal, moreover, which have already expanded the Factory Inspection Department in recent years to the limit of their financial resources, could not possibly subscribe to the view that where, in their opinion, the end to be achieved can be effected by simpler means, the revenues of the province should be spent in employing a large staff of inspectors to secure observance of the law in only one section of one industry.

The enforcement of the labour provisions of the Act, in the opinion of the local government, should be accomplished not through a much-multiplied staff of inspectors, but through control of shifts. Regulation of hours, unaccompanied by control of shifts, has proved a failure, except in single-shift mills, which, under the present law, are liable at any time to be forced back to the multiple-shift system, the continuance of which, under the present law, must inevitably lead Government to consider seriously whether it is worth while at all to enforce the labour provisions of the Act.

The local government also consider that the time has arrived when the possibility of reducing maximum hours, both weekly and daily, should be taken up. The present weekly limit was imposed to carry into effect the principle of Article 10 of the Washington Hours Convention, but the same Article says that further provisions limiting the hours of work in India shall be considered at a future meeting of the general conference. The local government have no information as to when the reconsideration of the existing hours provisions is likely to take place, but they think that the time is even now ripe for re-opening the question. The new hours provisions of the 1922 Act, have in no way injuriously affected industry, which, indeed, in the main, was working within the maxima for adult labour before the Act was passed. From the analysis of hours already given above, it is clear that the majority of industries in Bengal are already working less than the maxima, both weekly and daily; indeed, had the system of work in jute mills been reckoned as before the 1st July, 1929, when the hours of machine working were changed from 54 to 60, then Bengal would have shown a very small percentage of workers employed for the full 60-hour week. Industry in general has come to recognize the virtue of shorter hours. The Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1908 came to the conclusion that shorter hours in India would mean higher production, a lesson which by then had been thoroughly assimilated in the

West, and, though the Government of Bengal are not in possession of statistical evidence showing that the production per operative per hour in the chief industries in Bengal is higher than it was before 1911, they conclude that because the majority of industries have reduced hours, such reduction has been in the best interests of the industries concerned.

The important exceptions, of course, are in the textile industry which in Bengal is tantamount to the jute manufacturing industry, for this industry employs well over half the total number of factory employees in the province. The Bengal labour problem is mainly a jute mill problem. Hence, it is that any proposal which is made regarding industrial labour must always have particular reference to that industry. The hours position in the jute manufacturing industry, is, as stated above, that the weekly limit in single-shift mills is 60 hours, in multiple-shift mills, between 38 and 55 hours. The daily limit in single-shift mills is 11 hours, and in multiple-shift mills, between 9½ and 11 hours.

The Government of Bengal consider that neither the jute manufacturing industry nor any other industry in the Presidency would be seriously affected were the weekly limit of hours reduced to a maximum of 55, with a proviso that the hours might be extended on the principle of section 30 (2) of the present Act, to deal with an exceptional pressure of work. 55 hours, however, should be regarded as the normal hours for every industry per week.

The maximum daily hours, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, should be 10.

The reductions suggested above are material ones, though the maxima still remain considerably higher than Western standards. Reduction in India must be gradual, for each step must be tested with reference to the regularity and efficiency of workers on the new systems of work. The Government of Bengal believe that the gradual reduction in hours which has taken place in the last 20 years has been accompanied by greater regularity and more efficiency, and they believe that further reduction will lead to the same result. They think, however, that the 48-hour week and the 8-hour day are both outside the realm of practical policy at present; indeed, only in recent years—or rather months—has any demand been made by local labour leaders for an 8-hour day or 48-hour week. Some industries, e.g., railway workshops, have already adopted the 8-hour day and the 48-hour week, but to prescribe it by law as applicable to all industries is at present impossible. Reduction in hours must go hand in hand with intensification in efficiency and regularity, which develops only slowly, over a series of years.

The Government of Bengal do not anticipate that industry in general will oppose the 10-hour day and the 55-hour week. The Government of India, indeed, prior to the Washington Conference, ascertained 10 years ago, after consultation with local Governments, that the general consensus of opinion was in favour of a 10-hour day. This limit may now be adopted, and with it a corresponding reduction of 5 hours in the maximum working week.

The Government of Bengal have carefully considered the question whether the hours of adult women should be reduced below those of adult men. On general grounds of humanity and progress, they would prefer to recommend a lower working-limit for adult women, but were such a limit imposed, it would react detrimentally on the interests of women workers. Disparity between the working hours of adult men and women would almost certainly end in the replacement of women by young adult men and were such replacement not to be made, a shift system would have to be introduced. This the Government of Bengal desire to obviate.

It is assumed that, in spite of the contentions of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the jute manufacturing industry falls within the general exceptions mentioned in Article 7 of the Draft Convention concerning the employment of women during night, the Government of India will amend the Factories Act to prevent women and children working between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. On this assumption, the limit of hours within which factories which employ women and children will be able to work will be 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., or 13 hours a day. The local government see no reason why if the recommendations they have made above are accepted, textile mills in Bengal should not work 2 shifts of 5 hours each per day with a long interval in the middle of the day, during which workers could go to their homes and have a meal and rest. In this connection, attention is invited to the findings of Mr. Parsons's report on the ventilation and the humidification of cotton mills in Bengal, which has been sent separately to the Commission. The general trend of Mr. Parsons's findings is that the hottest period of the day should be set aside for rest. His conclusions are tentative, and much more detailed enquiry is necessary before a categorical finding can be reached. But there would appear to be little doubt that it would be in the best interests of the workers

themselves that, particularly, in the hot months of the year they should not have to work during the hottest periods of the day. The Government of Bengal, however, have reached no findings on the particular system of working that should be enforced. What they do desire is the re-inclusion in the Factories Act of the power to control shifts. That power, they consider, should rest in the hands not of the Inspector of Factories, as it was in the 1911 Act, but with the local government, for the reason that the recommendations of the Factory Inspection Department would be subject to the decision of the Government, which usually consult the interests concerned in such matters.

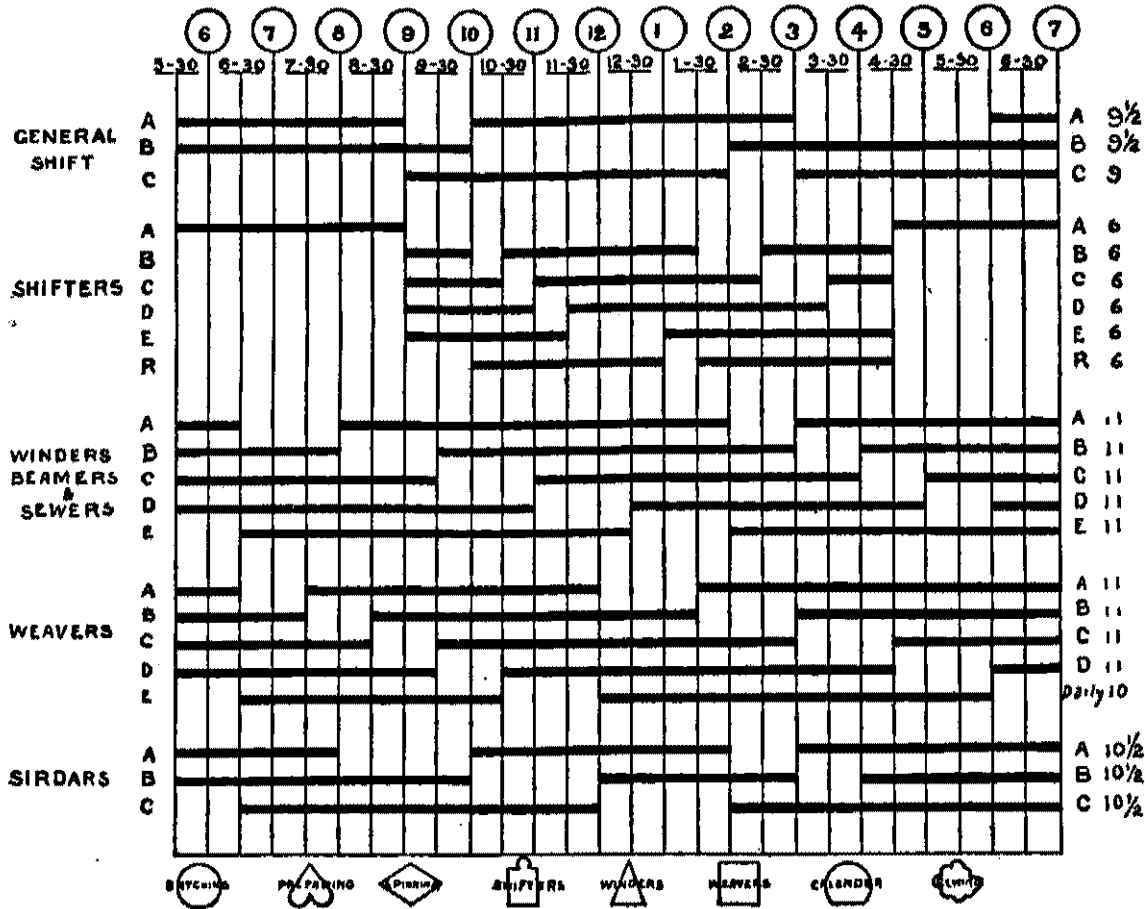
Much of the opposition to the re-inclusion of the power to control shifts arises from a fear that individual jute mills may be prejudiced. The root difficulty of the jute manufacturing industry is that the mills work and have always worked in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion. Their working agreements are unstable and always liable to dissolution by the disaffection of a minority. It is believed that the industry itself would ultimately welcome regulation by law on the ground that such regulation would be more stable and certain than internal regulation. All mills, both outside and inside the association, would be placed on a similar working basis and subject to a control which is not affected by competitive interests. The working conditions of employees could also be given more effective consideration. The Government of Bengal do not consider that the present single-shift system is a guarantee against the abuse of the labour provisions of the Factories Act. They have been compelled to support it as against the existing multiple-shift system, for the reason that no workable relay system has been put before them. Were the power to control shifts conferred on the local Government, it would be possible for them to permit systems of shifts, provided they were convinced that such shifts did not militate against the effective enforcement of the Act. On the other hand, it is probable that the industry itself would prefer that all the jute mills should work on a uniform basis, provided they were guaranteed that that basis could not be altered without the consent of Government.

The recommendations of the Government of Bengal with regard to the hours of children automatically follow from what has been said above. They consider that the maximum period of work permissible for children should be half the period permitted to adults, viz., five hours. This period would lead to greater effectiveness in the enforcement of the provisions relating to children and could be well adapted to a simple system of elementary education. If this recommendation is accepted it follows that the provisions of Sections 21 (b) and 21 (2) of the Factories Act are unnecessary.

The local Government do not consider that any change is required in the present age limits of children.

It has been suggested in the memorandum on "IX—Hours—A—Factories: (58) *Effect of daily limit*" that in the case of industries which are subject to fluctuating demands, probably, employees would be sufficiently protected against excessive hours, and the Act made workable were a weekly and not a daily restriction of hours imposed. This applies only to the non-textile industries, such as the engineering and shipbuilding industries, in which it has been alleged that the existing Act has led to a want of elasticity in working hours. All these industries work relatively short hours per day, viz., eight, and although the local Government have not examined this question in all its implications, there would appear to be a reasonable case for withdrawing the daily limit, provided means could be devised to ensure that the weekly limit was not exceeded. This raised a cognate question of considerable importance, viz., whether regulations could not be framed under the Factories Act on the parallel of the Codes of Regulations framed under the Factories Act in Great Britain. Such regulations might be framed on an all-India basis in consultation with the industries concerned, and it is probable that they might lead to simplification of administration on the side of both Government and the employers. The Government of Bengal, for example, have recommended separately that the English precedent should be followed in the case of docks. And it is probable that engineering workshops, ship-building workshops, and similar concerns could be dealt with in similar self-contained regulations. The framing of such regulations would obviate the complications of Chapter V of the Act and eliminate the difficulties which have been encountered in connection with the fixing of hours under section 26 of the Act. The local Government are inclined to view the above suggestions with favour, but are not prepared to give a final opinion on them without further analysis, in consultation with the industries concerned. They are of the opinion, however, that if such regulations are to be framed, the authority for prescribing them should be the Government of India and not local Governments.

APPENDIX B.  
 (Total number of employees, 6,964.)  
 System of Shifts.





## APPENDIX B.

IN THE COURT OF BABU B. N. MUKHERJI, MAGISTRATE,  
FIRST CLASS, HOWRAH.

Complaint Case No. 1150 of 1927.

*Judgment.*

The charge is that when the Inspector of Factories inspected the Howrah jute mills on the 28th July, he found that the attendance register had not been written in respect of five children workers. The manager, Mr. Murray, has been prosecuted under Section 41 (h) of the Factories Act. On the application of the manager, three other assistants have been summoned.

The Inspector of Factories has been examined for the prosecution. The manager has examined himself and two other witnesses.

There is no denying the fact the " B " shift commenced work at 10 a.m. and that at 11.15 to 11.25 a.m., it was found that the attendance of the five children had not been taken in the prescribed register. The witness admits that there are about 1,300 persons working in the particular mill and about 15,000 in the whole of the mill, and that it takes about a minute per head to mark attendance of the workers. The manager says that the taking of attendance is finished in about 1½ hours. The law says that the register is to be kept " up to date ". It does not mean that all the 1,300 persons are to be marked in the attendance register exactly at 10.30 a.m., which is physically impossible. A reasonable amount of time must be allowed to establish the identity of the persons working and then writing up the register. If it was found about the end of the day that the register had not been written up then of course it would be said that an offence under Section 41 (h) had been committed. But in the present case I cannot hold that the prosecution has established its case.

Further, even if it is supposed that an offence has been committed, yet it appears from the evidence of the Inspector of Factories that it is not possible for the manager to look into the working of all the departments and that his duty is that of supervision and management.

It appears from the defence evidence, including three volumes of circular orders issued by Mr. Murray (Ex. A to C) that the manager issued from time to time very strongly worded orders to his subordinates warning them against violation of the rules and threatening with punishments and that as a matter of fact some assistants were in fact fined and some dismissed. It must therefore be said that the manager has exercised " due diligence to enforce the execution of the Act " as contemplated in Section 42 (1) (a).

I therefore find the accused not guilty and acquit him under Section 245, C.P.C. Enter Section 41 (h) mistake of fact.

(Signed) B. N. MUKHERJI,  
Magistrate, 1st class, Howrah.

Howrah,  
14th October, 1927.

## X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults, and Children.

## A.—Factories.

81. *Effect of 1922 Act on Employment.*—The higher age limit imposed by the 1922 Act on the employment of children has resulted in a very marked diminution in the numbers employed. The following table shows from 1920 to 1928 the number of adults and children employed in both textile and non-textile factories in Bengal :—

| Year.      | Number of children in textile factories. | Number of children in non-textile factories. | Number of adults in textile factories. | Number of adults in non-textile factories. |
|------------|--|--|--|--|
| 1920 .. .. | 30,599                                   | 4,361  | 262,238                                | 167,515                                    |
| 1921 .. .. | 31,387                                   | 4,899  | 263,299                                | 165,827                                    |
| 1922 .. .. | 29,929                                   | 6,203  | 299,576                                | 181,372                                    |
| 1923 .. .. | 29,965                                   | 5,394  | 305,267                                | 183,009                                    |
| 1924 .. .. | 29,361                                   | 5,679  | 317,576                                | 190,507                                    |
| 1925 .. .. | 27,906                                   | 5,945  | 323,768                                | 193,723                                    |
| 1926 .. .. | 21,912                                   | 5,891  | 319,096                                | 204,024                                    |
| 1927 .. .. | 20,575                                   | 5,862  | 318,202                                | 215,120                                    |
| 1928 .. .. | 18,906                                   | 5,516  | 326,750                                | 219,907                                    |

Of the total number of children employed in Bengal, the great majority are employed in textile factories, and the above total shows that while the number of adults in textile factories has grown from approximately 262,200 to 326,700, the number of children has fallen from 30,600 to 18,900. In other words, while the number of adults in textile factories has increased by 24·5 per cent., the number of children has decreased by 38 per cent. This decrease is practically entirely due to the raising of the age limit by the 1922 Act. A few jute mills in recent years have entirely stopped employing children. The difficulties in regularizing the employment of children and the risk of prosecution, if children are found illegally employed, are undoubtedly the reasons why these jute mills have dispensed entirely with half-time labour.

In non-textile factories in which the employment of children is insignificant, as compared with textile factories, the number of adults increased from 167,515 in 1920 to 219,907 in 1928 or by 31·2 per cent., while the number of children increased from 4,361 in 1922 to 5,516 in 1928, or by 26·7 per cent. The following table shows the relative increases in the number of non-textile factories, and the number of employees, including children, during the period 1912 to 1920 and 1920 to 1928 :—

| —   | 1912.   | 1920.   | In-crease. | 1920.   | 1928.   | In-crease. |
|---|---------|---------|------------|---------|---------|------------|
| Number of non-textile factories.                      | 247     | 596     | 349        | 596     | 1,247   | 651        |
| Number of children employed in non-textile factories. | 2,282   | 4,361   | 2,079      | 4,361   | 5,516   | 1,155      |
| Number of adults employed in non-textile factories.   | 106,755 | 167,515 | 60,760     | 167,515 | 219,907 | 52,392     |

The increases in the number of employees, shown by the above figures, may be taken as being entirely due to the increases in the number of factories brought on to the register. The comparatively small increase in the number of child operatives during the 1920–28 period is due to the raising of the age limit from 9 to 12 years by the 1922 Act. A considerable increase took place between 1920 and 1922, but this was followed by a decrease after 1922, when the new provisions came into effect. The number of factories on the register in 1922 was 884 as against 1,247 in 1928, whereas the number of children employed was 6,203 and 5,516 respectively, i.e., an increase of 363 factories and a decrease of 687 children.

82. *Admission of infants to Factories.*—The Factories Act contains ample provision for the exclusion of infants from factories, if such exclusion is deemed advisable.

It is practically the universal habit of mothers employed in factories in Bengal to bring their infants into the factories with them. Very few cases of accidents to such children have been reported, but to avoid the chance of accidents several attempts have been made by employers to establish creches. Unfortunately not one of these has had the success that was anticipated. Women prefer to have their infants under their own eyes in that part of the factory in which they are working if at all possible. They are suspicious of other supervision for reasons which are best known to themselves. Probably they arise from caste prejudices or personal jealousies. It is difficult to understand why women should not prefer the obvious advantages which creches offer, but the fact remains that the good intentions of some managements in this respect have been frustrated. On the other hand, useful experience has been gained which will doubtless be used to future advantage.

It would be impossible at the present stage to prohibit the admission of infants and young children to factories. This would be tantamount to prohibiting the employment of female employees who are mothers of small children. Any attempt to force the exclusion of children or even to force the use of creches inside the factory would almost certainly result in labour trouble. The question is not a serious one, because the children are better off, at least in the larger, well-ventilated factories than they are in the lines or bazaar bustees. Moreover, in the home of the ordinary factory-worker there is no means of supervision of infants, apart from the mother herself. Were the admission of infants to factories to constitute a danger, the existing powers of the Act could be used at any time.

86.—*Work and Training of Young Adults*—(i) *Facilities for apprenticeship.*—In textile factories, with few exceptions, there are no systematic arrangements for the training of young adults.

In the Ludlow Jute Mills at Chengail a system has been enforced since 1922 which aims at the filling of subordinate posts by boys educated in the mill's own school.

After three years at the mill school the six most advanced pupils are put into a "B" apprenticeship class for a period of 18 months, during which time their daily training consists of being in the mill departments from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and at school from 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. According to a calculated schedule time each boy goes through the machine shop, carpenter shop, electrical department, power-plant department, weaving and preparing departments, and, at the end of 18 months, is promoted to an "A" apprenticeship class, where he goes through another course on similar lines, but on a higher plane. After 18 months as an "A" apprentice, the boy is given his choice with respect to the department in which he wishes to work. During these three years' apprenticeship, he is paid at the beginning at the rate of 2 annas per day, rising by small sums every six months. He then starts at 12 annas per day in the department of his choice, where he begins his regular work. Dependents of all classes of employees are eligible for such training irrespective of caste or creed. Ninety per cent. of the seats are allotted to sons of labourers, and 10 per cent. to sons of the clerical staff. The management hopes that in due time boys educated in this way will be able to fill posts in the mill as high as that of departmental manager.

Systematic training in craftsmanship is confined almost entirely to Government factories, railway workshops, and the larger engineering concerns. These factories employ apprentices who go through a five years' course of workshop and technical training.

87. *Extent of "Blind Alley" Employment (i.e., Extent to which Children are Dismissed on reaching Full Age).*—There are no statistics available on this subject, but there is no evidence to show that children are generally dismissed on reaching full age. Boys are absorbed in the industries in which they work as half-timers, but it is not uncommon for boys on reaching the legal adult age for factory employment to leave their employment for some time. Girls, as a rule, leave their employment when they are married, and may or may not return some time later.

89. *Work of Women and Children in Factories not subject to Act.*—There is a large number of concerns in Bengal which fall short of the requirements of section 2 (3) (a) of the Factories Act for registration purposes. The main classes of such concerns are soorki mills, rice mills, iron foundries, printing presses, match factories, brass and bell metal casting and polishing workshops, oil mills, hardware workshops, steel-trunk factories, wire netting and weaving factories, umbrella factories, soap factories, tanneries, and hosiery factories. The number of women and children employed in these factories is not known, but probably it is not very large. In one instance only in Bengal has use been made of section 2 (3) (b) of the Act. The factory in question which was already registered, was notified as the result of an attempt by the proprietor to avoid coming under the Act by dispensing with the use of power-driven machinery.

The majority of the smaller factories are ill-adapted for factory purposes, and the extension of the Act to them has been prevented in Bengal hitherto by lack of staff due to financial reasons. Probably, however, there would be no real reason for the extended application of section 2 (3) (b) of the Act on account of women and children only. The local Government consider that they should be regulated in the interests of all employees, and such regulation is only a matter of time and money.

It may be added, that at present, Government have in contemplation the extension of the Act by means of notification under section 2 (3) (b) to all small tea factories. A fairly large number of tea factories do not satisfy the provision of section 2 (3) (a) of the Act, and it is considered desirable that small as well as large tea factories should be brought under regulation.

## XII. Wages.

### LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

dated 16th December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith copies of memoranda of the Government of Bengal on XII.—Wages, in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Commission.

2. With regard to Chapter XI, item (93), I am to say that a report has been included under item (79) (*days worked per week in other establishments*), the memorandum on which was forwarded with this department letter referred to above. Items (94) and (95) are dealt with by the Government of India, and the local Government have no remarks to offer on them.

3. Memoranda on items (96) to (104) (Chapter XII) and items (108) to (111) (Chapter XII), in one collection are forwarded herewith, as also a separate memorandum on items (105), (106) and (107).

4. I am to say that the Government of Bengal propose to offer no evidence on the items in Chapter XIII.—“Industrial Efficiency of Workers.” These are essentially subjects for which the necessary facts must be obtained from employers of labour. I am, however, to enclose a note on sub-item (115) (ix) (*effect on production of alcohol and drugs*).

96. *Prevailing Rates of Wages (time and piece) and Average Earnings.*—(i) *In industry.*—No census of wages has been held in Bengal. Such figures as are available have been collected by the Chief Inspector of Factories, and the most comprehensive report compiled so far is in appendix VI to the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1927.

No further wage figures were published in the report of the Chief Inspector for the year 1928, as the wage-level remained the same.

(ii) *In surrounding agricultural areas.*—Quinquennial censuses of agricultural wages are held in Bengal. The last census was held in 1925. No material changes have taken place in agricultural wages since the publication of that report.

(iii) *Difference between money wages and money value of all earnings.*—No official analysis has been made of this subject in Bengal. In organized industry payment in kind is not usual. In a large number of concerns, however, workers receive benefits analogous to payment in kind, such as housing, which is provided either free or on less than an economic rent. In some cases, the money value of wages is increased by strict supervision of bazaar prices and by the provision of special facilities for bazaar purposes. These result in cheaper and better food being made available to employees than is usually provided in the local bazaars.

In agriculture, payment in kind is much more common, and this applies also to tea-gardens, where houses are provided, as a rule, entirely free of rent. Firewood is also often provided free, and workers are given plots of land on very favourable terms.

97. *Movements in recent years.*—(i) *Increases and decreases.*—(ii) *Reasons for variation.*—All wages in Bengal have increased during the last 10 years. The main reason for the increase was the rise in the cost of living during and after the war. Since the post-war increases were given, the wage standard has been stable. After the war, from 1919-20 to 1921-22, there was a great deal of industrial unrest owing partly to the fact that the increase in the cost of living had not been followed sufficiently promptly by a corresponding increase in wages. By 1922-23 the unrest subsided, as wages had been brought into line with the cost of living.

No authoritative general figures have been collected to show the differences in the standards of wages in the last 10 years, but in the Bengal jute mills, which may be accepted as a type for other industries, the rise in wages has been between 50 and 60 per cent. No definite calculation could be given without a detailed wage census, which cannot be undertaken in Bengal until the Government of Bengal can afford to set up the necessary organization.

Statements are attached showing current rates of wages and movements in recent years in the following industries and services.

(5) Inland steamer employees (the Inland Steamer Companies)—E. (6) Canal employees—F. (7) Cinchona plantation employees—G. (8) Tea garden employees—H.

(iii) *Relation to prices and cost of living (pre-war and post-war).*—As indicated elsewhere, no cost of living statistics have been prepared in Bengal. There is, therefore, no authoritative information with regard to the relation between prices and cost of living pre-war and post-war.

(iv) *Relation to profits.*—No official information is available on this head.

#### E.

##### Inland Steamer Employees (The Inland Steamer Companies).

*Prevailing Rates of Wages and Earnings.*—Serangs Rs. 46 to Rs. 150 per month; drivers Rs. 46 to Rs. 120 per month.

*Lowest Ratings.*—Generally speaking, the minimum pay is Rs. 20 per month.

*Movements in Recent Years.*—Increased by approximately 20 per cent. since 1920.

*Note.*—The above rates do not apply to the crews of barges employed on harbour work.

#### F.

##### Irrigation Department—Canal Employees.

*Prevailing Rates of Wages and Earnings.*—Rates in metropolitan areas and in Eastern Bengal:—

|                     | Rs. a.         | Rs. a.  |
|---------------------|----------------|---------|
|                     | Per day.       |         |
| Coolies .. .. .     | 0 8            | to 0 12 |
| Masons .. .. .      | 1 4            | to 1 12 |
| Carpenters .. .. .  | 1 4            | to 1 12 |
| Blacksmiths .. .. . | 1 4            | to 1 8  |
|                     | or even Rs. 2. |         |
| Sweepers .. .. .    | 0 12           |         |
| Khalasis .. .. .    | 0 12           |         |

Members of ships' crews are employed on monthly wages varying from Rs. 18 to Rs. 75 per mensem.

*Prevailing rates of wages in 1929 in South Western and Northern Bengal:—*

(1) Coolies for earthwork are paid 8 annas to 10 annas per diem. But in cultivation season the rate is increased to 12 annas per day. The female coolie gets one anna less than the male coolie.

|                                      | Rs. a.   | Rs. a.  |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---------|
|                                      | Per day. |         |
| (2) Carpenter .. .. .                | 1 4      | to 1 8  |
| (3) Mason .. .. .                    | 1 4      | to 1 8  |
| (4) Thatcher .. .. .                 | 0 12     | to 0 14 |
| (5) Blacksmith .. .. .               | 1 8      | to 2 0  |
| (6) Reja for carrying mortar .. .. . | 0 5      | to 0 6  |

On the piecework system their earning depends on their output. Generally the men earn about 12 annas per day for earthwork. The Sonthali coolie and his wife earn a rupee a day working together.

In recent years there has been increase in wages and the present rates are 40 to 50 per cent. above the pre-war level.

#### G.

##### Cinchona Plantation Employees.

*Rates—Skilled Men.*—Rs. 12 to Rs. 36 per month according to degree of skill and local supply and demand. Unskilled men 5 annas 3 pies to 6 annas per day.

Women—4 annas to 4 annas 3 pies per day.

Children—3 annas per day.

*Movements in recent years.*—Movements about 50—80 per cent. above the rates prevailing in 1912.

## H.

## Tea Garden Factories.

(i) *Darjeeling*.—The minimum average wages earned per day by ordinary workers will be approximately, for men 7-6 annas, for women 6 annas and children 2-9 annas. As much of their work is paid on the piece-work system throughout the year, it is usual for good industrious workers to earn more than double the figures mentioned.

It is estimated that the average earnings of the workers are about double those of 15 years ago.

(ii) *Jalpaiguri*.—The average monthly wages earned by a man is about Rs. 12-4, by a woman Rs. 5 and by a child Rs. 2-10. This is secured, however, by working only about one-third of the time which could normally be expected from workmen without imposing a strain on them.

The rates of earnings have increased considerably in recent years and it is considered that since the war, the earnings have in exceptional instances increased by 250 per cent.

(iii) *Chittagong*.—The average wages earned per day by a man is 8 annas, and by a woman 7 annas, the wages vary according to the amount of work the worker desires to do.

Earnings have generally increased by about 25 per cent. in recent years.

101. *Method of Fixing Wages*.—(i) *By negotiated agreements*.—The fixation of wages by negotiated agreements is extremely rare in Bengal. In the Calcutta Tramways Company, as the result of serious labour trouble in 1921, an agreement was reached regarding the fixation of wages as the result of the report of the committee of inquiry appointed by Government.

In 1929, in the jute mills, industry agreement was negotiated by the Labour Intelligence Officer embodying the general principles on which wages should be paid on the change-over from 54 to 60 hours working week.

In many disputes informal agreements have been made between managements and their workmen regarding the rates to be paid but these do not fall within the definition of negotiated agreements.

(ii) *Other means*.—The ordinary method of fixing wages is supply and demand, which are tempered by the prevailing rates in the various areas. Practically no agreements of a general character between employers are in operation in Bengal. Wages are fixed by individual concerns, not by industries or localities.

105. *Minimum wages—Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment*.—The advisability and possibility of the statutory establishment of minimum wages in India was considered in 1927-28 by the Government of Bengal in connection with the International Labour Conferences held in 1927 and 1928. The Government of Bengal recommended that the Government delegates at Geneva should ask for the exclusion of India from any Convention or Recommendation on the subject that might be adopted, on the basis of Article 405 of the Treaty of Peace. The following extracts, adapted from a demi-official letter on the subject to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Industries Department, indicate the grounds on which they reached their conclusions:—

"(1) The subject is not entirely new to the Government of Bengal, as a reference to the proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council of the 7th July, 1921, will show. Mr. K. C. Roy Chaudhuri's Resolution, moved just after the Bengal Committee on Industrial unrest had finished its enquiries, could hardly then be taken seriously by the council, but it at least elicited from Sir John Kerr a clear statement of what the Government of Bengal then thought of the applicability of the minimum wage system to India, a subject which, as he pointed out to the council, very few have studied, and concerning which, it may be added, his arguments are as valid in 1928 as they were in 1921.

"(2) In view of the importance of the issue under consideration, it is necessary to go into the problem of minimum wage machinery in some detail. It is not proposed to deal with the general economic issues involved in minimum wage legislation; the questionnaire adopted at last year's conference clearly shows that only methods are going to be taken into consideration at this year's conference.

"(3) The example chosen for comparative study is the Trade Board system in the United Kingdom. This is chosen for several reasons; but mainly because in India labour legislation has, as a rule, followed the example of similar legislation in Great Britain; the Trade Board method of fixing minimum wages has been widely adopted in Europe outside Britain, e.g., in France, Germany, Norway, Austria and

Czecho-Slovakia ; it has also been adopted in the Argentine Republic, and, in a distinctive form, in some parts of Australasia. The General Board system, common in North America, differs from the English system only in respect of method ; in trade boards, rates are fixed by industry or by part of an industry or trade, in general Boards, they are fixed for a number of industries or for a whole area. The other types of method for fixing minimum wages—compulsory arbitration and direct legislation—need hardly be mentioned, as it is taken for granted that the Government of India have not had either of them even in remote contemplation when framing their tentative proposals.

" (4) It is not proposed here to go into a detailed history or description of the Trade Board system in Great Britain. Sir John Kerr dealt with this side of the question in his council speech, to which reference is invited. A short resume of British Trade Board legislation is necessary, however, in order to bring into prominence some salient points which give illumination from the comparative point of view.

" (5) Trade boards in Great Britain originated in 1910 as the result of the passing of the Trades Boards Act, of 1909. This Act was the culmination of a long continued agitation against " sweating " in particular trades and in industry in general. The particular trades scheduled in the first Trade Boards Act, were chain-making, machine-made lace and net finishing, paper-box making, ready-made and wholesale bespoke tailoring. Trade boards were established in these trades soon after the passing of the Act, and in 1913 four more trades were included, viz., sugar confectionery and food preserving, shirt-making, hollow ware and tin-box making, and linen and cotton embroidery. Up to the war, in all, 13 boards were established. During the war, the trade boards were in practice, superseded by orders issued by the Ministry of Munitions, but in 1917, as the result of recommendations made by the Reconstruction Committee on the regulation of women's wages, the question of prescribing a minimum wage for women workers was taken up, and trade board machinery was suggested as a means to secure that end. The Whitley reports also recommend the continuance and further establishment of trade boards as a measure for the preservation of industrial peace in trades which were not well organized. As a result of the recommendations of the reconstruction committee and of the Whitley reports, the Trade Boards Act was amended in 1918. The fundamental principles of the first Act were unchanged. These features were (1) that minimum wages should be fixed trade by trade ; (2) that the power of fixing the rates should be entrusted to a joint board composed of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers in the trade concerned, with the addition of " appointed members " ; and (3) that rates fixed by trade boards became, when confirmed by the Ministry of Labour, enforceable either by civil or by criminal proceedings through a Government department. The original trades to which the Act applied were unorganized on both sides, i.e., there was little or no organization amongst the employers and there was practically none amongst the workers. In some of the trades, too, there was a large amount of " home work," that is work done in the worker's own home, usually at contract rates, which were very low.

" (6) In the original Act, the description of the class of trade to which the Act could be applied was that the rate of wages prevailing in such trade should be " exceptionally low " as compared with that in other employments. Difficulties arose in connection with the interpretation of the words " exceptionally low." It proved difficult in practice to establish that in any particular trade wages were exceptionally low in comparison with other trades especially as the comparison might be with other " sweated " trades. It was also considered necessary, in the conditions of industry excepted to prevail at the end of the war, to give power to the Minister of Labour not only to deal with trades which were manifestly " sweated " trades but also with trades which might become " sweated " as the result of the flow of labour into such trades with the cessation of war conditions. The result was that in the new Act the Minister of Labour was empowered to establish trade boards in any trade, " having regard to the rates of wages prevailing in the trade or in part of the trade." It was also added that he had to be satisfied that no adequate machinery was in existence for the effective regulation of wages throughout the trade. The 1918 Act also amended the original Act in respect of procedure, but this need not be further pursued. It may be added, however, that since the end of the war the list of trade boards established under the Acts has been enormously increased. It now extends to between 44 and 50 boards covering about one and a quarter million persons engaged in about 40 trades. These trades include, in addition to those already mentioned, aerated waters ; boot and shoe repairing ; brush and broom making ; button making ; flax and hemp ; fur ; hat, cap, and millinery ; jute ; laundry ; paper-bag making ; rope, twine, and net making ; stamp and pressed-metal wires ; the tobacco trade ; and wholesale mantle and costume making. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but these trades are mentioned for a reason which will be obvious from what is said below.

"(7) Two points emerge from the preceding two paragraphs which are of interest in connection with the present reference. One is that trade boards were established in Britain as the result of an agitation spread over a long series of years. The agitation if a date may be definitely ascribed as the starting point, began in 1885; it was accelerated by the Report of the Dunraven Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1890, and reinforced by several private Bills, many independent inquiries, and the Official Enquiry into Earnings and Hours in 1906. The condition of the "sweated" trades and the evils attached to "home work" were well known before the first Trade Boards Act was passed. It was universally admitted that these evils should if possible, be eradicated, as it is also universally admitted that trade boards have been very effective in their eradication. Even so, it took almost a quarter of a century for the British Government to undertake legislation on the subject, and such legislation, when undertaken was defective in some important respects. It is not contended by the Government of Bengal that legislation to abolish crying evils should be spread over a quarter of a century, but it is held that, before the Government of India, either actively or passively, accept the principle of minimum-wage legislation, a reasoned case should be established for their creation. The Government of Bengal are not aware of any evils in industry in this Presidency, which call for the creation of minimum-wage machinery. There has been no public demand for it; nor even has there been occasion to appoint local commissions of inquiry into abuses of individual industries. One such committee, it is true, was appointed in 1921, which had partial reference to Bengal, viz., the Assam Tea Garden Labour Enquiry Committee but even the report of that committee does not support the view that minimum-wage machinery is necessary. The conditions then analysed were temporary, and since then these conditions have passed away and there has been little or no trouble in the tea industry, so far as the Government of Bengal are aware, in either Assam or Bengal. This industry, moreover, is mainly agricultural, and it is assumed that the forthcoming International Labour Conference will not include within the scope of its discussion the application of minimum-wage machinery to agricultural labour. The Government of Bengal are not aware that conditions in other areas of India have called for minimum-wage inquiries or legislation, and they are of opinion that till there are proved abuses, which require new machinery and which cannot be remedied by industry itself under existing legislation, no countenance should be given to a suggestion that minimum-wage legislation or machinery should be adopted in this country.

"(8) The second point which emerges from the short summary of minimum-wage legislation in Great Britain is the difficulty of interpreting the phrase "exceptionally low." This soon became apparent in Great Britain in the administration of the 1909 Act, and, as noted above, the phrase was abolished in the 1918 Act, and was replaced by "having regard to the rates of wages prevailing in the trade or in part of the trade." This is a very important point, especially as exactly the same phrase as proved unworkable in Britain, is used in paragraph 4 of your letter. A reference to paragraph 13 of the report of the delegates at the 10th Conference shows that the principle of "exceptionally low" wages was "readily accepted" by the drafting sub-committee. In this ready acceptance there appears to have been either ignorance or forgetfulness of the history of English legislation on the subject. It may be noted that the phrase appears in item 1 of the questionnaire, and, if the opposition of the Government of Bengal to countenancing minimum wage legislation in India may be regarded as captious, it may at least be conceded that there is ample enough proof in Great Britain itself that one of the fundamental ideas adopted by the 10th Conference has proved unworkable in practice in the very country from which the suggestion of internationalising minimum-wage principles emanated.

"(17) It has been mentioned above that difficulties have been experienced in England regarding the interpretation of the phrase "exceptionally low." This was surmounted by the adoption of a workable criterion based on wages paid in similar industries or trades. In Australia, under the compulsory-arbitration system, the idea of a basic wage, or a "living wage" sufficient to enable a certain type of workmen to live on a certain standard, is prevalent; indeed there the "living wage" is a gospel enforceable by law. No employer may pay less than this minimum basic wage. There is now in Australia a very considerable literature on this very controversial subject, mainly compiled from the judgments of the various arbitration courts, and a study of this literature must convince everyone that the definition of "living wage" is one of the most difficult things in the world. The "living wage," however, is only one side of wage-fixing. Another is the capacity of an industry to pay, and this phrase has proved almost as controversial as the "living wage"; for example, the phrase "capacity to pay" is frequently interpreted to mean the determination of basic wage of a group of workers on the basis of the capacity of industry in general to pay. Or it may be based on the capacity of each separate industry to pay, regard being given only to conditions in an individual industry. Then, again, there is the English



principle of the 1918 Act, viz., wages in other industries. Now whatever principle is adopted (and often all together are taken into consideration in the decision of any one case), it is obvious that minimum-wage-fixing machinery presupposes complete and correct statistical information of various matters ; of wages, both of industry as a whole and of the various grades of workers in individual industries ; of the cost of living ; of the financial position of industry in general and of each industry ; of prices, wholesale and retail, general and local. It is almost unnecessary to dwell on the almost complete absence of information on several of these vital points in India. For one thing, there is no census of wages. In 1921-22 an attempt was made by the Government of Bengal (at the instance of the Government of India) to compile such a census for Bengal, but the effort was a complete failure. Such returns as were sent in were mostly inadequate ; many returns were not sent in at all, and even if complete returns had been sent in the Government of Bengal would not have been able to afford the staff to deal with them. A real census of wages, moreover, in India would require compulsory powers, but it is doubtful if, at the present stage of development, a demand for such powers should be justified. In the absence of such powers, and in the absence of the census which such powers might enable Government to compile, it would be absolutely hopeless to attempt to introduce a minimum-wage system.

" (18) Nor, except in one or two provinces, is there a cost of living index number for the working classes ; and even if there were, it would be no guide to what a "living wage" in India should be—a subject on which there would be endless argument and no agreement. The question of the construction of a cost of living index number was fully explored by the Government of India in 1921-22, when it was decided to leave the subject to local governments. The Government of Bengal at that time carefully studied the problem, and came to the conclusion that even if an index number could be constructed, and this was regarded as exceedingly problematical, it would have no real utility. Moreover a big staff for the work would have been required which would then have been, and still is, much beyond the purse of this Government. The subject was again considered in connection with the recommendations of the Indian Economic Inquiry Committee. The views of the Government of Bengal were communicated to the Government of India in the Department of Agriculture and Industries' letter No. 851, dated the 9th February, 1927. Impossible as many of the proposals of that committee appeared to the Government of Bengal, yet many of them would actually have to be seriously considered as practical issues were the introduction of minimum-wage machinery contemplated.

" (19) In the second place, trade boards in other countries (although this is not universal) are created chiefly for unorganized industries. There has not been the same difficulty in Great Britain in arriving at a rough definition as to what "unorganized" means as there was in the case of "exceptionally low" wages. Lack of organization is a very elastic term, however, as a perusal of the list of industries mentioned in extract 5 above shows. So as far as "home-workers" are concerned, there is not, as a rule, much difficulty ; "home-workers" are usually unorganized on both sides, as are many trades which are dispersed geographically and are carried on in small units, but trade boards in Great Britain are in existence for such industries as flax and jute manufacturing. Taking these instances, one finds in the latest available issue of the *Directory of Employers' Associations, Trade Unions, Joint Organizations, etc.*, 1925, published by the ministry of labour, that there are no less than 11 employers' associations for Scotland and the North of Ireland flax and jute manufacturing industries, and 23 trade unions (in each case national or general organizations are left out of account). Further examination of the same publication shows the existence of many organizations, on each side, for trades like tobacco manufacture, the fur industry, the clothing industries, brush-making, button-making and other trade board trades.

" (20) The question thus may very pertinently be asked in India : " what is an 'organized' or 'unorganized' industry ? " In this respect, attention is invited to the remarks in paragraph 6 of your letter, for in all probability industry in India would be judged in this respect by western standards. In Bengal we have one of the most compact industries in the jute mills ; this industry has one employers' organization, and few workers' organizations. From the British or European point of view, the jute mill industry in Bengal would appear to be hopelessly unorganized, especially when contrasted with the Dundee industry which, in spite of an organization (which, at least on the labour side, is incomparably higher than that of Bengal) is actually a trade board industry.

" (21) This point of organization perhaps, better than anything else, indicates the complete inapplicability of western (or other) systems of minimum wage machinery to India. In India our "organized" industries are usually regarded as those falling within the scope of the Indian Factories Act, but not one of these industries,

especially on the labour side, stands even a moment's comparison with the most unorganized industries in highly industrialized countries like Great Britain. The jute industry is the most illustrative case in point, as it is not only a powerful competitor with respect to Dundee, but its wages are also governed by a trade board . . . . . A great deal has been said and written in recent years on relative rates of wages in India and the west, and there is now general recognition of the fact that no real comparison can be made unless every circumstance bearing on eastern labour is fully taken into account. The most recent attempt was made by the delegation of International Federation of Textile Workers, which, headed by an ex-member of the British Cabinet, Mr. Tom Shaw, visited India in 1926-27. It is significant that in Mr. Shaw's report doubt was expressed whether labour is cheaper in India than in the west (see summary of his report at page 308 of the December issue of the *Bombay Labour Gazette*). No criterion of comparative efficiency has yet been found as between the Indian and western workman, nor is one likely to be easily found owing to the great divergence between the conditions of work and life, between traditions, outlook, family life, and many other factors; and there is very little point in bringing this incalculable element into the discussion at all. Moreover, it might be argued from this point of view that the Geneva organization, by means of a western majority was attempting to raise wages to reduce India's competitive ability, and this would naturally lead to issues to be threshed out on a much more public platform.

" (22) Trade Boards are *joint* bodies, and clearly the questionnaire adopted by the last International Labour Conference contemplates that whatever machinery is to be adopted as the result of a Convention, that machinery shall be constituted on a joint basis. In England, Trade Boards are part of the normal joint machinery of industry. They are the lowest rung in the Whitley ladder. Now, joint machinery requires at least two sides: in actual practice, in the case of trade boards, three sides. But in India at least one side is notably absent. There is not a sufficient supply of labour representatives to work even the simplest joint machinery. We have not emerged yet from the paternal stage, and shall not be able to do so until the working classes are literate and are able to produce representatives from themselves to sit at conferences along with employers. To impose joint machinery on industry where essential parts of the machinery are lacking is foredoomed to failure. This has been found to be the case in Bengal in regard to the very simple Works Councils, suggested in the Report of the Bengal Committee on Industrial Unrest. The imposition of more specialized machinery on industry would be opposed with all the might of industry, and in the view of the Government of Bengal, justifiably so. The fixation of minimum wages is very technical work, requiring, even in England, expert assistance in administration, and the Government of Bengal are extremely doubtful whether in India there is even a sufficient supply of what in England are known as "appointed" members were the Trade Board system introduced in this country. Apart from this, however, the main consideration arising on the issue discussed in this paragraph is that that minimum-wage machinery is primarily necessary in highly industrialised countries. Trade Boards did not develop in the West before trade unions and other joint machinery; they came *after* them—to rescue those whom organized industries had left unnoticed or helpless. In India, as pointed out above, "organized" industries are industries subject to the provisions of the Factories Act. Our "unorganized" industries are those outside the scope of the Act. They are conducted partly on a family basis and partly on a wage basis, but complete information regarding them is defective. Anyhow, in the view of the Government of Bengal, in India it is first of all essential to see that the provisions of the Factories Act are enforced, and, where they are enforced fully, to extend the provisions of that Act to smaller establishments than those to which the Act is at present applicable. On this point, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned, reference is invited to the Government of Bengal (Commerce Department) letter No. 4074 Com., dated the 27th July, 1927. Similar conditions, it is assumed, prevail in other provinces, and it would seem like running before we can walk to impose another, and an entirely new, class of legislation on industry.

" (23) So far, one element in minimum-wage legislation has not been mentioned in this letter, although reference was made to it in Sir John Kerr's speech in the Legislative Council. One of the main objects of minimum wage legislation is to prevent unfair competition. This is very fully dealt with in most of the literature on the subject; and it is familiar to anyone who has actually attended meetings of Trade Boards, or, for that matter, of Joint Industrial Councils. Trade Boards in England have in many instances been accepted—indeed, supported—by employers, as the employers, through the Boards, can impose rates of wages which ensure the absence of unfair competition, or at least guarantee that competition is carried on within ascertainable limits. There is the example of the sugar confectionery board in England. Within the purview of this board are businesses like Cadbury's and Fry's. It is farcical to contend that these concerns require Trade Board machinery

to ensure good conditions for their workers; but the boards, on which the big businesses have a very powerful representation, impose rates which compel small jam-making or sweet-making shops to pay rates which guarantee immunity to the large concerns from competition from a multiplicity of small factories. This, of course, guarantees good conditions to the employees of small firms, but there has been a good deal of complaint on this issue, which, to many impartial minds, has been perfectly justified. Applied to India, this aspect of elimination of competition opens up avenues of serious political complications, for, were minimum-wage machinery introduced, there seems no reason to doubt that this factor of competition would play a very prominent part.

"(24) In view of what has been said in the previous paragraphs, it is almost needless to mention the financial implications of minimum-wage machinery in India. As Sir John Kerr pointed out, legislation on the subject would have to be central, but it is probable that administration, as in the case of the Factories Act, would be provincial. It has been pointed out above that various censuses are a pre-requisite of minimum-wage machinery. This would be a first charge on provincial revenues. There would then have to be created an entirely new staff of Trade Board Inspectors which would, if western standards of "organization" were to apply, be much bigger than the existing Factories Departments. This would be the next new charge. There would be necessarily big additions to the Secretariats of all the Provincial Governments and big sums to be paid as fees for "appointed" members, travelling expenses, and so on. No attempt need be made to compile an estimate; it may merely be said, as has been said so often already on similar references, that, so far as the Government of Bengal are concerned, they could not undertake a single item of such expenditure."

106. *Deductions.*—(i) *Extent of fining*; (ii) *other deductions*; (iii) *utilization of fines and* (iv) *desirability of legislation.*—An enquiry into the above subjects was held in 1926-27, at the request of the Government of India (letter No. L.1418, dated the 25th June, 1926) on the subject of deductions from wages or payments in respect of fines. Subsequent enquiries have revealed no material difference from the facts then ascertained, and the Government of Bengal adhere to their views expressed in the reply in their letter No. 1673 Com., dated the 7th March, 1927.\*

107. *Periods of Wage-payment (day, week or month)*—(i) *Periods for which wages paid*; (ii) *periods elapsing before payment.*—A detailed enquiry was made into these subjects in 1924-25. The results were partly published in Bulletin No. 34 of the Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour, published by the Government of India. The complete results are given in tabular form below :—

| Establishments.   | Period of payment (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.). | Number of days normally elapsing between conclusion of period of work and actual payment. | Notes regarding facilities, if any, for obtaining rations from employers. | Remarks.  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Cotton spinning and weaving mills :—<br>(a) Permanent labour | Monthly .. ..                                     | 15  | —   | In one out of the four mills that reported the number of days elapsing for permanent labour was 25. |
| (b) Casual labour ..  | Weekly .. ..                                      | 7   | —   |   |
| 2. Cotton ginning and pressing mills :—<br>(a) Permanent labour | Monthly .. ..                                     | 15  | "Khoraki" given.  |   |
| (b) Casual labour ..  | Weekly .. ..                                      | Nil.  |   |   |
| 3. Jute spinning and weaving mills :—<br>(a) Textiles workers   | Weekly .. ..                                      | 7   | —   | The labour gets one week's credit in the bazaars.   |
| (b) Clerks, artisans and menials.                               | Monthly .. ..                                     | 15  | —   |   |
| 4. Engineering works :—<br>(a) Firms' employees                 | Monthly .. ..                                     | 15  | —   | The contractor is paid monthly. He is given intermediate advances at need.                          |
| (b) Contractors' employees.                                     | —   | —   | —   |   |

\* Printed in Appendix XII to the memorandum of the Government of India.

Table—contd.

| Establishments.                 | Period of payment (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.).                 | Number of days normally elapsing between conclusion of period of work and actual payment. | Notes regarding facilities, if any, for obtaining rations from employers. | Remarks.   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 5. Iron and Steel Works         | Monthly .. ..<br>Fortnightly .. ..<br>Weekly .. ..<br>Daily .. .. | 10<br>7<br>2<br>Nil.  | Individual "advances" in special cases.                                   |  |
| 6. Brick factories ..           | Varies with localities.<br>Never exceeds one month.               | Up to 15.   | "Khoraki" weekly or at shorter intervals.                                 | The concerns are small and numerous, and the work is seasonal.   |
| 7. Cement works ..              | Weekly .. ..  | 4½  | "Khoraki" given.  | Figures for one concern only were obtained.  |
| 8. Flour mills .. ..            | Monthly .. ..   | 15  | —   |  |
| 9. Printing Presses:—           |   |   |   |  |
| (a) Permanent hands             | Monthly .. ..   | 15  | Advances in some concerns.  | In 4 concerns out of 37, the number of days elapsing in the case of permanent hands was 20.  |
| (b) Casual hands ..             | Monthly .. ..   | 7   |   |  |
| 10. Rice mills:—                |   |   |   |  |
| Different classes of labour.    | Monthly .. ..<br>Fortnightly .. ..<br>Weekly .. ..<br>Daily .. .. | 10<br>7<br>2<br>Nil.  | Individual "advances" in special cases.                                   |  |
| 11. Sugar mills .. ..           | Monthly .. ..   | 15  | Individual "advances" in special cases.                                   |  |
| 12. Tanneries .. ..             | Monthly .. ..   | 15  | Intermediate "advances" for food.   |  |
| 13. Coal mines:—                |   |   |   |  |
| Raniganj field ..               | Daily .. ..   | Nil.  |   |  |
| 14. Mica mines .. ..            | None in Bengal.   |   |   |  |
| 15. Tea gardens:—               |   |   |   |  |
| Darjeeling .. ..                | Monthly .. ..<br>Weekly .. ..                                     | Nil.<br>Nil.  | Weekly "advances" are given.  |  |
| Duars .. ..                     | Monthly .. ..<br>Weekly .. ..<br>Daily .. ..                      | 15<br>Nil.<br>Nil.  | "Advances" are given on the 1st of each month.                            |  |
| 16. Docks:—                     |   |   |   |  |
| (a) Permanent labour            | Monthly .. ..   | 15  | —   | The labour gets one month's credit in the Port Commissioners' food-stuffs market.  |
| (b) Contract labour             | Weekly/Monthly  | 7/15  | —   |  |
| (c) Casual labour ..            | Daily .. ..   | Nil.  |   |  |
| 17. Tramways .. ..              | Monthly .. ..   | 21  | —   | The Company (Calcutta) pays between 16th and 21st and explains that this interval is necessary as a security, since the whole of the revenues pass through the employees' hands. |
| 18. Municipalities ..           | Monthly .. ..   | 7/15  | —   | Sixteen bodies reported. The Calcutta Corporation is among those who pay in the 2nd week.  |
| 19. Local Government Factories. | These fall under "printing presses."                              |   |   |  |

*Explanation.*—With the exception noted under item 9, the figures in column 3 accommodate the highest figures reported. Where 2 figures are given, the meaning is that about half the concerns from whom information was obtained fall within one maximum and about half within the other maximum.

So far as the information of the Government of Bengal goes, there has been no change in the situation since the above enquiry was made.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation.*—This was considered by the Government of Bengal in 1926–27, as the result of a reference from the Government of India in their letter No. L. 1391, dated the 28th July, 1926, on the subject of the prompt payment of wages. The reply of the Government of Bengal is contained in their letter No. 986-Com., dated the 9th February, 1927.\*

\* Not printed here. The letter is reproduced in Appendix XIII to the Memorandum of the Government of India.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed Wages.*—The information at the disposal of the Government of Bengal shows that in the majority of concerns a small percentage of wages always remains unclaimed, and that these wages, after the lapse of periods ranging from six months to two years, are in most cases absorbed in the assets of the companies. In some cases unclaimed wages are placed at the credit of a fund set aside for general welfare purposes.

Wages are as a rule claimable, no matter what length of time has elapsed between the earning of the wages and the claim. The amount of wages which remains unclaimed is very small, and varies from .25 to .5 per cent. of the wages total. No information is available regarding unclaimed wages due to contract labour. The records of the Bengal Government Press and His Majesty's Mint indicate that in Government factories about one-quarter per cent. of the total wages is returned to the treasury as unpaid wages and fines.

Wages remain unclaimed for a variety of reasons, e.g., sickness, leaving the district, absconding to avoid creditors, or death without record of next-of-kin. In some cases, employees deliberately leave their wages behind in order to ensure re-employment after absence, on the theory that if they do not take their wages, their employment is continuous even in spite of a period of absence.

109. *Bonus and Profit-sharing Schemes.*—There are various types of bonus schemes in operation in Bengal, but, so far as Government are aware, there is no profit-sharing. A general discussion of the types of bonus in operation in Bengal is contained in *Wages and Profit-sharing* by R. N. Gilchrist (University of Calcutta, 1924, pages 294–334).

111. *Desirability of Fair Wages Clause in Public Contracts.*—The question of desirability of a Fair Wages Clause in public contracts has never been raised in Bengal. In the present unorganized state of Indian labour, the insertion of such a clause in public contracts would serve no useful purpose. In actual practice, employees working under contractors have to be paid at least the rates prevailing in the area in which they are employed.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

115. *Effect on Production of—(ix) Alcohol and drugs.*—It has been always recognized that there is a tendency towards excessive indulgence in drink and intoxicating drugs amongst the workers in the industrial area in Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly. To check consumption, the steps mentioned below have been taken by Government.

(a) The price of country spirit has been considerably increased in Calcutta and in the industrial areas in the other districts referred to above. The retail price of country spirit of 25 U. P. strength, the highest strength in which the liquor is issued in the Calcutta district which includes the suburbs and the towns of Howrah and Bally and in the industrial areas in 24-Parganas and Howrah, is Rs 21-4-3 per imperial gallon. In the industrial area in Hooghly the price is Rs. 20-15 annas per imperial gallon, while in the rural areas in 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly it is Rs. 13-1-6 pies per imperial gallon. These increased rates of prices were first introduced in October, 1921. Figures have been obtained from the 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly districts to show comparative consumption of country spirits and foreign liquors in the industrial areas from 1921-22 to 1928-29 in the case of Hooghly and Howrah and from 1926-27 to 1928-29 in the case of 24-Parganas. As regards the last mentioned district, previous figures are not available. These figures show clearly that the policy of the Government to check consumption by increasing the price has been remarkably successful. In Howrah, consumption of country spirit in 1928-29 is about half of what it was in 1921-22. From 12,996 L.P. gallons the quantity has come down to 6,604 L.P. gallons. In Hooghly, consumption has come down from 12,968 L.P. gallons in 1921-22 to 10,020 L.P. gallons in 1928-29. In 24-Parganas, it has come down from 20,819 L.P. gallons in 1926-27 to 18,342 L.P. gallons in 1928-29. In the Calcutta district, consumption has come down from 243,035 L.P. gallons in 1921-22 to 148,875 L.P. gallons in 1928-29. As foreign liquor is not generally drunk by the workers, no comment on the figures about foreign liquor is called for.

(b) As regards drugs, the consumption of raw opium in Calcutta and in the industrial areas of Serampur and Barrackpur is markedly in excess of the standard indicated by the League of Nations. In 1927, Government appointed a Committee to ascertain the reasons for this excessive consumption and to suggest possible remedial measures. The Committee found that the principal reason for this unusually heavy consumption of opium is the large increase of the industrial population in these areas, many of whom are recruited from provinces and territories where people are habituated to the use of opium. It was found that the habit of doping children was comparatively rare and was confined mostly amongst certain classes of labourers in mills and factories who come from Orissa and the Central Provinces.

The retail price of opium has increased in these districts, viz., Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Hooghly and Howrah with effect from the 1st September, 1925, from Rs. 130 to Rs. 150 per seer. This increase in price has checked consumption to a certain extent. In Calcutta, it has come down in 1928-29 to 10,926 seers from 11,545 seers in 1925-26. Similarly in 24-Parganas it has come down from 5,065 seers to 4,839 seers; in Howrah from 1,576 seers to 1,546 seers, and in Hooghly from 2,864 seers to 2,662 seers.

The age limit for the sale of opium was raised from 16 years to 20 years in Government Notification No. 4488 Ex., dated the 11th August, 1927.

The recommendations of the Opium Enquiry Committee are still under the consideration of the Government.

(c) As regards other intoxicating drugs, ganja, charas and bhang, no special steps as regards the industrial areas have been taken, but the duty on ganja and charas and the retail prices of these drugs were increased throughout the Presidency with effect from 1st April, 1928, to check consumption. The retail price of ganja was increased from Rs. 97-8 annas to Rs. 105 per seer and of charas from Rs. 140 to Rs. 160. There has been an appreciable decrease in the consumption of all these drugs in 1928-29.

(d) Licensing Boards for the municipalities of Calcutta, Howrah and Bally and for the district of 24-Parganas have been constituted to regulate the number and location of excise shops. There is a strong non-official element in all these Boards. In the Licensing Board for the Barrackpur sub-division, two members are nominated by the Jute Mills Association. In Hooghly, in the mill municipalities, there are Excise Advisory Committees, members of which are consulted before the issue of licences. Under Rule 74(d), pages 131-2 of the Bengal Excise Manual, 1918, Volume 1, Collectors are required to consult large employers of labour in mills, factories, tea-gardens and coal mines on proposals for the grant of licences for shops for supplying spirit to their labourers.

(e) Limited powers have been delegated to the Licensing Board of the 24-Parganas district and other Licensing Boards in mufassil districts, viz., Dacca, Chittagong and Rangpur, to control the hours of sale. Proposals to delegate such powers to the Licensing Boards for the Calcutta, Howrah and Bally municipalities are under consideration.

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*Extract from a Letter from the Government of Bengal, dated 16th December, 1929.*

(3) Information on item (119) (i) and (ii), (*Nature of trade union activities*), is contained in the second annual report of the Registrar of Trade Unions, and also in the note of the Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

(4) Since the memoranda were compiled, more trade unions have been registered, and the following corrections should be made under item (121). To the list of unions which have been registered, the following should be added, in continuation of the list given in that item:—(11) Clerks' Union, Clive Street, Calcutta; (12) Indian Seamen's Union, Ekbalpore Lane, Kidderpore, Calcutta; (13) Bengal Labour Association, Bow Bazaar Street, Calcutta; and (14) Press Employees' Association, Bow Bazaar Street, Calcutta.

The list of application for registration should be modified as below:—(1) All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union in Calcutta; (2) Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta (a different body from the one noted in the list of registered unions); (3) Calcutta and Suburban Transport Service Workers' Association, Calcutta; (4) Calcutta Corporation Employees' Association, Calcutta; (5) Bengal Oil and Petrol Workers' Union, Budge-Budge, 24-Parganas; and (6) Bengal Jute Workers' Union, Calcutta.

Under the same heading should be included the second annual report of the Registrar of Trade Unions, copies of which, as already noted, accompany this letter.

(5) As regards item (122), (*Miscellaneous questions regarding trade unions*), I am to say that the commonest method of negotiation between employers and employed is through sirdars. As indicated under other headings, trade unions are not commonly utilized as intermediaries. The local government have no information regarding any attempts at co-operation between employers and employees to increase efficiency of production.

The present position regarding employees in State industrial concerns in Bengal in relation to the trade union movement is that they are free to join or abstain from joining trade unions as they care.

(7) Under item (124), sub-headings (ii) and (iv), certain corrections are necessary. It will be seen from the note on the Jute Mill Strikes, 1929, that a Government official was specifically directed to take part in the settlement of an industrial dispute during

1929. During 1929, also, joint standing machinery has been set up between the Inland Steamer Companies and the Bengal Mariners' Union for the settlement of disputes. This machinery was successful in avoiding a threatened dispute in July and August of this year.

As regards item (vi), I am to say that the applicability of trade boards to conditions in Bengal has been dealt with under item (105), Minimum Wages, and that the Government of Bengal are of opinion that at the present stage of development the creation of an Industrial Court would be premature. Workers are not sufficiently educated or organized to permit of the creation and utilization of any general scale of joint industrial councils.

(8) Under item (125), (*Trades Disputes Act*), correction is necessary in the light of the views expressed in pages 154 *et seq.* (starting from "Recent experience has clearly demonstrated" down to the end of the note) of the note on Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

(9) The attitude of Government towards trade combinations and in connection with industrial disputes is indicated in the note on the Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. *Extent of the Organisation of—(i) Employers.*—The employers' organizations in Bengal represent industries which extend beyond Bengal, as well as industries which are mainly or almost entirely located in Bengal; for example, the Indian Tea Association represents interests in both Assam and Bengal, and the Indian Mining Association interests in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and other provinces. Normally, in matters of commercial interest, the Government of Bengal consult about 10 employers' associations, viz., the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, the Marwari Chamber of Commerce, the Marwari Association, the Bengal Mahajan Sabha, the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Merchants' Association, Chittagong, the Narayanjanj Chamber of Commerce, and the Calcutta Trades Association. On mining subjects, the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation are consulted, sometimes separately and sometimes through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. As a rule, other associations representing particular interests, such as the Indian Tea Association, the Indian Jute Mills Association, and the Indian Engineering Association, are consulted through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber recognizes no less than 23 associations, which are as follows:—Calcutta Wheat and Seed Trade Association, Indian Jute Mills Association, Indian Tea Association, Calcutta Tea Traders' Association, Calcutta Fire Insurance Association, Calcutta Import Trade Association, Calcutta Marine Insurance Association, The Wine, Spirit and Beer Association of India, Indian Mining Association, Calcutta Baled Jute Association, Indian Paper Makers' Association, Indian Engineering Association, Calcutta Jute Fabric Shippers' Association, Calcutta Hydraulic Press Association, Jute Fabric Brokers' Association, Calcutta Baled Jute Shippers' Association, Calcutta Liners' Conference, Calcutta Jute Dealers' Association, Calcutta Hides and Skins Shippers' Association, Indian Lac Association for Research, Calcutta Accident Insurance Association, Calcutta Sugar Importers' Association, Salt Importers' Association of Bengal.

The Marwari Chamber of Commerce and the Marwari Association, as their names indicate, represent the interests of up-country merchants, but the most fully organized representative chamber of Indian interests is the Indian Chamber of Commerce, which was registered in 1926 to promote the interests of commerce and industries in India, and, in particular, the industries in which Indians are engaged or concerned. Similar objects are professed by the much older associations—the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and by the Bengal Mahajan Sabha. The Calcutta Trades Association, which was founded in 1830, exists for the protection of European shopkeepers and tradesmen in Calcutta.

The local chambers of commerce at Chittagong and Narayanjanj are of minor importance, as compared with the Calcutta Chambers. Most of the concerns represented on these chambers have their head offices in Calcutta; hence their activities are mainly of local interest only.

There are a number of local associations in the tea industry, representing both European owned and managed and Indian owned and managed gardens, for example, the Duars Planters' Association, Jalpaiguri; the Indian Tea Planters' Association, Jalpaiguri (the most important association of Indian tea garden owners); the Darjeeling Planters' Association, Darjeeling; the Terai Planters' Association, Darjeeling; and the Terai Indian Planters' Association, Sukna. The Indian Mining Federation represents Indian owned coal mines.

Several other associations have been founded from time to time to represent particular interests. For instance, in the last two years, two motor-bus syndicates have been started in Calcutta to represent the interests of motor-omnibus owners.

(ii) *Employed*.—Records of organizations of employees have been kept in Bengal since 1920, and between 1920 and 1929, 140 employees' organizations have been reported to have come into existence. These organizations have been of various types. The best of them have had a continued existence for some years and have ultimately registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926. A very large number of them—the number has been estimated to be 54—passed out of existence very soon after they were started. Of this class, a not uncommon type is the strike committee. The strike committee comes into being usually *after* a strike breaks out. A number of officials are elected, meetings are held and subscriptions collected, but after the strike the body entirely disappears. Another type of this class is the association which comes into existence owing to the influence of one or two individuals for a specific purpose, such as raising the status of a class of workers. Sometimes no definite strike is connected with such organizations, but almost invariably they have become moribund after the first two or three meetings. Another type, the existence of which has been as fitful and uncertain as that of a strike committee, is the body which is set up in the interest of some particular individual. Such bodies, with a full list of office bearers, have been established from two causes; one is nomination for the local and imperial legislatures, and the other nomination for the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. In the former case—the legislatures—labour members are nominated and not elected, and some individuals have been under the impression that nomination from a large number of labour bodies would lead to selection by Government. In the case of the Geneva conferences, the expectation is founded on Article 389 of the Treaty of Peace, under which Governments are compelled to nominate the labour representatives of the delegations after consultation with representative organizations of employees.

Between the two extremes, i.e., registered trade unions and strike committees, there is a big class of labour organizations which have preserved an identity for all the period for which reports are available. It is difficult to classify these bodies, as sometimes a body which has been moribund for two or three years suddenly comes to life for some reason or other. It is estimated that of the total number of 140 trade unions, which have been reported to be in existence between 1920 and 1929, 86 still show activity of some kind; of these only 10 are registered trade unions.

Of the 86 bodies reckoned to be in existence at present, only a few represent manual workers. The great majority of the so-called trade unions in Bengal represent non-manual workers, especially clerks. The ratio is approximately three clerks' unions to two manual workers' unions. Some of the unions are mixed organizations professing to represent both clerks and manual workers.

The above numbers include branch organizations of all-India organizations (but not branches and sub-branches of other organizations to a total number of 36).

Besides the number shown in the above list, there are three bodies with headquarters in Calcutta which are of a federal type. One is the Bengal Provincial Committee of the All-India Trade Union Congress, an unregistered body which professes to receive affiliation fees from other individual unions in Bengal; another is the All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union, which has also a provincial branch in Bengal with its headquarters in Calcutta. The branch is included in the above number; and the third is the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, which represent railway unions. It also has its headquarters in Calcutta.

No estimate can be given of the number of persons covered by these unions, except for registered trade unions, which are mentioned later. The great majority of the labour bodies have no regular membership. Indeed, it is doubted if the existence of the bodies is known to the great majority of workers whom they claim to represent.

#### 118. *Effect of the Organizations.*

119. *Nature of Activities*.—So far as employers' organizations are concerned, the only effect that is noted from the point of view of the Government is the better regulation of industry. Information regarding the internal organization and working of employers' organizations may more appropriately be obtained from the organizations themselves.

The labour organizations in Bengal have made their existence felt mainly through strikes, and the efficacy of their endeavours to better workers' conditions may be judged from the tables of results of industrial disputes given below. A large number of the so-called local trade unions have been merely strike committees, such committees, as already pointed out, usually come into existence *after* a strike breaks out. They disappear when the strike is settled. Some unions with a more permanent organization have attempted to create definite machinery for negotiation, and, in one or two cases, threatened strikes have been avoided by negotiation. In the great majority of strikes which have been recorded in Bengal, however, proper



negotiating machinery has been conspicuously absent, and, in cases where the influences behind strikes were more political than economic, the will to negotiate on any reasonable terms was absent.

In a few cases trade unions have interested themselves in activities outside wage issues. Benefit funds of various kinds have been started in some unions. Such unions might perhaps more properly be designated mutual improvement associations. Their members are of the clerical class.

The Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation in more than one report has commented on the fact that labour organizations have helped to secure for workers the benefits of the Workmen's Compensation Act. Unions have also reported alleged abuses of the Factories Act to the Factory Department; their complaints when investigated, however, nearly all fail because they cannot produce the necessary evidence for use in court.

120. *Individual Trade Unions.*—(i) It is not possible to give the history of individual trade unions in Bengal, except so far as that history has been written in documents published by the unions themselves, e.g., the Indian Seamen's Union. The annual reports of bodies which are not registered are not submitted to the Government, and in the case of registered trade unions only two have had an official existence for more than one year.

(ii) The attitude of workers on the whole towards trade unions is apathetic although they may be quite enthusiastic temporarily over the creation of a strike committee. So far as the information of the Government goes, trade unions have not wide control over the persons they claim to represent. In individual instances of protracted strikes, trade union leaders aided by outsiders have undoubtedly been able to exercise much control over workers, but sustained control is rare. Such control presupposes a stable organization resting on regular subscriptions, and the Indian worker has not yet realized the value of solidarity to the extent of being willing to pay a regular monthly contribution during periods when no agitation is going on.

(iii) This is a subject on which evidence may more appropriately be received from employers. So far as the information at the disposal of the Government goes it may be said that employers are exceedingly hostile to the type of union known as the strike committee, which usually contains a number of outside *bhadralog* leaders who have no connection with the concern in which the trouble has broken out. On the other hand, employers have shown the greatest readiness to listen to grievances put forward by their own employees. In some cases, employers have definitely agreed to recognize unions which have been registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, and to confer with their officials as representing the men. Bodies which have no definite status, however, i.e., trade unions which have not been registered under any Act, are not well received by employers.

121. *Trade Unions Act, 1926.*—The extent to which the Trade Unions Act, 1926, has been utilized is shown in the following list of unions which have been registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act:—(1) Bengal Nagpur Railway Employees' Union, Bengal Nagpur Railway compound, Kidderpore, Calcutta; (2) The Calcutta Tramway Workers' Union, Old Post Office Street, Calcutta; (3) Kanchrapara Railway Workmen's Union, Kanchrapara, Eastern Bengal Railway; (4) Eastern Bengal Railway, Indian Employees' Association, Huzurimull Lane, Calcutta; (5) Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Kharagpur; (6) Assam-Bengal Railway Indian Employees' Association, Mymensingh; (7) Bengal-Nagpur Railway Workers' Union, Kharagpur; (8) Kankinarah Labour Union, Kankinarah, 24-Parganas; (9) Bengal Mariners' Union, Ekbalpur Lane, Kidderpore, Calcutta; (10) The Calcutta Port Trust Employees' Association, Ekbalpur Lane, Kidderpore, Calcutta.

One of the above unions has ceased to exist, and applications for registration are at present under consideration from the following unions:—(1) All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union, Calcutta; (2) Clerks' Union, Calcutta; (3) Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta; (4) Labour Association of Bengal, Calcutta; (5) Calcutta and Suburban Transport Service Workers' Association, Calcutta.

The Trade Unions Act so far has had no definite effect on industry beyond the fact that the above number of unions has been registered. As pointed out above, employers are more ready to negotiate with unions which have been registered than with bodies which have not been registered, and in one case, in particular, viz., that of the Bengal Mariners' Union, the employers definitely refused to negotiate with the union till it was registered. After registration, the employers did negotiate with the union.

Of the number of unions which have been registered, 8 are in the transport industry, and of these, 3 (1 now defunct) are on one railway and 2 on another. Only 1 union representing workmen in one mill area in Bengal has been registered in the Bengal jute manufacturing industry.

It is too early yet to suggest amendments of the Act. No abuse of any individual section has yet come to the notice of the Government. There seems to be the possibility of abuse in section 22, which requires that not less than one-half of the total number of the officers of every registered trade union shall be persons actually engaged or employed in an industry with which the trade union is connected. A noticeable feature of the trade unions which have been registered in Bengal is the very large numbers of officers. The average number for 10 unions is 32.8, the maximum being 51, and the minimum 18. Not one of the unions has contravened the section, or, indeed, included even an appreciable percentage of outsiders among the officers. If however a union desires to include a large number of outsiders in its membership, all the union need do is to extend the list of officers accordingly.

### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. *Extent of strikes and lockouts.*—The extent of strikes and lock-outs in Bengal is shown by the analytical tables below, which cover the period 1921–29. These tables show the total number of strikes for the period and also the strikes for each calendar year of the period. They also show the distribution of disputes by groups of industries and trades.

*Industrial Disputes—extent of strikes and lock-outs during the period 1921–29.*

| Year.                       | Number of disputes. | Number of men involved. | Number of man-days lost. |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1921 .. .. .                | 150                 | 254,982                 | 2,990,253                |
| 1922 .. .. .                | 93                  | 198,702                 | 1,803,750                |
| 1923 .. .. .                | 67                  | 137,529                 | 1,247,569                |
| 1924 .. .. .                | 55                  | 90,881                  | 925,562                  |
| 1925 .. .. .                | 44                  | 60,344                  | 517,549                  |
| 1926 .. .. .                | 57                  | 150,670                 | 822,255                  |
| 1927 .. .. .                | 33                  | 60,674                  | 802,289                  |
| 1928 .. .. .                | 58                  | 123,275                 | 3,916,057                |
| 1929 .. .. .                | 35                  | 324,528                 | 3,485,385                |
| Total for period 1921–29 .. | 592                 | 1,401,585               | 16,510,669               |

*Distribution of industrial disputes according to groups of industries and trades affected in the period 1921–29.*

| Groups of industries and trades. | Number of disputes. |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | Total 1921–29. |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|
|                                  | 1921.               | 1922. | 1923. | 1924. | 1925. | 1926. | 1927. | 1928. | 1929. |                |
| Jute mills and presses           | 44                  | 41    | 33    | 22    | 16    | 34    | 15    | 19    | 12    | 236            |
| Cotton mills ..                  | 8                   | 1     | 1     | 10    | 1     | 3     | 2     | 5     | 6     | 37             |
| Transport .. ..                  | 27                  | 9     | 1     | 1     | 6     | 1     | 3     | 8     | 0     | 56             |
| Other factories ..               | 46                  | 14    | 12    | 8     | 8     | 7     | 6     | 12    | 14    | 127            |
| Conservancy ..                   | 5                   | 1     | 4     | 10    | 3     | 7     | 2     | 12    | 0     | 44             |
| Cargo handling coolies           | 8                   | 14    | 9     | 2     | 4     | 2     | 0     | 0     | 1     | 40             |
| Miscellaneous ..                 | 12                  | 13    | 7     | 2     | 6     | 3     | 5     | 2     | 2     | 52             |
| Total ..                         | 150                 | 93    | 67    | 55    | 44    | 57    | 33    | 58    | 35    | 592            |

From these tables it will be seen that the total number of disputes in the period 1921-29 was 592. The number of men involved was 1,401,585 and the number of man-days lost 16,510,669 giving an average per year of the whole period of 66 strikes, 155,732 men involved, and 1,834,519 days lost.

(i) *Causes*—(iii) *Nature of settlement*.—The analytical tables below show the causes and the nature of settlement of strikes for the period 1921-29, as well as for each year of the period.

| Year.                                   | Demands. |        |            |                 |        |
|---|----------|--------|------------|-----------------|--------|
|   | Pay.     | Bonus. | Personnel. | Leave and hour. | Other. |
| 1921 .. .. .                            | 74       | 3      | 32         | 1               | 40     |
| 1922 .. .. .                            | 43       | 1      | 15         | 2               | 32     |
| 1923 .. .. .                            | 22       | Nil.   | 17         | 9               | 19     |
| 1924 .. .. .                            | 27       | 1      | 10         | 5               | 12     |
| 1925 .. .. .                            | 20       | 3      | 9          | Nil             | 12     |
| 1926 .. .. .                            | 26       | 3      | 7          | 11              | 10     |
| 1927 .. .. .                            | 18       | Nil.   | 5          | 3               | 7      |
| 1928 .. .. .                            | 35       | 1      | 12         | 1               | 9      |
| 1929 .. .. .                            | 19       | Nil.   | 8          | 1               | 7      |
| Total for the period<br>1921-29 .. .. . | 284      | 12     | 115        | 33              | 148    |

| Year.                                   | Results. |                  |          |             |
|---|----------|------------------|----------|-------------|
|   | Success. | Partial success. | Failure. | Indefinite. |
| 1921 .. .. .                            | 11       | 37               | 79       | 23          |
| 1922 .. .. .                            | 14       | 14               | 53       | 12          |
| 1923 .. .. .                            | 8        | 3                | 50       | 6           |
| 1924 .. .. .                            | 8        | 8                | 30       | 9           |
| 1925 .. .. .                            | 5        | 1                | 31       | 7           |
| 1926 .. .. .                            | 6        | 1                | 39       | 11          |
| 1927 .. .. .                            | 4        | 1                | 23       | 5           |
| 1928 .. .. .                            | 6        | 9                | 33       | 10          |
| 1929 .. .. .                            | 9        | 8                | 14       | 4           |
| Total for the period<br>1921-29 .. .. . | 71       | 82               | 352      | 87          |

From these tables it will be seen that causes arising out of pay and bonus were responsible for 296 strikes, or exactly half the number. Causes arising from personnel were responsible for 115 disputes. Under this heading has been included all types of disputes arising from quarrels with sirdars or management. A number of specific instances are quoted below:—Demand for dismissal of two sirdars for alleged submission of false reports against strikers; demand for dismissal of a sirdar who assaulted a spinner; protest against assault on a weaver by a sirdar; demand for the reinstatement of a sirdar dismissed for taking part in an attack on a European member of the administrative staff; demand for the reinstatement of two sirdars dismissed for an attempt to assault a European assistant; demand for the reinstatement of four sirdars dismissed for assaulting other sirdars under the same stevedore; demand for dismissal of a sirdar who attended the mill disregarding the demand of the majority of the mill hands; protest against the dismissal of a sirdar by the management; demand for redress for assault made on a cooly by a sirdar for misconduct; demand for dismissal of sirdars on account of alleged exactions; protest against dismissal of weaving sirdars by the management; demand for the reinstatement of a dismissed sirdar; protest against alleged abuse by a sirdar; protest against the dismissal of two sirdars; demand for the reinstatement of a dismissed sirdar; protest against the dismissal of a sirdar who was an enthusiast in the labour union movement.

One hundred and forty-eight disputes have been classified as having been occasioned by other demands. The variety of these demands is so great as not to be susceptible of classification. Many of them were non-economic or only remotely economic in character, and selected examples are set out below :—

- (1) Proposed arrest of weavers concerned in assault upon European assistant.
- (2) The arrest of a craneman for removing a piece of wood.
- (3) Demand for recess for *namaz* (prayer) on Fridays.
- (4) Demand for a burial ground by Muhammadan employees.
- (5) Arrest in connection with a fatal riot in which a Gurkha durwan of the mill was killed.
- (6) Stoppage of a village pathway running through acquired land.
- (7) An altercation between the manager and the cook.
- (8) Transfer of a popular European assistant and appointment in his place of a Bengali.
- (9) Demand for release of non-co-operation volunteers occasioned by a European depriving a cooly of a khaddar cap.
- (10) Refusal of the manager to take back a worker who was arrested as a congress volunteer.
- (11) Demand for withdrawal of proceedings against an Indian worker accused of assault on a European assistant manager.
- (12) The excellence of the local harvest.
- (13) The presence of elephants in the locality, supposed to be the vanguard of a Gandhi army.
- (14) Rumour that workmen of the mill concerned were assaulted in a recent shooting affray at a place about 30 miles distant.
- (15) Demand for permission to attend the trial of workers prosecuted in connection with the volunteer (non-co-operation) movement.
- (16) Demand for immediate release of men convicted in connection with a mill-rioting case.
- (17) Demand for release of men arrested for disorderly conduct.
- (18) Prosecution and conviction for driving an unlicensed gharry and using a horse with a diseased eye.
- (19) Order prohibiting demonstrations in connection with the Turkish victory celebrations.
- (20) Instigation by the zamindars' (landlords) agent who had a quarrel with the manager.
- (21) Men's refusal to carry foreign goods in their carts.
- (22) Frequent railway accidents by shunting engines caused a demand for specific hours for the work of loading and unloading.
- (23) Complaint regarding police prosecutions.
- (24) Demand for disposal of cases affecting the staff by the manager and not by the departmental head.
- (25) Demand for the release of men arrested on a charge of theft.
- (26) Police prosecution and conviction for using disabled animals for transport.
- (27) Demand for withdrawal of a theft case against employees.
- (28) Chastisement for bad work. Many strikes have been occasioned by this, and also by threats of dismissal for bad work. European, Parsi, Punjabi and Bengali supervisors, foremen or overseers have been concerned.
- (29) Arrest of three sweepers for obstructing a public thoroughfare with carts.
- (30) Demand by the authorities requiring particulars (home address, etc.) of workmen.
- (31) Protest against the arrest of three mehtars on a charge of obstructing the public thoroughfare supplemented by complaints about alleged police oppression in the past.
- (32) Protest against the arrest of two sweepers on a charge of theft.
- (33) Demand for withdrawal of restrictions imposed upon the workers' entrance into and exit from the mill premises.
- (34) Protest against charges of theft levelled against a few of the coolies.
- (35) Trouble connected with alleged inadequate supply of drinking water in the menials' quarters.
- (36) Protest against the arrest of a few employees on a charge of theft of company's property.

- (37) Demand for withdrawal of an order for the daily cleaning of looms.  
 (38) Protest against police prosecution for gambling.  
 (39) Protest against the publication of certain municipal bye-laws.  
 (40) Protest against alleged abuse by a clerk and a sirdar of the firm.  
 (41) Protest against the alleged rough-handling of a cooly by the manager for idling.  
 (42) Protest against the quality of the food supplied at meals.

The result column shows that 352 or 59 per cent. resulted in failure, and that only 71 or 12 per cent. were entirely successful. 82 or 14 per cent. have been classified as partially successful, while 87 or 15 per cent. have been classed as indefinite. In these cases it is impossible to say whether the demands were or were not conceded. Examples of this class are :—promises of sympathetic consideration of grievances ; indefinite settlements reached through outside intervention ; promises of enquiry ; promises of personal investigation ; compromises ; promise of increase of wages provided neighbouring firms granted rise to their employees.

(ii) *Duration and character*—(iv) *Loss to industry and workers*.—The analytical tables below indicate the aggregate duration of the disputes in man-days and their magnitude in respect of numbers of men involved, for the whole period as well as for each year of the period.

The following table analyses the disputes in each year according to their duration :—

*Industrial disputes—Duration and character.*—The following table analyses the disputes in each year according to their duration in man-days.

| Duration in man-days. | Number of disputes. |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|
|                       | 1921.               | 1922. | 1923. | 1924. | 1925. | 1926. | 1927. | 1928. | 1929. | Period 1921–29. |
| From 10 to 99         | 9                   | 8     | 5     | 3     | 6     | 6     | 4     | 7     | 1     | 49              |
| „ 100 to 999          | 31                  | 20    | 26    | 24    | 15    | 15    | 13    | 22    | 13    | 179             |
| „ 1,000 to 9,999      | 55                  | 32    | 20    | 19    | 13    | 16    | 7     | 9     | 12    | 183             |
| „ 10,000 to 99,999    | 45                  | 29    | 13    | 8     | 9     | 19    | 8     | 15    | 7     | 153             |
| „ 100,000 and upwards | 8                   | 4     | 3     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 5     | 2     | 26              |
| Total ..              | 148*                | 93    | 67    | 55    | 44    | 57    | 33    | 58    | 35    | 590*            |

\* The number does not include two disputes of 1921, figures for which are not available.

The following table analyses the disputes in each year according to the number of men involved in them :—

| Number of men involved. | Number of disputes. |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |                  |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|
|                         | 1921.               | 1922. | 1923. | 1924. | 1925. | 1926. | 1927. | 1928. | 1929. | Period, 1921–29. |
| From 10 to 99           | 18                  | 14    | 10    | 6     | 12    | 7     | 11    | 16    | 8     | 102              |
| „ 100 to 999            | 50                  | 36    | 31    | 30    | 17    | 19    | 12    | 24    | 16    | 235              |
| „ 1,000 to 9,999        | 75                  | 38    | 25    | 17    | 15    | 31    | 9     | 15    | 10    | 235              |
| „ 10,000 and upwards    | 5                   | 5     | 1     | 2     | 0     | 0     | 1     | 3     | 1     | 18               |
| Total ..                | 148*                | 93    | 67    | 55    | 44    | 57    | 33    | 58    | 35    | 590*             |

\* The number does not include two disputes of 1921, the figures for which are not available.

The loss to industry is estimated by the number of man-days lost due to the disputes. No estimate has been made of the loss in wages caused to workers.

124. *Conciliation and arbitration machinery—(i) Results of previous investigations.*—Several special investigations were instituted by the Government of Bengal during the period of intense industrial unrest in 1920–21.

(a) As the result of a strike of taxi drivers and professional drivers of private cars in Calcutta which was caused by objections to certain rules, particularly (1) a new rule requiring medical examination of applicants for professional driver's licences, and (2) another rule forbidding the carrying of attendants in taxis, Government appointed a committee of inquiry into the existing licensing regulations and the control of taxicabs generally. The strike lasted from the 12th to the 20th January, 1921, and ceased as a result of the institution of the inquiry. The committee made a number of proposals for amendments in the existing regulations. These proposals were ultimately accepted and brought into effect on the 12th October, 1921.

(b) As the result of a strike of drivers and conductors of Calcutta and Howrah tramways, which lasted from the 27th January to the 24th February, 1921, Government appointed a committee of inquiry after the resumption of work by the strikers on the 8th March, 1921. The men resumed work towards the end of February on condition (1) that the Calcutta Tramways Company would investigate their grievances and announce their decision within a week, and (2) that if the men were dissatisfied with the Company's decision, Government would appoint a committee of inquiry. There was general agreement between the Company and the men's representatives in regard to the majority of the committee's recommendations. Some, however, the directors of the company did not accept. Another strike of the tramway employees of a much more protracted character broke out in 1922. It lasted from 20th December 1922 to 27th January, 1923. No committee of inquiry was appointed, although the representatives of the men raised several points which arose from the previous inquiry. Work was resumed unconditionally.

(c) During a strike on the light railways of Messrs. Martin & Co. in the 24-Parganas and Howrah, which lasted from the 15th June to the 2nd July, 1921, a special conciliation board was constituted by Government by a special resolution, at the joint request of the employers and the employees concerned. The result of the board's efforts was a compromise on most of the points raised by the workers, and as a result of the board's recommendations it was agreed that joint works committees should be set up on the Howrah-Amta and Howrah-Sheakhala lines. Works committees were established soon after the Board's report was published, but they failed to function owing to the men's indifference.

(d) A resolution was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council on the 4th March, 1921, to the effect that Government should appoint a committee to inquire into the general causes of the prevailing unrest and to suggest remedial measures. The report of the committee was published on the 18th June, 1921. The main recommendations of the committee were :—(i) the establishment of joint works committees in industrial concerns ; (ii) non-intervention of Government in private industrial disputes, which, it was considered, should be settled by voluntary conciliation ; (iii) the constitution by Government of a conciliation panel to deal with disputes in public utility services ; and (iv) the appointment by Government of special conciliation bodies in the case of private industrial disputes, if both parties desired outside intervention.

As the result of the recommendations of this committee, a conciliation panel was constituted . . . . . on the 29th August, 1921. The panel contained 30 names, and was composed on a representative basis, leading public bodies being asked to recommend persons to serve on it. The panel was reconstituted every year till 1929, when it was superseded by the Trade Disputes Act. Several applications for Government intervention were received during the period of the panels' existence, but in no case did Government consider that intervention was justified.

To assist in the formation of joint works committees in industrial concerns a pamphlet containing model constitutions was compiled by the Department of Industries.

(ii) *Pari played by official or non-official conciliators in settling disputes.*—In no case has a Government official been specifically ordered to take part in the settlement of an industrial dispute, but there are records of a number of disputes which have been settled by the intervention of officials. In such cases of intervention, officials have aided either by giving advice or by acting unofficially as arbitrators. Most of the disputes were of a trifling character. In one case of an important dispute, the intervention consisted merely in a Government officer acting as a post-office between an employer's organization and a trade union of which the employers refused to take any official cognizance.

Several disputes have been settled by the intervention of non-officials, and a few cases are on record in which settlements were effected by the joint efforts of representatives of employers and employees.

(iii) *Use (if any) made of Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act, 1860.*—This Act has not been used in Bengal.

(iv) *Joint standing machinery for regulation of relations between employers and workpeople.*—No such machinery is in existence in Bengal. The recommendation regarding the creation of works committees, to which reference has been made above, was infructuous. A few attempts were made to create such committees, but they were unsuccessful.

(v) *Opportunity afforded to workpeople of making representations.*—No case has ever come to the notice of the Government of Bengal in which workpeople were not given the freest opportunity of making direct representations to employers.

125. *Trade Disputes Act.*—The Act has just come into effect, and no remarks are called for.\*

### Jute Mill Strikes, 1929.

#### 1.—Narrative of the Strikes.

The jute mill strikes which broke out in July, 1929, have brought to light many features of interest to the Royal Commission on Indian Labour, and in this note the narrative of the strikes, and the issues connected therewith, are presented in such a way as to provide information for the Commission on the lines indicated in the list of subjects issued by them to witnesses.

The jute mill strikes were notable for many reasons. One was their magnitude. Never before in the history of the jute mills in Bengal had anything of the nature of a general strike been attempted. Strikes in individual mills have been common but, as a rule, they have been confined to the concerns in which they broke out. From July 1st to September 30th, a period which includes the general strike which was settled by the agreement, and the individual strikes which broke out after the agreement, the total number of employees affected was about 272,000, the total number of working days lost was about 2,896,000, and the total number of looms closed down was 42,700 out of a total of 51,000 in Bengal. The following statement shows the total number of employees implicated, and the total number of working days lost in the jute mill industry for the whole period, prior to 1st July, 1929, over which statistics have been recorded by the Government of Bengal:—

| Year.                                | Number of strikes in jute mills. | Number of men involved. | Number of working days lost. |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1921 .. .. .                         | 39                               | 186,479                 | 706,229                      |
| 1922 .. .. .                         | 40                               | 173,957                 | 1,079,627                    |
| 1923 .. .. .                         | 29                               | 90,664                  | 644,804                      |
| 1924 .. .. .                         | 18                               | 69,488                  | 346,756                      |
| 1925 .. .. .                         | 14                               | 44,940                  | 242,906                      |
| 1926 .. .. .                         | 29                               | 38,042                  | 794,384                      |
| 1927 .. .. .                         | 9                                | 34,900                  | 218,000                      |
| 1928 .. .. .                         | 18                               | 56,524                  | 1,508,708                    |
| Up to 30th June, 1929 .. .. .        | 5                                | 18,285                  | 106,785                      |
| From 1921 to 30th June, 1929 .. .. . | 201                              | 713,279                 | 5,648,199                    |

Prior to the general strike, the most protracted strike in the industry was in the Fort Gloster Mills, Bowraah, in 1928. This strike lasted from 17th July to the 31st December, 1928, and the employees concerned lost 1,129,358 working days. The strikes of 1929, it has been estimated, cost the workers Rs. 27,57,000 in lost wages and the industry 117,327,000 yards of lost production, valued at about Rs. 171·71 lacs.

The apparent ease with which the jute mill workers were brought out on strike this year is very remarkable in view of the fact that not only have the great majority of strikes in the jute mills hitherto been localized in individual concerns and of short duration, but also because during the period of intense industrial unrest from 1919 to 1922 there was at no time any sign of a general jute mill strike. The attempted general strike of 1929 has brought into the limelight many defects in the organization of the jute mill employers and workers, but the long record of peace which the mills have enjoyed must be set down to the credit of both sides. Perhaps nowhere in the world are conditions more favourable to strong organizations on the part of both employers and employees than in the jute-manufacturing industry in Bengal, for all the mills, now nearly 100 in number and employing nearly four lakhs of workers, are situated on the banks of the Hooghly within a radius of 18 to 20 miles on the north and south sides of Calcutta and Howrah. In some areas such as Titaghur,

\* But see para. 9 of the Government of Bengal covering letter.

Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah, and Telinipara-Baidyabati-Champdany, the mills are very numerous, and the mill employees form the great majority of the inhabitants in the surrounding municipalities. But whereas the Indian Jute Mills Association on the employers' side has been in existence for many years for the regulation of the commercial side of the industry, no regularly organized trade union has yet been formed for jute workers as a whole. During the strikes the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, led by Miss Probbabati Das Gupta, professed to represent all jute mill workers on the river, but this claim was later proved to be unfounded, as the union, even before it split into two, was unable to control the workers in some important areas.

Another reason why the general strike was important was that, for the first time in the history of the Bengal jute mills it led to common action by the Indian Jute Mills Association on the subject of wages and conditions of work. Prior to these strikes, the Indian Jute Mills Association had concerned itself with general commercial conditions only; it was part of the creed of the association that each mill or group of mills should be allowed to manage its internal affairs, including wages and shifts. The association attended to general trade conditions and policy, and it was from action dictated by the association on trade policy that the 1929 strikes arose.

Prior to the war, the economic position of the jute mills was not so strong as it is now. During the war they passed from lean years into undreamt-of prosperity, which has continued up to the present time. Before the war, joint action for trade purposes was not easy to achieve, very largely owing to the independent outlook of the various managing agents. The competition between mills was intense—some times almost disastrous—but prosperity taught them what adversity could not, viz., the uses of combination. To preserve the prosperity in the post-war period, the managing agents of the mills, as organized in the Indian Jute Mills Association, decided to restrict production, and to attain this end they came to an agreement regarding working hours. This agreement was that all mills should work only 54 hours a week. The agreement applied to all members of the association, and at present only about half a dozen mills are outside the association, and most of these are new and small mills.

The maximum of working hours permitted by the Indian Factories Act is 60, so that, under the 54-hour agreement, all mills would ordinarily appear to have had a reserve of six hours per week to meet growing demands. This, however, is only partially the case. From their earliest days, the jute mills have been accustomed to work on what is usually known as the double-shift, but what actually is a multiple-shift system. This system grew up gradually with the industry. It was devised to suit the peculiar character of the labour. Originally, the labour was mainly Bengali, recruited from the local districts. Later on, as the industry developed, it was imported mainly from the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. Before hours for adult labour were regulated by the Factories Act, there was no need for the jute mills to restrict working hours, except for light; and when electric light came in, theoretically the mills could work all hours. The labour, however, restricted their own working hours by the simple expedient of refusing to work longer than it suited them. The labour was also very casual, and the jute industry evolved the shift system as a means of harmonising their own desire to utilise their plant to the maximum by the continuous running of machinery with the peculiar type of their labour. Incidentally, the shift system prevented abuses which were common in other parts of India, especially unduly long hours, and gradually, as legal regulation came in, it accommodated itself to new prohibitions regarding the night work for women and children, and the limitation of the hours of work of children.

When the amended Factories Act of 1922 came into effect, the position was altered. A maximum daily and weekly limit was imposed for all workers, and the women's and children's regulations were also tightened up. Added to these was an increased effectiveness of the factory inspection department, and gradually managing agents of mills began to take into consideration the possibility of organizing their labour on a new system, viz., the single-shift system, under which the mills work for two clear-cut periods per day, the same workers, with the exception of children, manning the periods.

During the last half a dozen years about half of the jute mills have changed from the old double or multiple-shift to the single-shift system. Under the multiple-shift system, at present it is possible for jute mills to work 81 hours a week, i.e., 6 days of 13½ hours each. This is quite legal under the Indian Factories Act, although it does not satisfy the Washington Convention regarding the night-rest period of women. Prior to the 1st of July, 1929, when they were working 54 hours a week, single-shift mills could expand only to 60 hours a week, the maximum number of hours permitted under the Factories Act. The reason for the difference is that in multiple-shift mills the shifts can be so arranged as to satisfy all the provisions of the Factories Act regarding maximum hours, rest periods, half-timers' hours, and women's



hours. In single-shift mills, however, there is only one shift; this shift, with different sets of children, works  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours in the morning and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours in the afternoon, i.e., the maximum of 11 hours.

When, after the war, the Indian Jute Mills Association decided to restrict working hours, they adhered to the  $13\frac{1}{2}$  hour day, but decided on working only 4 days a week, from Monday to Thursday. This left the multiple-shift mills with a theoretical margin of two  $13\frac{1}{2}$  hour working days per week, to meet any possible new developments in the market. From the workers' side it meant two completely idle days per week. To compensate the workers for these days, a scheme was devised whereby they were granted a subsistence wage for one of the two days. This payment, known as *khoraki*, has led to a great deal of trouble since it was instituted.

The mills which changed over from the multiple to the single-shift adopted, as indicated above, the clear-cut system of one shift working for the whole day, the mills closing down altogether during the middle of the day. In almost every instance when they changed over from the double to the single-shift there was a strike arising from disputes over wage adjustment. The disputes were always connected with *khoraki*, which, under the new system, was automatically abolished. The single-shift mills on the 54 hour week worked for 11 hours per day during the first four days of the week and 10 hours on Friday. The workers thus lost one of their idle days, and with it, of course, disappeared the *khoraki*. The *khoraki*, however, was incorporated in the new rates, and the single-shift mill workers soon came to realize that, on the single-shift, their total earnings were a little more than they had been on the double-shift.

Another feature which made the strikes of 1929 notable was that for the first time in the history of the Bengal jute mills, Government intervention was necessary on the industrial side; this intervention led to the first negotiated agreement in the industry. Hitherto, the jute mills had upheld a strenuous individualism with regard to their own affairs. In 1929, however, not only did circumstances render intervention of Government essential, but the jute mills were forced to recognize the power of organized labour, even although the organization was only temporary and based on rather flimsy foundations.

The immediate cause of the strikes in 1929 was a decision of the Indian jute mills association, reached towards the end of 1928, to raise the working hours of all mills from 54 to 60. This decision was actuated by market causes; the chief element leading to the change was increased competition from continental mills. Although the decision was reached in 1928 it was agreed for various reasons not to give effect to it till the 1st July, 1929. The main items in the new agreement were:—

(1) That all mills which were members of the association should work 60 hours a week;

(2) That in multiple-shift mills, the hours might be reckoned over two weeks, i.e., these mills could continue to work, as before, 54 hours in the first week, but in the second week they would have to work 66 hours, or 120 hours per fortnight; and

(3) That no mill should make up for lost time caused by strikes.

Under the previous agreement, mills which lost time by strikes were permitted to make up lost time by working during the "idle" days. The new agreement, like previous agreements, contained no stipulation concerning wages. During the first six months of 1929, the managing agents made preparations for the change-over on the 1st July, and the general result of these preparations, so far as hours are concerned, was that single-shift mills were to work one hour extra on Friday and five hours on Saturday, and multiple-shift mills four days of  $13\frac{1}{2}$  hours each one week and five days ( $13\frac{1}{2}$  hours for four days and 12 hours on the fifth) the next week, as allowed in the agreement. On the 1st July, the change-over took place, but the effect on wages was not felt till the end of the second week, as all wages in jute mills are paid one week in arrears. Prior to the change-over, the one registered union in the whole of the jute mills—the Kankinnarah Labour Union—publicly drew attention to the necessity for joint conferences between representatives of the mills and of the workers to adjust terms for the new system of working. There was then, however, little expectation of trouble, even on the part of the union, as it was anticipated that the rates would be amicably adjusted.

The first signs of actual trouble became apparent at the end of the first week in July. The principle on which the managing agents generally proposed to pay wages for the extended hours was an exact proportionate increase on the old time wages, with fractions in favour of the worker. In single-shift mills (multiple-shift mills were not at first implicated), this meant an increase of one-ninth, as the hours were increased by one-ninth. In double-shift mills the same principle was observed, although the increase of hours in the case of individual workers was not necessarily the same. In the double-shift mills the position was complicated by *khoraki*. In the first week of working in the multiple-shift mills there was no question of not paying

*khoraki*, as the mills worked for four days as previously. In the second week, however, the question of *khoraki* did arise, as work had to be continued from the Thursday to the Friday, and *khoraki* had hitherto been paid for Friday. The storm-centre of the trouble was a group of single-shift mills in Bhatpara, viz., the Alliance-Craig-Waverly group, under the managing agency of Messrs. Begg, Dunlop & Company, and the neighbouring Megna Mill under the managing agency of Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Company.\* In the Jagatdal group of mills there was at first no definite strike. The workers simply refused to work 60 hours a week. They worked for 54 hours, but immediately the 54 hours were completed they left the mill. They refused to work the extra hour on Friday, and did not turn up on Saturday. This went on for two weeks, during which time the workers refused to take wages which they had earned. This, it may be added parenthetically, is not an unusual feature of strikes in Bengal. The refusal to take wages which have been earned evidently arises from a hazy idea on the part of the workers that the continuity of their employment, which in some cases affects provident funds or pensions, is broken by taking wages before resumption of work. The leaders in the strike were the weavers, and in the whole of the Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah area such trouble as did become apparent arose from this class of worker, which in all jute mills is the most highly paid. There was no apparent trouble amongst the time-paid workers.

The grievance of the weavers arose from the decision of the managing agents to alter the old stent. Weavers are paid by the piece, and the prevailing method of payment in jute mills is a basic rate per cut of 100 yards, with an ordinary bonus on cuts when a certain number of cuts have been taken off, and an extra bonus on cuts when a higher number have been taken off. The lower bonus was easily earned by all workers under the 54-hour working week, as it practically amounted to a bonus for regular attendance. The higher or extra bonus, rising from cut to cut, was earnable by the great majority of weavers, although only the best weavers were able to reach the highest bonuses. What the managing agents did in effect was this. They argued that by increasing the working time by six hours, weavers would be able to reach the higher bonuses with ease, with the result that they would get more than the proportionate increase in earnings which had been granted to the time-workers. They therefore shifted the cut at which the higher bonuses could be earned forward by one place. The argument was that if, say, a weaver on the old system could take off 9 cuts in 54 hours, he could take off 10 cuts in 60 hours, that is, at the rate of one cut per six hours. This shifting forward of the bonus by one cut at once aroused the opposition of the weavers in the group of mills where the original trouble took place. When the trouble spread later, with one or two exceptions, no grievances were put forward by the workers, either time or piece, but probably, especially in the congested area, where the original trouble started, all weavers were closely interested in the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna dispute.

The Kankinnarah Labour Union, under Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, took up the case, but, before a settlement could be reached, other influences had entered the field. In the second week of July, a Barrackpore pleader and the Bengal Jute Workers' Union began to take an interest in the case. The Barrackpore pleader was elected vice-president of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, and an intensive campaign was started in the affected area. By the end of the third week of July, i.e., 20th July, no strike had actually broken out, but the workers had consistently refused to work more than 54 hours a week and to take their pay. On the 22nd July, on the advice of the pleader, the weavers adopted a new policy. They went into the mills but did not work to their full capacity. This *ca'anny* policy which is a variation of the *satyagraha* tactics so commonly adopted in recent years in both Indian politics and strikes, led to an immediate deadlock in the mills. All jute mills in Bengal are so organized that if any section of the workers goes on strike or adopts tactics such as those just mentioned, the rest of the mill is immediately affected. The weavers, who had decided to take off only one cut, informed the management that they had been told to do only half their usual work. This

\* On the 5th July a strike had broken out in another set of mills—the Barnagore mills—at Barnagore, adjoining and north of Calcutta on the left bank of the Hooghly. This, however, at first was a localized strike; it arose from a complaint of a number of spinners, who raised questions affecting the wages granted at the change-over from the double to the single-shift in these mills three years previously. The Barnagore spinners resumed work on the 8th July, but went out again on the 9th, and remained out till the 12th July, when work was resumed on the old conditions, till the mills closed altogether along with all the other mills (except the Lansdowne mill) on the left bank of the Hooghly, north of Calcutta. This dispute was not connected with the main issue which arose at Jagatdal, although the Barnagore mills ultimately resumed working as the result of the agreement.

immediately led to a glut of yarn in the mills, and they had to close down. On the same day (the 22nd of July), the managing agents of the affected mills met in Calcutta and decided to grant the demands of the weavers (to restore the 54-hours stent) in full. This decision was promptly communicated to the mills, and managers were ordered to tell the sirdars to spread the news amongst the workers. The decision was also posted up on the mill gates. The concession, however, proved too late, as on the next day, the 23rd of July, the weavers pursued the same tactics, and the mills closed down entirely.

The original dispute was a perfectly genuine one. It arose in a group of single-shift mills in which the workers were asked to work six hours more per week and thereby give up the free Saturday which they had hitherto enjoyed. The extraordinary feature of the case is that the dispute arose amongst the relatively high-paid weavers. The time-workers put forward no case at all. In the case of the weavers, the decision of the managing agents to alter the stent looked perilously like rate-cutting, and it ultimately received the fate which rate-cutting receives where labour is better organized. The time-workers would seem to have had a fairly good case for asking more than an exact proportionate increase in wages, for, although the hours they were asked to work were within the legal limits of the Factories Act, they had not been working 60 hours for many years. They could have put up at least a colourable case for increased rates on some overtime basis for the extra six hours worked. This, however, was at no time put forward during the strike, although the principle of additional wages for time-workers was included in the agreement which settled the strike.

The dispute remained more or less localized for the week starting on the 22nd July. With a large number of workers standing idle in the very congested Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah area, contagion was almost inevitable, and at the beginning of the succeeding week, picketing became general in the district. During the week, the management of the mills made every attempt to induce the workers to return on the ground that all that they had demanded had been conceded. The workers, however, would not be persuaded. They said that they would not resume work without the order of their union, the union in this case being not the registered Kankinnarah Labour Union under Mr. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, but the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, which thenceforward took command of the situation. The Kankinnarah Labour Union, it may be added, had done its best to induce the workers to resume work, but their efforts were fruitless. On the 29th July, the Alexandra mill, neighbouring the above group, was severely picketed by strikers. The Alexandra mill is under the same managing agency as the Alliance, Craig and Waverly mills, viz., Messrs. Begg, Dunlop & Company. Thus, at the very beginning of the strike, one of the peculiar, indeed almost incomprehensible, features of the general strike became apparent, viz., that while three mills under the same management went on strike, the fourth, immediately neighbouring the others, refused to go out till circumstances compelled the management to close it. The Alexandra mill was closed down by the management in order to prevent rioting and destruction of property. Actually, it continued working in spite of picketing, from the 29th July to the 1st August, on which date a mob of strikers attempted to enter the mill to force the workers to stop. The Kankinnarah Labour Union officials claimed that the mill continued working owing to the fact that the influence of the union in that mill was very strong. By the 1st August, picketing had become more effective, and there appears to be no doubt that picketing was accompanied by general intimidation in the form of personal threats. Women, especially, were threatened with assault and general molestation if they continued to work, and shopkeepers were also warned that if they supplied workers continuing to work with food, their shops would be looted. The neighbouring Anglo-India mills, four in number, had to close down for these reasons. The closure in their case was gradual—a fact which suggests that the workers had no marked grievance. By the 2nd August, however, the closure in these mills was complete. At the beginning of next week, i.e., the 5th August, the strike had practically become general. All the rest of the mills in the Jagatdal-Bhatpara-Kankinnarah area had to close down—the Auckland, Reliance, Kankinnarah and Nadia mills on the 5th August, and the Gourepore and Naihatti mills on the 7th August. On the 7th August the strike also spread southwards to the Shamnagar South Mill. In none of the later stoppages was a statement of grievances put forward by the workers to the management. Indeed, the opposite was the case, as the management were informed by such workers as they were able to consult that they had no grievance, and that they had stopped work only because of intimidation.

On the 5th August, the strike also spread to the whole of the Titaghur mills. In that area it also affected one or two other concerns, a jute-shoe factory and an engineering works, which, though they had no ascertainable grievances, closed down because of either sympathy or intimidation. In none of the stoppages in the Titaghur

area were statements of grievances put forward by the workers. All the mills in this area work on the multiple-shift, and the ostensible reason for closure was the abstention of the women workers.

In the meantime, trouble had arisen in another area, viz., the Sealdah area in Calcutta. On the 29th of July, the operatives of the Union North, Beliaghata, and Narkeldanga mills went out after some agitation conducted by a local branch of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. On the following day, the workers of the Soorah mills followed suit. Work was resumed in the Union North mill on the 2nd of August, and partially in the Soorah mill on the same date. The Union North mill again closed on the 5th August, and the Soorah mill on the 8th. In the case of the Sealdah mills, the only statement of grievances put forward was an ultimatum issued by the Beliaghata Jute Workers' Union the existence of which has been known to no one before the issue of this document.

On the 5th of August, the trouble spread to the south of Calcutta, where two mills—the Clive and Union South—went on strike without any grievances being communicated by any agency to the management.

The result of these strikes was that during the week beginning the 5th August all jute mills between Calcutta and Naihatty had closed down, with the exception of the Lansdowne and Kamarhatty mills. The Khardah mill closed down during this week. At the end of this week, viz., on the 9th August, the debate referred to below took place in the Bengal Legislative Council. During the next week, i.e., the week starting the 12th August, the Hookumchand and Kamarhatty mills closed down. The Barnagore mills, after having worked partially for a short time, had also closed. The Agarpara mill, a new non-Association mill, closed down on the 14th August. The Naihatty mill, which had made an attempt to restart, closed down again on the same date. During all this period, the Lansdowne mill, close to Calcutta and adjoining the disaffected Sealdah group, remained working. It also remained working after the general strike—a rather unexpected development, as the Lansdowne mill has a fairly long history of unrest.

On the opposite side of the river on which there are about 25 groups of mills, up to this time only one mill was affected—the Hastings mill—where a purely localized dispute led to a strike on the 1st of August. This dispute arose from a question of wages affecting only a portion of the sacking weavers which did not affect the neighbouring mills—Wellington and Presidency. Indeed—another remarkable feature of the strike—the Wellington and Presidency mills were not affected during the general strike before the agreement, or for some weeks after the agreement, yet the Wellington mill is separated from the Hastings mill only by a compound wall. The Hastings dispute later became merged in the general issue, but the Wellington mill was not affected till September, and the Presidency mill was one of the few that at no time went out.

On the 13th August, trouble appeared in another area containing a number of jute mills, viz., the Telimpara, Bhadreswar, Baidyabati and Champdany area in the Hooghly district on the right bank of the river. The Victoria and the North Shamnagar mills, both under the management of Messrs. Thomas Duff & Company, then closed down. Local trouble had previously broken out in the Champdany mill, but the mill had continued to work.

The position at this stage may be summarized as follows. The whole of the mills from Calcutta to Halisahar were on strike, with the sole exception of the Lansdowne mill. South of Calcutta, the Union South and Clive mills were also out. The Barnagore dispute, originally of a localized character, had been merged in the general dispute. On the other side of the river, the Victoria mills had joined in the general issue, and the Hastings mill still remained out. Trouble had also appeared at the Birla mill, the extreme south mill on left bank of the river. The mill, however, continued working partially. The total number of looms affected was 30,400 or 60 per cent. of the total number of looms on the river. The number of workers involved was approximately 192,000. The only real statement of grievance in the general dispute had been put forward in the case of the Alliance-Craig-Waverley-Megna group, and that grievance had been settled by the concession of what the workers had demanded, although the workers did not resume. Apart from the localized disputes at the Hastings and Barnagore mills and the ultimatum delivered to the Sealdah group by a hitherto unheard-of labour body, no other statements of grievances had been put forward.

On the 8th of August, notice was given by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy of a motion for adjournment of the Bengal Legislative Council to discuss the strike situation. The motion was admitted, and a discussion took place on Friday the 9th August. No further reference to the debate is necessary here, as a printed copy of the proceedings is appended. The Hon Mr. McAlpin explained the attitude of Government in the matter, which, in short, was that negotiations, which had started between the

jute mill authorities and certain trade union leaders, should be given a chance to fructify, and that nothing in the debate should be said which would prejudice the prospects of peace.

In the week succeeding the debate, viz., the week starting the 12th August, as already indicated, the strikes spread still further. During this week, an agreement was reached between the parties. The part played by the Government, up to this date, in the strike and the negotiations leading to the agreement, as well as the conditions of the agreement itself, are referred to subsequently. The agreement was signed by the various parties on Friday, the 16th August, and the labour leaders in accepting the terms signed an undertaking that they would to their utmost to secure a resumption of work over the week end. The effect of the agreement was immediate. On Monday, the 19th August, all the mills which had been on strike, with one exception, resumed work. The one exception was the North Shamnagar mill, which was affected by a series of fresh strikes that broke out in the Telinipara-Bhadreswar-Baidyabati-Champdany area. This mill, however, resumed work on the following day. Thus, by the morning of Tuesday the 20th, every mill which had been on strike had resumed work.

Then followed a series of new strikes in mills which had hitherto defied all the efforts of the strike leaders. These strikes seemed to have been caused by fear on the part of the workers that, unless they went on strike, they would not share in the concessions to be granted under the agreement. During the week end following the agreement, the managing agents of the various groups of mills, with one or two exceptions, had let it be known in all their mills, irrespective of whether they had been on strike or not, that they would partake in the concessions. In spite of this guarantee, the mills went on strike, either simultaneously or one after another, very much as if they had been smitten by a rapidly spreading contagious disease. The Bengal Jute Workers' Union, faithful to the promise of Miss Das Gupta, exerted every effort to send the workers back, but while the union leaders had found it easy to get the workers on the left bank of the river, north of Calcutta, out, they did not find it so easy to get the workers on the other side either to remain at, or return to work. The strikes following the agreement provide one of the most amazing and peculiar incidents in industrial history, for, in spite of resisting the intense efforts of the union to get them out during the main strikes, the workers actually went on strike when they had been promised the concessions granted as the result of the general strike and against every argument that the union leaders could use to induce them to remain at work. The two chief centres of trouble were the mills on the right bank of the Hooghly, from Chandernagore to, and including, Serampore and the group of mills under the managing agency of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Company in the Budge Budge area. During the first week after the settlement of the main strike, all the mills in the former area, with the exception of the Victoria and the North Shamnagar Mills, which returned to work, went out and remained out for a week. No demands were put forward by the workers. They said that they did not understand the notice which had been issued by the union calling the strike off. The notice had been signed by Miss Das Gupta, whom, they said, they did not recognize. Miss Das Gupta did her best to get the men back to work, but she proved to have little power in that area; indeed, a number of workers abused and insulted her when she went there to speak to them. The mills which were on strike in this area included the Angus Mill, under American management, which had granted the concessions secured by the agreement on the day of the change-over, the 1st July.

On the south of Howrah, the Lawrence workers went out, evidently under the impression that they had to make some sort of demonstration of unrest in order to get the concessions. They realized their mistake when explanations were given by the management, and resumed working the next morning. On the 20th August, the whole of the Andrew Yule group of mills in the Budge Budge area went on strike, in spite of the fact that the workers in these mills had been promised the concessions secured by the agreement. The strikes in this group proved the most stubborn of the post-agreement strikes, and did not collapse till the 11th September. The unrest in the Yule mills had repercussions on the other side of the river, the Yule mills in that area—Belvedere and Delta—also going out, though in their case the strike was short-lived. One of the group, indeed—National—remained steadfast throughout the whole period, with a very slight intermission. The Ludlow and Fort Gloster Mills, opposite Budge Budge, were also affected. The Lawrence Mill again went out subsequently, on two occasions, while the Fort Gloster group resumed work, and again went partially on strike. The restiveness in these mills was all the more peculiar in view of their resoluteness during the earlier troubles. In the Fort Gloster case, demands arising from a protracted strike of 1928 were put forward. Miss Das Gupta went to the Budge Budge area several times to persuade the workers to go back, but her efforts were unavailing. The strike ultimately collapsed by the workers returning unconditionally. Agitators not connected with Miss Das Gupta's union had informed the workers south of Calcutta that Government had promised them

100 per cent. rise in wages. This 100 per cent. was whittled down to 75, 50, and, ultimately, 25 per cent., but in spite of the variations, the workers had to resume work under the terms of the agreement.

Apart from the strike in the Budge Budge group of mills, none of the strikes which broke out after the agreement was of long duration, and in none of them was any statement of grievances put forward, unless the demands for 100 per cent. rise in wages made in some of the southern mills could be said to be such a statement.

The position gradually calmed down, till, in the second week of September, the great majority of the mills were working. A local dispute broke out at the Kamarhatty Mill, in which the workers demanded the rates in the Kankinnarah Mill under the same managing agency, viz., that of Messrs. Jardine, Skinner and Company. In the second week of September, the Wellington Mill at Rishra went on strike, because the time-workers alleged that they had not received the concessions stipulated in the agreement. The New Central Mills in Howrah also went out for a few days, alleging that the agreement had not been put into effect. This strike was the only strike during the whole period in the Howrah area.

By the end of the second week of September, when the position became practically normal, the great majority of mills at one period or another had been affected by the unrest. Indeed, only about 10 mills had worked consistently throughout in both the pre-agreement and post-agreement periods, and in several of these there had been temporary disturbances which, however, did not lead to definite stoppages. A remarkable feature about the mills which did not go on strike is that the majority of them are situated in areas likely to encourage strikes. For example, with one exception, all the Howrah mills, from Howrah to Bally and Belur, remained steadfast. The Hooghly Mill, situated in Kidderpore, a mill which has had considerable labour trouble and which is situated in a very congested area, reported no unrest, although two of its neighbours were on strike, and the Lansdowne Mill, situated near Sealdah, the mills in which all went out, worked throughout in spite of a well-earned reputation for readiness to strike.

## 2.—*Negotiations Leading to the Settlement.*

It has already been remarked that, although there had been many strikes in the jute mills, there had at no previous time been any attempt at a general strike. The part of Government in all the previous strikes had been that of a neutral third party keeping the peace and watching developments, and in no case did either disorder or the merits of a strike appear to them of such a character as to require intervention on industrial grounds. Intervention, moreover, has always been strongly opposed by employers, specially in disputes in private concerns. In the present case, the first approach was made to Government by the employers. The Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and, later, representatives of the managing agents of the mills affected, approached the Honorable Member in charge of the Police Department with a view to securing adequate police protection for the workers, who, they declared, were prevented from going to work purely by intimidation. They contended that, as the demands of the workers had been granted, there was no industrial dispute. In spite of action taken by district and subdivisional authorities to prevent illegal intimidation, the workers in the mills concerned did not go back; indeed, the strike spread. Once it began to spread, it developed so rapidly that the issue of intimidation was submerged. The workers as a whole, in spite of any protestations made by individual workers to managers, showed no disposition to return. They remained remarkably peaceful, especially on the left bank of the river north of Calcutta. There was only one serious clash, and that was between workers of the Gourepore Mill and Kabuli money-lenders—a clash which was only indirectly connected with the strike. From the peace-and-order point of view, in spite of the inherent dangers of the position, the strike was very orderly, although, after the settlement, several cases of assault on members of the superior staffs of mills were reported.

From the point of view of a settlement, the position in the early stages was complicated by the facts that the demands of the discontented workers had been conceded in the case where demands had been made, in the other cases no demands had been made at all, and that, while in one area weavers had led the strike, in another the women workers had caused willing men workers to be locked out. The mill authorities were given no chance to negotiate, as their workers did not approach them. General statements of grievances, however, were broadcasted by means of leaflets; these were issued by the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The managements endeavoured to spread the news among their workers that any reasonable statements of grievances would be looked into. The Jute Mills Association came into the field with a statement of terms on which work might be resumed. These were:—(1) That the mills would pay the correct proportionate increase in wages for the extra

hours worked ; (2) That they would pay *shorahi* as before ; (3) That there would be no victimization ; and (4) That the association would recommend that favourable consideration should be given by members of the association to the provision of maternity benefits.

These negotiations were conducted mainly through the medium of the press, in which many letters and statements appeared. They were very much "in the air," and little calculated to secure peace, for the main parties to the controversy would not meet.

Government were closely watching the position, but at that stage could do little to bring the issues to a conclusion. With respect to grievances, they were practically in the same position as the employers. No definite issues had been put forward ; where they had been put forward, they had been met. No negotiations had taken place between the workers and the managements, except in the cases where the Kankinnarah Union had been implicated. Miss Das Gupta's union was not a registered one, and recognition of her as leader might further complicate matters. The employers were strongly opposed to intervention by means of the Trade Disputes Act, and it was apparent that till the issues were clearer, no useful purpose would be served by appointing either a court of inquiry or a board of conciliation, as it was not likely that a promise to appoint either of these bodies would bring the strike to an end. From the industrial point of view, therefore, no immediate action was deemed advisable.

The fact that so many workers were on strike, however, was a great menace to the peace of the community, especially as there was a possibility of communal friction. A table is appended which shows the communal composition of selected jute mills, and from that table it will be seen that while there is a preponderance of one community, there is a powerful minority of the other.

| Name of Mill.                              | Hindus per<br>100 of full<br>strength. | Muhammadans<br>per 100 of full<br>strength. |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Bhatpara-Jagaidal-Kankinnarah Area.</i> |  |   |
| Hookumchand .. .. .                        | 65                                     | 33  |
| Naihatty .. .. .                           | 74                                     | 24  |
| Gourepore (2 mills) .. .. .                | 81                                     | 19  |
| Nadia (2 mills) .. .. .                    | 71                                     | 29  |
| Reliance .. .. .                           | 64                                     | 36  |
| Kankinnarah (2 mills) .. .. .              | 73                                     | 27  |
| Anglo-India (4 mills) .. .. .              | 71                                     | 28  |
| Alliance (2 mills) .. .. .                 | 64                                     | 36  |
| Megna .. .. .                              | 66                                     | 32  |
| Alexandra .. .. .                          | 74                                     | 26  |
| Auckland .. .. .                           | 69                                     | 31  |
| Craig .. .. .                              | 60                                     | 40  |
| Waverly .. .. .                            | 75                                     | 25  |
| Shamnagar (South) (2 mills) .. .. .        | 78                                     | 22  |
| Agarpara .. .. .                           | 64                                     | 36  |
| Empire .. .. .                             | 81                                     | 19  |
| Kelvin .. .. .                             | 70                                     | 30  |
| Kinnison (2 mills) .. .. .                 | 74                                     | 26  |
| Standard .. .. .                           | 74                                     | 26  |
| Titaghur (2 mills) .. .. .                 | 80                                     | 20  |
| Khardah (2 mills) .. .. .                  | 74                                     | 26  |
| Kamarhatty (2 mills) .. .. .               | 61                                     | 39  |
| Barnagore (2 mills) .. .. .                | 62                                     | 37  |
| <i>Sealdah-Garden Reach Area.</i>          |  |   |
| Soorah .. .. .                             | 65                                     | 35  |
| Beliaghata .. .. .                         | 67                                     | 33  |
| Union (North) .. .. .                      | 54                                     | 42  |
| Clive (2 mills) .. .. .                    | 52                                     | 48  |
| Union (South) .. .. .                      | 65                                     | 35  |
| <i>Budge-Budge Area.</i>                   |  |   |
| Cheviot .. .. .                            | 78                                     | 22  |
| Caledonian .. .. .                         | 70                                     | 30  |
| Budge-Budge (2 mills) .. .. .              | 70                                     | 30  |
| Albion .. .. .                             | 65                                     | 35  |
| Lothian .. .. .                            | 72                                     | 28  |
| Orient .. .. .                             | 61                                     | 39  |
| Birla .. .. .                              | 52                                     | 48  |

| <i>Jute Mills.—contd.</i>            |    |    |    |    | Hindus per  | Muhammadians    |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------------|-----------------|
| Name of Mill.                        |    |    |    |    | 100 of full | per 100 of full |
| <i>Serampore-Chandernagore Area.</i> |    |    |    |    | strength.   | strength.       |
| Victoria (2 mills) ..                | .. | .. | .. | .. | 72          | 28              |
| Shamnagar (North) ..                 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 79          | 21              |
| Angus ..                             | .. | .. | .. | .. | 73          | 27              |
| Northbrook ..                        | .. | .. | .. | .. | 79          | 21              |
| Dalhousie ..                         | .. | .. | .. | .. | 73          | 27              |
| Champdany ..                         | .. | .. | .. | .. | 71          | 29              |
| India (3 mills) ..                   | .. | .. | .. | .. | 71          | 29              |
| Wellington ..                        | .. | .. | .. | .. | 64          | 36              |
| <i>Howrah Area.</i>                  |    |    |    |    |             |                 |
| Belvedere ..                         | .. | .. | .. | .. | 83          | 17              |
| Delta ..                             | .. | .. | .. | .. | 73          | 27              |
| Fort Gloster (3 mills) ..            | .. | .. | .. | .. | 73          | 27              |
| Lawrence ..                          | .. | .. | .. | .. | 76          | 24              |
| Ludlow ..                            | .. | .. | .. | .. | 70          | 30              |

From the point of view of peace and order, therefore, Government had to keep in close touch with the dispute, not only with a view to deciding whether intervention was necessary, but also to safeguard the public peace. The council debate also helped to clear the issues and it gave an indication of the mind of the legislature with regard to Government intervention.

There was no resumption of work in the beginning of the week commencing the 12th August; indeed, the strike leaders took heart from the council debate and urged the workers to stay out, as Government would be forced to intervene. Instead of settling down, the unrest spread, and on the 14th August, conferences were arranged at which the Honourable Members in charge of the Police and Commerce Departments, with Mr. Gilchrist, Deputy Secretary in the Commerce Department, Labour Intelligence Officer, and Registrar of Trade Unions, met separately the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association; Mr. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, of the Kankinnarah Labour Union; and Miss Das Gupta, the President of the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union and actual leader of the strikers. The only action prior to this that had been taken by a Government officer was by Mr. Bingemann, district magistrate of the 24-Parganas, who in his capacity as district magistrate, summoned a representative conference on the 5th August, at Bhatpara, at which were present representatives of the jute mills in that area, Miss Das Gupta, Mr. Roy Chowdhury, Maulvi Latafat Hossain and others. This conference, the main aim of which was to ascertain the facts of the situation, was not successful in bringing the parties together for purposes of negotiation.

At the conference held in Writers' Buildings, with the committee of the India Jute Mills Association on the 14th August, the committee confirmed the announcement regarding the conditions mentioned above on which workers might resume work. The conditions were further discussed and the association placed the following interpretation on the phrase "correct proportionate increase in wages":—

"In the case of workers, time and piece, the correct proportionate increase will be the correct proportionate increase on total earnings for the extra hours worked, with fractions in favour of the workers. . . . In mills, where *khoraki* has hitherto been paid, *khoraki* will continue to be paid as before. (Note.—In mills in which *khoraki* has not been paid separately, it has been incorporated in the wages.)"

The above formula, the association agreed, should apply to all workers, but there was some discussion on the extra increase that might be paid as the result of working more hours in the case of both time and piece-workers. No definite decision was reached at the conference, but an indication was given that (a) in the case of time-workers any increase over the correct proportionate rate would be considered by individual mills, as no solution of a general nature was possible owing to various reasons, and (b) that in the case of piece-workers individual mills would consider reasonable requests which might be put forward by workers on their return to work.

The committee also indicated that there was no question, as had been alleged in some quarters, of turning workers out of their quarters, unless there were riots. The committee also agreed to take up the question of simplification of wages after the strike was over.

At the conference, at which Mr. Roy Chowdhury and Maulvi Latafat Hossain were present, both union leaders said that in their opinion the terms already announced by the Association were sufficient to secure the return of the workers.

At the conference with Miss Das Gupta, the various claims put forward in the pamphlets of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union and by Miss Das Gupta herself were narrowed down to the following:—(1) Proportionate increase in total earnings for



extra time worked, the total earnings to include bonuses of all kinds and *khoraki*; (2) no victimization; (3) payment of wages for the period during which the workers had been on strike or had been locked out; (4) the creation of a board to consider other grievances, the board to consist of three millowners, three representatives of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, and two outsiders (one to be chosen by the employers and one to be chosen by the union); (5) provision of maternity benefits; and (6) no corporal punishment.

These terms were communicated to the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association, which replied that the committee could recognize only registered trade unions, and that they adhered to the assurances which they had given at the conference on the previous day. The committee absolutely declined to pay wages for the strike period and refused to agree to the creation of a board, as stipulated by Miss Das Gupta. So far as corporal punishment was concerned, they indicated that the striking of workers was strictly prohibited in all mills, and that any man caught breaking the rule was severely dealt with. They also stated that the mill authorities would, as they always had done, consider sympathetically any reasonable grievances or demands which might be put forward by the workers themselves.

Such was the position of the various parties on Thursday, the 15th August. On the afternoon of that day, the labour intelligence officer, by previous arrangement, had a conference with Miss Das Gupta, who was accompanied by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who had moved the adjournment motion in the Legislative Council. At this conference, issues were raised which had not been previously mentioned. These were mainly of a general nature, and the labour intelligence officer persuaded Miss Das Gupta that they could not be made subjects for negotiation then, as they were to be considered subsequently by the Royal Commission. The issues were gradually narrowed down until there was agreement on all save strike pay and the proposed board. Dr. Roy in particular pointed out that, as the mills were in the wrong on their own admission, they should pay for the period of stoppage. Miss Das Gupta pleaded the examples of other countries in support of strike pay, but it was proved to her that her statement was entirely wrong, and that the issue could be settled by herself if she would organize a sound union. Ultimately, the labour intelligence officer suggested a compromise, namely, that time-workers should get a concession similar to that granted for piece-workers, i.e., that if the 54-hour stent was continued as proposed, the time-workers should get the same ratio of increase as the piece-workers. This was accepted and the strike pay issue dropped. There was some difficulty about the proportionate increase in total earnings, as Miss Das Gupta had insisted on the inclusion of *khoraki*. *Khoraki*, however, does not apply to single-shift mills, and it was agreed that *khoraki* should be treated separately. Miss Das Gupta and Dr. Roy both insisted on keeping in the item regarding the appointment of a board to examine other grievances, and ultimately they agreed to accept a general formula, such as was ultimately included in the agreement, if the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association could not be persuaded to accept their point of view.

After the conference with Miss Das Gupta and Dr. Roy, the labour intelligence officer got into touch with the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association late in the evening. He explained to them the position taken up by Miss Das Gupta, particularly with regard to strike pay and to the creation of a board, and suggested to them that a settlement was now possible on the basis already agreed upon by the Association publicly plus concessions to the time-workers on a scale proportionate to those that would accrue to the piece-workers by the adherence to the 54-hour stent. The Mills Association had not at this stage publicly announced their adherence to the 54-hour stent, but it was known that they would accept this concession, which had already been granted in the case of the Begg Dunlop group and some other mills. After some discussion the committee agreed to recommend the proportionate increase in the case of time-workers. The labour intelligence officer explained to them Dr. Roy's and Miss Das Gupta's point of view with regard to the creation of a board. The committee, as anticipated, absolutely and finally refused to have anything to do with it, and it was necessary, therefore, to fall back on the general statement that each mill would consider reasonable statements of grievances put forward by its own workers.

The concessions granted by the committee made a settlement possible, and the labour intelligence officer at once drew up a draft of terms, which was signed next morning by the chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and later in the day by Miss Das Gupta and Mr. Roy Chowdhury. The terms of settlement are reproduced below :—

#### *Terms of Settlement.*

(1) *Wages*.—The Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association will recommend to members of the association the terms already publicly announced :—(a) to pay the correct proportionate increase in total earnings for the extra hours worked; (b) to pay *khoraki* on the same scale as heretofore.

They will also recommend to members :—(c) that the scales of bonuses remain the same as they were before July 1st when the mills were working 54 hours a week ; and (d) that favourable consideration be given to an adjustment of wages to time-workers on the basis of the concession suggested for piece-workers.

(Note.—This will not apply to mills where such adjustment has already been made).

The Committee will also recommend to members :—(2) that there be no victimization ; (3) that favourable consideration be given to the provision of maternity benefits ; (4) that there be no corporal punishment.

(Note.—The committee wish to point out that corporal punishment is already strictly prohibited.)

(5) That the authorities of each mill consider favourably reasonable statements of grievances put forward by their workers.

The labour leaders also signed an assurance to the effect that they would do their utmost to secure a resumption of work on Monday, the 19th August.

During the week-end the Labour Intelligence Officer had considerable difficulty in securing adherence to the terms of settlement on the part of Miss Das Gupta as her advisers had impressed on her the fact that the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association had made the agreement in bad faith and had no intention of adhering to it. Moreover, she made an attempt to insist on special terms for the Barnagore workers. Ultimately after long argument Miss Das Gupta decided to adhere to the settlement in spite of all advice to the contrary, and the results of her adherence have already been indicated in the account given above. It may be stated here that although during the weeks immediately following the resumption of work the position was at times somewhat tense owing to the fact that many allegations were made regarding victimization and non-compliance with other items of the terms of settlement Miss Das Gupta exerted herself to the utmost to keep the peace. In this she was successful, although it ultimately came to light that her influence in some of the new strikes was ineffective.

The following weeks, during which the post-agreement strikes referred to above broke out, led to many difficulties, mostly connected with the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The union, as will be seen later, split into two, but Miss Das Gupta retained her control over the workers, and was able to persuade them to remain at work. Agitation was started by dissentient members of the union with a view to creating further trouble. During this period, Government were not approached by any of the parties to take any action, but the Labour Intelligence Officer was constantly in touch with both the Jute Mills Association and the union with a view to preventing new strikes arising from misunderstandings. The position of the Labour Intelligence Officer in this respect was exceedingly delicate. As the negotiator of the agreement, he was looked upon by Miss Das Gupta's side as responsible for its enforcement in spite of the fact that it had been made perfectly plain in all the negotiations that Government had no power to enforce the agreement, and that the Committee of the Jute Mills Association itself had only power to recommend. Nevertheless, because an officer of the Secretariat negotiated the agreement, Government was constantly spoken of on the union side as being responsible for its enforcement, and, when the post-agreement strikes broke out, especially in the Budge-Budge area, Government was actually declared publicly to have enforced 100 per cent. rise in the case of the workers north of Calcutta.

Complaints poured in to the Labour Intelligence Officer from Miss Das Gupta regarding breaches of the terms of settlement, especially with regard to victimization. After the resumption of work, Miss Das Gupta was bombarded by complaints from men out of work, who alleged that they had been victimized. The complaints were also published in several of the daily papers, particularly the English *Basumati*, which contained a daily bulletin from Miss Das Gupta's union, or, after the split, from Miss Das Gupta herself. The Labour Intelligence Officer had to act as an intermediary between the jute mills and Miss Das Gupta—a position which was forced upon him by the fact that up to the 31st of August none of the jute mill authorities would correspond directly with Miss Das Gupta or her union. He at first conveyed the messages by telephone to Mr. Laird, Chairman of the Committee of the Jute Mills Association, who passed them on to the managing agents concerned—a function which, however, unpalatable, Mr. Laird readily undertook in the interests of peace. Complaints and consequent strike threats became more and more numerous, until the Labour Intelligence Officer at Miss Das Gupta's request, had to hold another conference with her and Dr. Roy. It was pointed out at that conference that the general charges of victimization which had been made had been denied, and that such charges could serve no useful purpose. If the allegations were persisted in, then the individual instances would have to be examined. The Labour Intelligence Officer informed Miss Das Gupta that, although he was somewhat taxing his position, he would use his influence for one occasion only to have her complaints analysed by the mill authorities. Miss Das Gupta thereupon sent a long list of alleged cases. This

It was, therefore, clear that section 3 of the Act would have had no effect whatsoever. The only course open to the Government, therefore, was to summon the leaders on both sides to take stock of the situation and to adopt such a course as appeared to them best. After the leaders had been interviewed, the position had been clarified on both sides, but the speedy outcome of the negotiations, the agreement, was more or less of an accident, resulting in a private conference which the Labour Intelligence Officer had with Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and Miss Das Gupta, at the conclusion of which the Labour Intelligence Officer recognized that with only slight concessions on the part of the Jute Mills Association, an agreement could be reached between the Association, Miss Das Gupta, and the Kankinnarah Labour Union. The whole of the negotiations took place on the Labour Intelligence Officer's own initiative between 2.30 p.m. and 7 p.m., and the actual papers of the agreement were signed by mid-day the next day. The Labour Intelligence Officer drafted the agreement, and it was signed in his house by Mr. Laird, the President of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and Miss Probhabati Das Gupta on the morning of the 16th August. The parties, however, were not brought together. Actually, the manuscript agreement, which was signed by Mr. Laird, was also signed by Miss Das Gupta in the Labour Intelligence Officer's house, because he had no office facilities for making duplicate copies of the agreement. In theory, the terms of the agreement were signed by each party separately, the Labour Intelligence Officer attesting the signatures.

The Labour Intelligence Officer is a Secretariat officer, occupying the position of Deputy Secretary in the Commerce Department, which administers labour laws, and also in the Marine Department. Thus the agreement was given the appearance of having been negotiated under Government sanction, and it was this that led to subsequent declaration of the union in the press and in speeches that the Government was the sanctioning authority behind the agreement. Actually, the Labour Intelligence Officer, with the sanction of the Government, had acted as an intermediary or as a point of contact between parties who would not meet, conveying the views of one party to the other, and, ultimately, collating and, to some extent, adding to them, with a view to making them agree. With the conclusion of the agreement and the forwarding of copies to the interested parties, his functions should normally have ended. Owing, however, to his peculiar position he had for several weeks following the conclusion of the agreement to act in a mixed capacity as a permanent channel of communication between two parties, one of which refused to correspond with the other, and, in respect of one party, as a sort of court of interpretation or appeal. Had the Labour Intelligence Officer not acted in this capacity, had he refused to have further dealings with Miss Das Gupta and Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy after the conclusion of the agreement, there is no reasonable doubt but that the agreement would have broken down and that the workers, who continued to be in an excited state, would have gone out again. In some cases, probably, Miss Das Gupta and her agents would have had difficulty in persuading the workers to go out, but where persuasion would have failed, picketing and intimidation would almost certainly have succeeded. Nevertheless, it was deemed advisable that the parties should be left to negotiate by themselves, and the Labour Intelligence Officer was directed to withdraw from the position of intermediary. Before he actually withdrew, however, the second crisis developed on the 31st August. If on that date he had not been able to bring Miss Das Gupta into direct communication with the managing agents of the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna group of mills, the whole battle would have had to be fought over again. By achieving direct communication between Miss Das Gupta and Messrs. Begg Dunlop and Company, he was able to tell both sides that, now that one set of managing directors were willing to discuss grievances direct with Miss Das Gupta, there are no reasons why others should not do likewise, and that, therefore, he proposed to leave further negotiations to the parties themselves.

The position whereby Government may be made a third party in strikes and strike settlement is by no means satisfactory, and is under consideration separately. In Bengal, Government tend to be drawn into industrial disputes more than they need be, because of the fact that headquarter offices of the Government are situated near Clive Street. When serious strikes break out, the first impulse of managing agents is to ask for an interview with the Honourable Member in charge of the Police Department, whereas, normally, they should first approach the district authorities. Thus, in strikes in the metropolitan area, there is a tendency on the part of the industrial authorities to attempt to override the district authorities by having orders issued direct by Government. Experience has proved that the reports of the industrial authorities are sometimes based on incomplete information. Government have to depend on the district authorities for full reports, as they also have to depend on them for taking the necessary measures to keep the peace. The position of the district authorities, however, is not adequately appreciated by managing agents generally in the case of extensive or protracted strikes. When, in the present case,

first approach towards an understanding of the position at Bhatpara-Jagatdal was made by the local authority, viz., the District Magistrate of the 24-Parganas, sufficient attention was not paid by the mill authorities to the possibilities of such a conference. Indeed, considerable resentment was felt at Mr. Bingemann's perfectly correct action in summoning representatives of the different parties to the conference, because the mill authorities had refused to meet representatives of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union previously. When representatives of the mills actually attended the meeting and found that Miss Das Gupta and other strike leaders were present they felt that they had been tricked. The atmosphere of the meeting, therefore, was not conducive to reaching a settlement. The managing agents of the mills, however, showed great readiness to come to a conference in Writers' Buildings, although they let it be known that they would not come to a conference at which Miss Das Gupta was present. By this time the strike had spread very much further, and the outlook was much more ominous. They were perfectly aware that Government had summoned representatives of the Kankinnarah Labour Union and Miss Das Gupta to separate conferences, but they would not concede the point of refusal to recognize the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Government thus came into the position of intermediary and though the Labour Intelligence Officer ultimately negotiated the items in the agreement on his own initiative, the negotiations were conducted with official cognizance and sanction. The terms of the agreement thus came to be looked on generally as having behind it at least a measure of Government approval, whereas, of course, not one of the items of the agreement had been taken into consideration of principle at any stage of the negotiations, or after the negotiations, by any department of Government.

#### 4.—*The Employers' Side.*

The main facts on the employers' side have already been given. The Indian Jute Mills Association guides and directs the general policy of the jute companies which are members of the association with regard to general trade conditions. The Association does not interfere with the internal management of mills beyond the negotiation of agreements regarding output, which, of course, involves working hours. At no time of the existence of the association have wages and other conditions of work been regarded as an association subject. Some attempts have been made in the past by individual members of the association to secure some measure of standardization of wages and working conditions, but they all have met with failure. The jute mills have grown up as independent units and have rigorously preserved this independence, so far as it has been consistent with general trade policy.

When it became necessary for Government to attempt to bring about some settlement of the general strike, the first prominent feature brought to notice by the Committee of the Mills Association, which was the negotiating authority on the part of the association, was that the committee had power only to recommend certain measures to its members. The members of the committee, it is true, themselves represented about 65 per cent. of the looms, but they could give no guarantee that any recommendation that they would make, would be accepted by other members of the association. Therefore, any agreement that could be drawn up had to be drawn up in the form of "The Committee recommend to members, etc. etc."

There was good ground behind the committee's view, for perhaps in no industry in the world, situated in such a circumscribed area, is the wage position more unchoate. The mills grouped under different managing agents, work under wage systems which have developed many local idiosyncrasies during the long or short years of their existence. Even in mills under the same managing agents there are differences which to persons not acquainted with the position would seem incredible. Examples such as the following could be multiplied. In two mills, A and B, situated in the same area and separated from each other by little more than a boundary wall, under the same managing agents, there is practically not a single entry in the wage-books of the two mills which is the same. In three mills, X, Y and Z under the same managing agents, situated within a stone's throw of each other, the rates in one mill have for many years been higher than those in the other two mills, yet the workers have been aware of this and have continued working quite contentedly. In other groups of mills situated close to each other and under different managing agents, the wage-rates in individual mills are kept, or are supposed to be kept, strictly secret. The total earnings are not necessarily kept secret, but each mill prides itself in having been able to devise piece-rates or bonus rates which are better than the rates of the neighbouring mills. These rates, of course, can be ascertained by spy-work in the bazaar, but up to now, with individual exceptions, there has been no attempt at co-operation. Naturally, therefore, the commiseration of the Jute Mills Association had to agree to terms only provisionally, and that their position was warranted was subsequently proved by the fact that a small number of mills refused to co-operate in the agreement. This lack of co-operation is said to have arisen from

a claim on the part of the managing agents that the rates in these mills had been abnormally high previous to the strikes. During and after the strike, the number of claims by individual mills that they were the highest-paid mills on the river was remarkable: at least a dozen mills made that claim.

Even more remarkable than the traditional secrecy of wage-rates was the independent action taken by individual firms without consulting others when the change-over took place. Only at a very late stage in the strike did it come to light that some managing agents had made the concession demanded by the workers in the Begg Dunlop group, on the 1st of July. In one managing agency the concession was made to only a part of the whole group of mills of which they were managing agents. This group of mills, moreover, was represented on the committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association, which, as a whole, was entirely ignorant of the action which the firm had taken till the strike had developed into a public menace.

Again, when the post-agreement strikes broke out, it came to light that the Angus mill, which is a member of the association, had, in anticipation of possible labour trouble, granted on the 1st July the concessions which were ultimately incorporated in the agreement. This enlightened action, however, did not prevent the Angus workers going on strike for about 10 days after the cessation of the general strike. Later, misunderstanding was caused by the action of the Angus authorities after their strike ended. The managing agents of two mills in the neighbourhood inquired of the Angus authorities what concessions they had granted to the workers on their return. The Angus authorities replied that they had granted no concessions, a perfectly correct reply because the men went back to work unconditionally. The concessions, however, had been granted on the 1st of July. The inquiring managing agents promptly announced in their own mills that the men who were then on strike would have to come back unconditionally, that they would get none of the concessions at all. In one case, indeed, this action was taken after the men while on strike had been definitely promised the concessions.

When the second crisis arrived an attempt was made by the Alliance-Craig-Waverly managing agents and the managing agents of the Megna mill to take joint action, but at the very last moment, indeed on the day when the pay checks were distributed, the managing agents of one group altered the rates of a section of their workers without informing the others. This, in itself, almost precipitated a crisis, where such a crisis was entirely unnecessary, because the managing agents of the one set of mills were quite willing to make the adjustments which the other mill had made.

These are merely examples of the entire lack of co-ordination in the Bengal jute-mill industry, so far as working conditions are concerned. This lack of system was brought prominently to light in the case of the second Kamarhatty mill strike, which happened in the first week of September. The Kamarhatty workers demanded the rates of the Kankinnarah workers. Kankinnarah is situated about 16 miles further up the river than Kamarhatty and has developed its own local habits of work and pay. The Kankinnarah rates are admittedly higher than the Kamarhatty rates, but, though both mills are under the same managing agents, no attempts had been made to co-ordinate them. The Kamarhatty strike forced the Association to take action, because had the managing agents, for the sake of peace, granted Kamarhatty the same rates as Kankinnarah, then the areas neighbouring Kamarhatty would have been affected, and the wage trouble would have spread up and down the river again like so many recurrent attacks of influenza. The Indian Jute Mills Association, however, took up a definite stand on the subject and decided that no further concessions would be granted beyond those in the agreement, and that if strikes broke out as the result of unsatisfied demands for such concessions, then they would have to be fought to a finish.

Then there is the question of the non-association mills, now about half a dozen in number. These mills regulate their own hours of work. Some of them work the maximum possible hours under the Factories Act, viz., 81 hours per week, and they have to make their own arrangements as regards payment. The association has no knowledge of the rates paid in those mills, nor have these mills official knowledge of the rates paid by mills which are members of the association. The non-association mills are mainly new mills, and it is generally believed that new mills have to pay higher rates than older mills. This appears to be acquiesced in by the workers, at least until such time as new mills have developed sufficient age to become looked upon as old mills.

The most vexed question of all in the jute mills, so far as the wages are concerned, has already been referred to, i.e., *Ahoraki*. Double-shift mills pay *Ahoraki*, single-shift mills do not, yet *Ahoraki* has been, and is still, a bone of contention between the workers and the management. To the outsider, the institution of *Ahoraki* at all, or payment for no work done, would seem to have been a big mistake. Probably this is now generally recognized, but it has now grown into a custom or *dustoor*, and

its removal as an item from the wage-books will by no means be easy, as has been clearly demonstrated in the case of the many strikes which occurred when double shift mills changed over to the single-shift. No combined action has been taken with regard to *Ahoraki*, but at the conference between the members of Government and the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association, the association declared its intention of undertaking the question of simplification of wages after the settlement of the strike. The question of standardization of wages is quite another problem. This was referred to by Mr. Laird, chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, in his speech in the Bengal Legislative Council. Standardization is not generally looked upon as feasible, although as indicated already, some members have from time to time pressed for it.

Much of the difficulty in the strike was occasioned by the attitude the Jute Mills Association adopted towards the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Employers in general are very averse from dealing with bodies the constitution of which they do not know. During the whole course of their existence, until after the war, the Bengal jute mills were free from trade-unionism of any kind. After the war, unions of some kind developed with almost bewildering rapidity, because in almost every strike some sort of labour body was formed, usually after the strike broke out. Such bodies had no permanence, no constitution, no regular membership, and their power to control the workers for whom they professed to be willing to negotiate was always extremely problematical. They bred not unnatural antagonism on the part of the management, for a friendly spirit does not develop easily when the introduction comes by means of assault and battery. Employers strongly resent the absence of notice or lack of opportunity for negotiation, which is so common in strikes in Bengal. As a rule, they are ready to listen to any grievance which the workers put forward, and they meet them in a reasonable spirit. No better proof of this can be given than the long record of industrial peace which the jute mills have had. In one or two instances, employers have negotiated with self-styled labour leaders, whether their claim to such was justified or not, but it was not till after the passing of the Trade Unions Act in 1926 that any indication was given of a principle which might be followed by employers with regard to labour bodies. The principle was that negotiation would take place only with registered trade unions. The first union to be registered was the Kankinnarah Labour Union. Indeed no other jute workers' union has been registered or has even applied for registration.

At the beginning of the unrest which led to the strike, the Kankinnarah Labour Union was active in pushing the case of the dissatisfied workmen. Although many of their letters were not acknowledged, a certain amount of negotiation did take place between them and the authorities of the group in which the trouble was coming to a head. These negotiations failed and the principle of negotiation with a registered trade union was considerably damaged. The jute mill authorities, however, till some time after the general strike was finished, resolutely refused to negotiate with the unregistered trade union, and in this they had considerable justification, for, as has already been indicated, in practically no case were the managements given an opportunity to discuss with their own workers the grievances which they professed to have. The feelings of the managements, however, were still more exacerbated by the fact that in the great majority of cases the workers stopped work without giving any notice whatsoever. The managers, the managing agents, and, indeed the whole superior staff of the mills were entirely ignorant of the workers' point of view. What they were aware of was that certain sections of their workers refused to work for reasons which could not be ascertained even from sirdars. The manner in which the mills stopped work also suggested that such grievances as the workers might have had were not of a serious character. The method of closure of the Anglo-India Mills is an interesting example of this. These four mills did not close down as a whole; they closed down gradually, mill by mill, the ultimate stoppage being caused by wholesale picketing. Then there was the clear evidence that though a part of the industry refused to work another part as stubbornly refused to stop working. The pre-agreement strikes, too, presented many quite incomprehensible features with regard to individual mills. Thus, while the South Shamnagar workers went on strike, the North Shamnagar workers on the opposite side of the river in the same company and under the same managing agency did not go out till just a few days before the agreement was negotiated. In the Sealdah group, as well as in Barnagore with its particular dispute, the workers went out and went in, in some cases as often as three times, during the general strike. In Barnagore, the workers are under the same managing agency and paid in the same terms as the Bally workers on the opposite side of the river. Yet the Bally workers at no time either before or after the agreement showed any disposition to strike. In Messrs. Bird & Co.'s managing agency the majority of mills did not strike till after the agreement, and the same is true of the whole of the mills in the Yule agency. The whole aspect of the strike, indeed, seemed incongruous to a degree, and the managing agents, ascribing the cause to the work of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, and particularly

Miss Das Gupta, were not unreasonably opposed to according any official sanction to direct negotiations with a body of which they had no official knowledge, and the motives of which were very generally doubted.

#### 5.—*The Labour Side.*

Two unions were involved, one the registered Kankinnarah Labour Union, and the other the unregistered Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The Kankinnarah Labour Union which had been in existence for some years, was the only body involved in the earlier stages of the dispute. This was quite natural, as the dispute broke out in the particular area in which this union operated. The Bengal Jute Workers' Union did not come into the field until the trouble was reaching a head. Indeed, in a statement made during the course of the negotiations prior to the agreement Mr. Roy Chowdhury said that Miss Das Gupta realized the possibilities of the situation only when she heard him talking over the phone about the trouble in the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna group. The decline of the influence of the Kankinnarah Labour Union was ascribed by Mr. Roy Chowdhury to be due to the antagonism of Maulvi Latafat Hossain, one of the officials of the union, to illicit drug traffic, alleged to be common in the Kankinnarah-Bhatpara mill area. Maulvi Latafat Hossain had been pressing the police to take action against the smugglers, and this antagonized some powerful interests in Bhatpara, which started a campaign amongst the workers, advising them not to listen to the officials of the Kankinnarah Labour Union. A Barrackpore pleader, Babu Narendra Chatterji, also entered the lists against the Kankinnarah Labour Union for reasons which are obscure, and for some reasons which are equally obscure he very quickly obtained great ascendancy over the workers. The managing agents of the Alliance-Craig-Waverly-Megna group said that after they had granted the concessions which the workers had demanded, the workers refused to go back to work, unless they received a definite order from this pleader. Miss Das Gupta got into touch with Narendra Babu, and he was elected Vice-President of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. The emergence of this gentleman as a labour leader led to great antagonism on the side of the employers. Unlike Miss Das Gupta's, his name had never previously been mentioned in any labour connection whatsoever. He had no knowledge of the jute industry and had never previously been known to have any business connections in Bhatpara, yet suddenly for no reason which could be ascertained by the employers and without any official position in any union, registered or unregistered, he seemed to get control of a considerable body of men. The employers flatly refused to have anything to do with him in spite of the fact that the workers said that they were willing to resume work on the terms which had been conceded if the employers would simply write a letter to Naren Babu and get his permission for them to return to work. The Naren Babu incident is not uncommon in local labour politics. It not infrequently happens that some person entirely unknown to the management or even to the majority of workers themselves suddenly assumes leadership during a dispute, whether it be petty or protracted. Such individuals, coming from and going to nowhere, breed more antagonism on the part of the employers even than political leaders, who may enter the labour arena for reasons connected more with politics than with the improvement of labour conditions.

With the assumption of control by the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, the leaflet literature began and with it the general unrest. From the copies of the leaflets which are appended, it will be seen that the claims of the workers were put forward in not immoderate language. Several of the facts in the leaflets were woefully wrong, but, on the whole, the advice to the workers was couched in language which might have been used in an orderly strike under the leadership of a well-organized trade union in a more highly industrialized country. The pamphlets are interesting because for the first time, on this side of India at least, the 8-hour day and the minimum wage were introduced as issues in a big dispute. The part played by women in the strike and by a woman as leader was indicated by the demand for maternity benefits, which was also ultimately conceded in the terms of settlement. The demands for leave with pay and pay during illness are not uncommon features in strikes in Bengal. The pamphlets were issued in several languages and were printed on red paper. The fact that the contents of these pamphlets seem to have been so quickly assimilated by such a large body of workers suggests that there must be, in the jute mill area, considerably more literacy than the census statistics show. The colour of the pamphlet was said to have some connection with the strikes, as word had been passed round amongst the workers that on receipt of red pamphlets they were to strike. On the other hand, the pamphlet ultimately issued by the union calling for peace was also printed on red paper.

Whatever may have been the feelings of the workers regarding the strikes, the combined effect of the leaflets, Miss Das Gupta's own influence, the Jagatdal strike, picketing and intimidation, was to bring about closure in practically all the mills

on the Calcutta side of the river north of Calcutta. Miss Das Gupta's union, the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, is supposed to be the lineal descendant of a union which used to operate in the Bhatpara area, called the Bhatpara Jute Workers' Union. This union took a prominent part in strikes some years ago, and it was run mainly by persons known to have extremist connections. Some of them, indeed, are at present under trial in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Although its locus was Bhatpara, the officials had a habit of suddenly descending on any area where trouble had broken out. The union, for example, was active in several strikes in the Bowreah-Chengail area. Local branches were formed as strikes broke out, but whether these branches were independent unions or branches of the Bhatpara Jute Workers' Union is known only to the persons most intimately concerned. In 1929, the union transferred its headquarters to Calcutta. Its reported activities were sporadic. While in Bhatpara, it had kept up a continuous existence and took close interest in the welfare of the workers. It was reported, for example, by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal, in his reports for 1926 and 1927 to have been useful in furthering the claims of injured workers in that area for compensation. When the strike broke out, the union had changed its headquarters from Cornwallis Street, where its office was supposed to have been hitherto, to Harrison Road, and it was from Harrison Road that the shower of leaflets emanated and it was also from there that the organization was conducted. Local agents of the union seem to have been appointed in all the important mill areas. These agents were said to be good speakers in Hindi. The mainspring of the whole of the union, however, was the President, Miss Das Gupta. Miss Das Gupta previously had attained some position in the labour world by leading a strike of Calcutta sweepers in 1928. She was educated at Columbia University, New York, and at Frankfurt in Germany. She was elected president of the union in place of one Kalidas Bhattacharya, who seems to have disappeared from public life about the time the Meerut case was started. After she entered the field, Miss Das Gupta threw her whole energy into the strike, and ultimately gained complete control, irrespective of any of the other officials or agents of the union, and the completeness of her control was early proved by the fact that after the agreement was reached she secured the return to work of all mills on strike within twenty-four hours.

The position of Government with respect to Miss Das Gupta was explained to her by the Hon'ble. Mr. Moberley, when she came for the conference referred to previously. The Hon'ble. Mr. Moberley explained to her that from general reports she seemed to be the leader of the strike, although, so far as Government were aware, her position was quite irregular. Her union was not registered; Government had no information regarding its constitution, or her powers under the constitution, or of the organization of the union. As, however, she was the leader, Government, the Hon'ble. Mr. Moberley explained, wished to hear her point of view. The subsequent negotiations have already been described, but at a meeting it became quite evident that her knowledge of jute mill working conditions at that stage was of a very vague character. She also had a very vague idea of the local position in regard to hours of work and other matters. More surprising still, in spite of the debate in the Legislative Council, and of the publicity which the strike had occasioned, Miss Das Gupta was surprised to hear that the Trade Disputes Act had been in force since May. By this time, may be added, the rumour that some dealers in the hessian market were providing the money for the strike had achieved great prominence, and Miss Das Gupta seemed distinctly averse from any action of the nature of a public inquiry. The Hon'ble. Mr. Moberley asked particularly who the members of the union were. Miss Das Gupta replied that every striker automatically became a member of the union. Asked why she had not registered the union under the Trade Unions Act, Miss Das Gupta said that she refused to register the union because such registration would involve charging fees from members. No member of the union, she said, was charged any fee, i.e., there were no paying members of the union. She financed her union herself, she said, from her own earnings (Miss Das Gupta has some interest in chemical manufacture in which a brother is engaged). The question of finance was not pursued further at a meeting, but there can be no doubt during the strike, and also after it, the Bengal Jute Workers' Union spent a great deal of money.

Where this money came from is one of the unsolved problems of the strike. The answer which is most generally accepted is that it came from some hessian dealers, who recognized in the strike an opportunity of lessening the loss which they had incurred, or were likely to incur, as the result of a fall in the hessian market. Hessian dealers who had bought forward were faced with the fact that prices had fallen considerably since they bought, and that a strike could be used for their own ends in one of two ways—either the price of hessians should be forced up or, much more important, mills should be prevented from delivering. In the contracts there is a special strike clause, which permits of notice of cancellation of a contract being given under certain conditions. It is not without significance that the Begg Dunlop, in which the trouble originally started, was perhaps the best "sold" mills on the river,



and that, while in the last 20 years the number of cancellation-of-contract notices sent to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was not 200, in one month during the general strike such notices amounted to nearly 2,000. Wild rumours became prevalent regarding the hessian gambling, and many names prominent in Calcutta business and politics were connected with the instigation of the strikes. Proof of the allegations is unfortunately not available. This aspect of the matter was one of the strongest reasons for the appointment of a court of inquiry under the Trade Disputes Act, but before conditions had developed to such a pitch that the court of inquiry could have been used for the calling off of the strike, the strike had been settled by negotiation. It seems indisputable, however, that hessian dealers were in some way implicated in the strike, as many Marwaris, never hitherto interested in labour matters, but known to be interested in the hessian market, are known to have taken an interest in the strike.

The alleged *modus operandi* of the instigators was the distribution of money amongst *sirdars* and local shop-keepers. Under the *sirdari* system, gangs of workers are under the immediate orders of *sirdars* and they are practically bound to go on strike if the *sirdar* so orders. Sufficient payment to a *sirdar*, or to a number of leading *sirdars*, in a mill is, therefore, adequate for the stoppage of at least one department of a mill, and jute mills are so organized that if one department closes down, the rest of the mill must also close. The position thus comes to be that for a thousand or two of rupees it seems possible to close down any mill in Bengal for, at least, a short time. Such closure may be given the aspect of a *bona fide* labour dispute by the circulation of a number of more or less hypothetical demands. In the general strike, however, unfortunately for the jute mill authorities, there was a perfectly *bona fide* labour dispute in the initial stages, viz., the question as to whether or not the 54-hour stent should be preserved for the 60-hour week. It is probable that knowing that the workers had a real grievance, the Marwari speculators came into the field with a view to lessening their own losses, or perhaps even increasing their gains by means of speculation in what is known as the *bhitar basar*.

After the general strike was over and when the post-agreement strikes were in progress, the Bengal Jute Workers' Union officials fell out amongst themselves. Miss Das Gupta was deposed in a suddenly called meeting. The leaders of the dissentient movement were the General Secretary, Kali Sen, and the Organizing Secretary, Bankim Mukherji. Miss Das Gupta refused to recognize the constitutionality of the meeting and at a later meeting, said to be constitutionally called, she retorted by dismissing her dismissers, whom she replaced by Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza, General Secretary, and Babu Nripendra Chaudhuri, Organizing Secretary. The union now split definitely into two, and at the moment of writing it is not known which one has the prior claim to be called the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Both use the name. Voluminous press correspondence followed in which the two sections vigorously attacked each other, and from the attacks and counter-attacks certain interesting features may be extracted.

The following two extracts from the press indicate the difficulties of "recognizing" bodies which are not registered; they also throw some light on the finances of the strike.

The first is an extract from *Liberty*, dâk edition, of the 12th September:—

#### *Charges against Miss Das Gupta.*

*More Light—Why she was Removed from Office.*—Mr. Kali Sen, General Secretary of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union has issued the following statement:—

"I would fain have ignored Miss Das Gupta's hysteric effusions in the press as well as the frantic outbursts of her gallant band of admirers, but the mischievous activities in which she is still indulging in the name of the union compel me to lay before the public the real truth with regard to the present situation.

She has been pleased to characterize the proceedings of the meeting in which the no-confidence resolution was passed as a huge joke. We know in the light of recent events that the labour movement is to Miss Das Gupta nothing more than good fun quite in keeping with her feminine caprices and frivolities. But, brought up as we have been in a different atmosphere, we have the misfortune to take the movement more seriously. We would, therefore, point out to her in all humility that the meeting of the Executive Committee in the union office in which she was dethroned was duly notified beforehand—at least as duly as the meeting which she convened subsequently at her private residence and at which only six members out of twenty-nine were present, failing thereby to form a quorum. She may be further interested to know that at the meeting in the union office no fewer than nineteen members out of twenty-nine took part in the deliberations and unanimously resolved to remove her from the position of the Acting President.

Out of these nineteen members who unanimously passed the no-confidence resolution, six have been prosecuted in connection with the present strike and these and the rest have a career of sacrifice and suffering unknown to the later Acting President. Some of the people "expelled" by her "ukase," have twice been prosecuted even during the strike.

These are the people whom Miss Das Gupta chooses to call as jesters and mercenaries. The public may well judge who is really so.

*Charges against her.*—In the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, held on the 24th August, the following principal charges were brought against her on which the vote of no-confidence was passed :—

(1) She never consulted the Executive Committee in matters vitally affecting the interests of the workers.

(2) She never took the Executive Committee into confidence over financial matters and she never consulted the Committee about spending the strike fund at her disposal. She spent money without the knowledge of the Executive Committee which had every right to know how the money was spent. She never submitted any accounts. She did not disclose what was the balance left in her hands when the strike was called off.

(3) She obstinately refused to form a Strike Committee for reasons best known to herself.

(4) She attended conferences for negotiations privately and without previously consulting the Executive Committee of the union.

(5) She did not consult the Executive Committee about the terms of settlement and arrived at a compromise without the sanction of the Executive Committee.

(6) On the 13th of August, Mr. Bankim Mukherji declared that the mills in the Southern Section would go on strike next week, thereby completing the general strike, and insisted on the strike being continued for another fortnight to ensure happy terms of settlement. She pleaded scarcity of funds, although subsequent events proved that she had been spending money lavishly even after the calling off of the strike. She appeared to be only too anxious to bring the strike to an end and arrived at a compromise on most dubious terms of settlement.

(7) She treated the officials of the union with discourtesy and carried on all sorts of vile propaganda behind their back. She called them mercenaries although she knew full well that in their social status they were her equals.

(8) She threw every obstacle in the way of those who undertook to release on bail the important officials of the union and the workers who were arrested at Champdany.

(9) Her speeches in asking the workers to resume work on pain of imprisonment under the Trade Disputes Act definitely disclosed her reactionary mentality.

*The Constitutional Issue.*—I have been noticing with amusing interest, reports and statements published in the press by Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza who styles himself as the General Secretary of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. If Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza had any idea of constitution he would not be dragged into this dirty quarrel. He ought to understand that although by a long stretch of imagination the question of removal of Miss Das Gupta from her office of Acting President may be regarded as a disputed point, no one having the least amount of common sense in him will admit that a so-called meeting of the Executive Committee, called by an Acting President already removed from office, and attended by only six recalcitrant members who came in the Executive during the strike when new temporary branches sprang up, had any constitutional right to expel old and active members of the Executive and elect a General Secretary. I would again remind the public that 19 members of the Executive out of 29 are still with us and out of the six gentlemen who had the audacity to hold a meeting at Miss Probbhabati's private chamber and seal the fate of the union, two, Mr. Nandokishore Sharma, Secretary, Shammagar Branch, and Mr. Sk. Zaman, Secretary, Rishra Branch, have since cut off their connection with the so-called union of one, Anthony Bagan Lane, and have joined us.

*History of the Union.*—The public may be interested to know the origin and previous history of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union and Miss Probbhabati's connection with it. As the very start I may point out that the Bengal Jute Workers' union which is at present located at 41, Harrison Road, is not a mushroom union. It was established about six years ago after the Gourepur strike. Readers of *Aimashahi and Forward* may remember the articles written by Mr. Kalidas Bhattacharjee, the late Acting President of the union, in which the past history of the union was elaborately delineated. The head office of the union was located at Bhatpara and have all along been doing immense service to the jute workers, fighting their compensation cases, removing malpractices within the mills, viz., bribery and other zulums, and most of the juteworkers on both sides of the river know the Bhatpara Union and comrade Kalidas. It is affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress and has international connection and all previous records are in my possession.

*How Miss Das Gupta came on the scene.*—In January, 1929, Mr. Shibnath Banerji was elected President of the union. When he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for nine months in connection with the Lillooah strike, Mr. Kalidas Bhattacharjee was elected Acting President by the Executive Committee.

In March, 1929, Mr. Radha Raman Mitra, General Secretary of our union, Mr. Dharani Gossain, one of the Vice-Presidents, and Mr. Gopendra Chakrabarty, Secretary, Bhatpara Branch, were arrested in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy case and taken away to Meerut. After that unfortunate incident, the Executive Committee elected Mr. Kali Sen, Secretary, Calcutta Branch, as the Acting General Secretary and Mr. Bankim Mukherji, Secretary, Bowreah Branch, was appointed as the Organizing Secretary.

At that time Miss Probbabati Das Gupta who was aspiring to be a labour leader, tried to form a rival union at Champdany under the name of "Champdany Jute Workers' Union," although our union had a branch therewith Mr. Nirode Chakrabarty as the Secretary thereof. Our policy all along being the formation of a big union of all jute workers we deprecated the idea of a rival union at Champdany. Miss Probbabati's attempt at Champdany also came to an end, as Mr. Shachinandan Chatterji on whom she depended as the Secretary of her rival union, joined the Central Organization and Mr. Nirode Chakrabarty being obliged to leave Champdany at that time, Mr. Chatterji was elected as the Secretary of our Champdany branch.

The Executive Committee then co-opted Miss Das Gupta as a member of the Executive Committee. When Mr. Kalidas Bhattacharjee after his arrest at Chandpur and subsequent release retired from public life, Miss Das Gupta was elected as the Acting President in his place. That is how she came into the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. I have to say all this to clear the constitutional issue once more, that a member co-opted by the Executive Committee and elected by the said Committee as the Acting President may be constitutionally removed from office as well as the union by the said Committee.

It is a pity that the vast body of working class people is not yet self-conscious, and for some time may be beguiled by the glamour of reactionary personalities who pose as their friends and treat them as pawns in a game of speculation and keep them dazed with promises and bluffs, but these tactics cannot hold good for an indefinite period and the next few weeks will show how far the workers recognize her as their leader.

Our union has all along adopted the policy of educating the workers in the primary tenets of trade unionism and have always stood against reactionary leaders who try to enforce their personalities on the uneducated workers in order to exploit them for their personal interests. The Bengal Jute Workers' Union is a left wing labour union and it will always stick to its political principles as such.

Miss Probbabati's journalistic friend's remark that "unions may come and unions may go but Dr. Probbabati will remain for ever" speaks for itself, and Miss Das Gupta's reactionary mentality cannot be depicted better.

I think I have sufficiently cleared the situation now and I hope the enlightened public will now understand the game that is being played by Miss Probbabati in the name of the labour movement. The *status quo* of the "Anthony Bagan Union," composed of adventurers and doubtful characters, whose identity we are going to expose shortly, will also be judged in its proper light."

The second is from the *Basumati* (English), of the 12th September, 1929 :—

#### "BOURGEOIS" LEADERS AND THEIR "JOKES"—NEWSPAPER PROPAGANDA—

##### DR. PROBBABATI REFUTES THE CHARGES ONE BY ONE.

*Who wasted the Money.*—In a statement to the press, Dr. Miss Probbabati Das Gupta, who was removed from the office of the president of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union by an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee on 24th August last, referred to the charges against her, published in yesterday's *Liberty* (11th September), and said :—

*A huge joke.*—"I described that meeting as a huge joke and I would describe the charges published to-day as another joke. That was the only way to retain hope of working together with bourgeois 'labour leaders' in future in the cause of labour. They want to know how Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza, B.A. (Oxon.), came to be the general secretary of the union. Mr. Mirza might want to know how at the end of March, 1929, without any previous notice of any meeting of the union, at an informal meeting at my residence at No. 1, Anthony Bagan Lane, Mr. Kali Sen was made acting general secretary and Mr. Bankim Mukherji was made organizing secretary of the union. They appointed me president and appointed them secretaries at the end of March, 1929, shortly after the arrest of the men now undergoing trial at Meerut. As far as I remember, at that meeting we three were the only persons present. Then

no question of quorum arose. Within a month of that appointment there was no meeting, formal or informal, of Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Since 20th March, 1929, until the future sentence of banishment was pronounced upon me in my absence on 24th August, 1929, there were, as far as I can recollect, only two formal meetings of the executive committee, one about a month after the appointment by me of the general secretary and the organizing secretary, as stated already, and the second to appoint Mr. Naren Chatterji as vice-president early in August last, just before the strike. The union proceedings book should contain my signature to the minute. A good deal has been said about constitution. I want to know when was any constitution drawn up for Bengal Jute Workers' Union? Where is a copy of the constitution to be found? Was there any list of subscriptions collected, or to be collected, from members of the union? How much was collected from the members? Was it the president's duty to call a meeting of the executive committee to decide upon declaration of strike? Was it the president's duty, according to the constitution, to call a meeting of the executive committee to discuss the terms of settlement? Was any meeting called by the secretary, or held since the strike began, until the joke was perpetrated by surreptitiously including in the item 'Miscellaneous' the dismissal of the president and her banishment from the union? I cannot help asking, with a smile, 'Under what clause of the constitution, written or unwritten, was the order of dismissal and the sentence of banishment made?' Does the constitution justify banishment without even a notice that there was any charge pending? Who gave the executive committee that extraordinary power, usually reserved for the general body of members of the union in every democratic institution? And, lastly, what was the occasion for this indecent haste? Was it a financial necessity? Anything connected with 'the game of speculation' to which the general secretary refers? Surely it was a farce. I want to forget the mean and despicable aspect of this financial necessity of the bourgeois 'labour leaders' in want. So I call it a huge joke.

"*The Occasion for Mirth.*—It is not true that at the meeting in which Mr. Mirza was appointed general secretary, there were only six members present. There were at least half a dozen more members present at that meeting than at the meeting where I was sentenced to banishment. Of course, it does not suit the dismissed general secretary of the union to acknowledge these members as such any longer. That again is an occasion for mirth. The dismissed general secretary tries to trace the history, of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Of course, he is innocent of knowledge of that history, and refers readers to Mr. Kali Das Bhattacharjee in accurate articles in *Atma-Sakti*. That institution was never called 'Bengal Jute Workers' Union.' But the dismissed general secretary is not bound to state facts accurately or even to learn them from the pages of *Atma-Sakti*. That would be too much of a bother.

"*Story of Money.*—There is one subject about which I want to speak with restraint. The money I had at my disposal—and Mr. Kali Sen and Mr. Bankim Mukherji and a host of others personally derived benefit from it—was not a fund of the union. Long before I made Mr. Kali Sen general secretary I used to get funds and to spend for the union. But that never was the money of the union. The union never had any right to call for account of moneys I used to have at my absolute disposal, whether before, or during the strike, or since the end of the strike. I can, but will not, disclose the source from which money is coming to them, nor do I want any account from them, for that is no business of mine. Others are making unwelcome enquiries already. But surely I had a right to call for account of money I made over to Mr. Kali Sen and many of his colleagues. They were hardly seriously pressed to render account. If necessary, I shall publish full details, if Mr. Kali Sen and Mr. Bankim Mukherji and Mr. Nripen Khan invite disclosure. All I want to say is that I get money and I spend money for others. The hoarding instinct is foreign to my nature. The public will now understand why I like to treat the accusations as a joke."

The private sources of revenue referred to in the above statements are, so far as official information goes, mysteries. The outstanding fact about Miss Das Gupta, however, was her undoubted control of the strikers in the pre-agreement strikes. Even admitting her meagre knowledge of labour conditions and labour laws, and the doubtful origin of the money, which she was undoubtedly spending lavishly towards keeping the strike going, there is no doubt that, as she herself claimed, in the first interview at Writers' Buildings, that she had only to lift her little finger and the workers would obey. Ultimately, it is true, her influence proved of little avail in other areas, especially in the Budge-Budge area, but the fact remains that so far as the workers on strike during the general strike were concerned, she was able to control them absolutely, and the extent and efficiency of her control is amply proved by the expeditious way in which she had every one of these workers back to work within 24 hours. Such sudden rise to control can only be described as one of the peculiar

features of Indian industrial life. To the average jute mill worker, at the end of the second week of July, Miss Das Gupta was entirely unknown, yet for the next three weeks she was mistress of the situation, and, indeed, in respect of the area where she had power originally, remained mistress of the situation subsequently, in spite of the split in the organization of which she was the head.

In the post-agreement troubles, Miss Das Gupta tried her utmost to honour the word she had given with respect to original strikes. She failed in respect of most of the mills, but she certainly succeeded in preventing a recrudescence of the strike in the original area. After the resumption, however, the workers took advantage of her. Hundreds of alleged cases of victimization were put before her, which on examination completely broke down. False statements of wages were given her. Cases of corporal punishment were reported to her (all such cases, it may be noted, were not entirely without foundation). The false statements of wages in particular seem to have been furnished to her with the sinister reason of instigating another general strike, which they would undoubtedly had done had it not been for wisdom of the managing agents concerned in meeting Miss Das Gupta herself and explaining the ridiculous character of the statements which had been given her. Everything went to show that influences were behind Miss Das Gupta, attempting to compel her to use her influence to set the ball rolling once again, and, to the credit, it must be said, that she did not deviate from her set purpose of keeping the peace, at least for a time. Unfortunately, it came to light that the union asked the workers to keep the peace for only three months. Why this time-limit should be imposed upon the peace at the moment remains to be seen, but Miss Das Gupta has been personally impressed with the obvious results of further unrest. The agreement in this respect has come as a godsend to the jute mills, even although, originally, it was an unwelcome necessity. The jute mills have decided to adhere to it. In some cases, it is understood, the adjustment of wages has gone slightly beyond the agreement, but they are now on safe ground in refusing to go further, at least in the meantime. Indeed, it is understood that they have decided that no further concession will be given and that any demands for such concessions, which may lead to a strike, will be followed by a fight to a finish. Miss Das Gupta had been impressed with this point of view, but the effect of the information conveyed to her will be tested within the next few months. The dissentient branch of her union is said to be instigating further trouble, and in the confusion of advice, perhaps the common-sense of the workers themselves may ultimately prevail. But there is no denying the fact that the position is disquieting, for, on their own admissions, the two branches of the union are at loggerheads over money. Miss Das Gupta has admitted that she had funds from a private source; she has also admitted that the union has no paying members. And she has been repeatedly impressed with the advisability of registering the union if she wishes to remain in the labour movement. The Trade Unions Act requires an audit of accounts, though it does not (as she contended) require that subscriptions be paid. The public are not unjustified in feeling that there is something wrong somewhere, and till the labour side can put its house in order, and show that their actions are actuated only by the welfare of the workers, there is little hope of it commanding public confidence, or, what is even more important, the confidence and respect of the employers.

#### 6.—*The Oil Depot Strikes.*

The narrative of the jute mill strike would be incomplete without some reference being made to the strikes in the oil depots at Budge Budge. The chief oil companies with factories at Budge Budge are the Burma Shell, the Standard and the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company. They employ about 4,000 men direct, but this represents only a part of the total labour, as the work of loading and unloading is done by contract.

The oil workers went on strike at the same time as the Budge Budge group of jute mills. The strike was at first thought to be a sympathetic one. For some time previously, however, agitation had been going on among the oil workers. This was directed by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, who for some time had taken a leading part in the tin plate strike at Golmuri, Jamshedpur. The agitation was infructuous till the jute workers went out. Mr. Bose's object was to bring pressure on the tin-plate authorities at Jamshedpur. The Burma Shell Company has a controlling interest in the Golmuri concern, and Mr. Bose attempted to force their hand by inciting strikes in all their factories. Thus, the position at Budge Budge was that the workers had to go on strike to help the Golmuri men, working in an entirely different industry, in a different province, and under a different Government. The one point of contact was ownership of shares in each concern by the Burma Shell Company. The Burma Shell Company is only one of the employers at Budge Budge, but the others, including the Standard Oil Company of New York, were included in the attack.

The strikes were given the appearance of a *bona fide* dispute by statements of "grievances" being sent to the managements, but the method by which they were presented shows clearly that the grievances were only a subterfuge. The strikes broke out on a Wednesday. At 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the manager of the Burma Shell Depot received an ultimatum from his workers, or a section of them; this ultimatum contained a long list of grievances the *bona fides* of which may be gauged from the fact that one of the demands was that the workers should be compensated for accidents, whereas they are automatically so compensated under the Workmen's Compensation Act. A reply was demanded within five hours. This was a clear impossibility, as the head office in Calcutta closed at 5, and the local manager obviously could not reply on his own initiative. In the case of the Standard Oil Company the demands which were not signed had been sent in on the previous Saturday. In the Indo-Burma Petroleum case the demands were sent in after the strike broke out.

Immediately after the strike broke out the employers exerted themselves to get into touch with their workers. They were not successful. They distributed leaflets intimating that any grievance the workers had would be discussed on resumption of work. They had no effect. The inevitable union was created, the Budge Budge Oil and Petrol Workers' Union, with a President, Mr. Subhas Bose, a treasurer, a secretary and a general organizer. The union put forward a set of demands. The demands were:—(1) Immediate settlement of tin-plate strike; (2) immediate recognition of the union; (3) fifty per cent. increase in wages in form of increment or bonus; (4) standardisation of rates and introduction of grade and time-scale system (uniform rates for same kinds of jobs in all the Oil and Petrol Companies); (5) six days work per week. Full wages to be paid if the company stops work of its own accord; (6) Eight hours' duty. Fifteen minutes' allowance to be given for attendance; (7) stoppage of suspensions and discharges without proper enquiry made along with union representatives; (8) leave and service rules: privilege leave, casual leave and sick leave to be given to all workers; (9) provident fund benefit, gratuity and pension scheme to be introduced in all companies and extended to all workers; (10) accident benefit compensation scheme; (11) arrangements for pure drinking water; (12) better housing, construction of workers' quarters; for the present some quarters allowance to be granted. The question to be thoroughly discussed with union officials; (13) Contractors' labour, such as soldermen, etc., to be guided under the same rules and service conditions.

Many strike leaders came from Jamshedpur to reinforce local leaders, but on August 29th Mr. Subhas Bose, in a statement issued in his newspaper *Liberty*, made the issue quite clear. The statement is reproduced here:—

"The situation at the Tinplate Company has reached a dead-lock. There is a general strike now commencing from Friday last. Both the new and old hands are out. For keeping up appearance the machinery is kept running but there is hardly any production. The management appear to be unbending. But while they refuse to treat with the union, they are doing all they can to cajole and tempt individual workmen. The big officers of the company including the general manager do not even hesitate to go from door to door in order to humour the workmen.

"The demands of the workmen are so moderate and the attitude of the local management so unreasonable and uncompromising that we, who have spoused the cause of the workers have no alternative but to fight to a finish. For this purpose we intend to have the local Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. The Tin-plate Company are holding out a threat that if protection is withdrawn they may close down for good and the Burma Company will then import tin-plates from abroad. If the threat is carried out the present fight will then develop into a fight between the Burma Oil Company and ourselves. In pursuance of that fight we shall approach every factory in India owned by the Burma Oil Company and shall create a situation such as we have created at Budge Budge. Steps have been taken in that connection. The unbending attitude of the local management has converted a local issue into an All-India question. We, who are not tin-plate workers, but are helping them, have been dragged into this fight by the workers themselves. We waited for several months before we intervened, but when we found that the poor workers were engaged in a fight against heavy odds and the management were too obstinate we had to step in. Once we have intervened we have to fight till the bitter end."

The strikes in both the jute mills and the oil depots dragged on, with the usual leaflets, speeches and attempts by interested and disinterested people to reach a settlement. The jute and oil workers mutually encouraged each other in their hopes of success, but ultimately the jute workers tired and resumed work on the terms of the agreement, which had been promised before they went out. The oil companies acted with much forbearance and restraint. The Standard Oil Company replied to the Union, but refused to recognize it as did the others. The Standard Oil Company pointed out that they had no connection with Golmuri and that they were ready on resumption of work to listen to the workers' grievances. The other companies

also refused to recognize the union, which, it may be stated, did not even apply for registration under the Trade Unions Act. As for the workers they were told to hold out till the Golmuri case was settled, whereas not one out of a thousand of them knows any thing of the Golmuri case. Probably they had never heard of Golmuri at all. Yet in a leading article in *Liberty* of September 5th an article headed "Golmuri Strike" the following passage occurs:—

"The wails of the suffering people have reached to workers at Budge Budge where the same Burma Oil Company hold the major part of the shares of the petroleum plant. The Golmuri atrocities are having their repercussions at Budge Budge and it is not at all strange that 7,000 workers have struck and that all the works there are in complete deadlock. These people have their grievances—another example of how the Burma Oil Company have made it a profitable business not only to exploit the oil resources, but hundreds and thousands of our poor and hungry men and women and children. To-day is the 15th day of the strike. And what are their complaints? They are employed for 18 or 19 days and are paid wages with which it is impossible for them to make both ends meet. They enjoy no leave or holidays, and the sick period is treated as absence without pay. There is only one municipal hospital with one doctor to cater to the medical requirements of so many people and Burma Oil Company have made no additional provisions which are badly required. Nor are the labourers supplied with pure drinking water, although the management can easily make arrangements to bring it from Calcutta. And to crown them all, the housing conditions in which they have to live are simply disgraceful. These are sufficient enough to lead the people to a conflict with the employers, but it is no use hiding the clear fact that, that is not the only cause of the Budge Budge strike. They have been moved by feelings of sympathy towards their suffering and persecuted brothers at Golmuri, and are determined to bring the Burma Oil Company to reasonable, if not a humane, frame of mind. There is yet time to mend, but will the Burma Oil listen to counsels of peace?"

The Gilbertian situation of the Standard Oil Company of New York being asked to settle the tin-platers' strike at Golmuri in Bihar and Orissa was not sufficiently appreciated by the workers, otherwise they would scarcely have given up several weeks' wages for nothing.

The oil strikes almost inevitably raised issues that were brought to Government. The employers came in deputation to Writers' Buildings to discuss the situation, but it was pointed to them that, so far as the Trade Disputes Act was concerned, they were private concerns. Section 2 (g) (iii) of the Act makes light supply a public utility service but not oil supply, without which light may fail, moreover, the presentation of grievances, however *mala fide*, gave a *prima facie* aspect to the case of an industrial dispute, and section 16 of the Act could not be utilised. The wording of section 16 also, it was indicated, was such that even without statements of grievances it could not be utilised. Civil action, it was also pointed out, was for the oil authorities themselves to consider. The only thing Government could do outside appointing a Court of Enquiry or Board of Conciliation, which clearly would be useless under the circumstances, was to give adequate protection against attacks to oil installations and to workers wishing to continue in work.

Attempts were made by several persons to reach a settlement, Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury and the Vice-Chairman of the Budge Budge Municipality endeavoured to get the men back. But none of them could settle the Golmuri strike, and ultimately the Budge Budge workers went back in driblets in spite of Golmuri.

### 7. General Remarks.

A fact which stands out very prominently from the above account of the strikes is the lack of machinery in the industry for the settlement of disputes. In well-organized industries, Government intervention is normally a last resource, to be sought only after every possible method of negotiation within the industry has failed. In the jute mill strikes the negotiations in the industry were of a perfunctory character owing to the fact that the union with which the employers were willing to negotiate had lost control of the situation. The employers persistently refused to deal with Miss Das Gupta directly, on the principle that they would recognize only registered trade unions. Ultimately, however, they accepted an agreement which they knew had been accepted by an unregistered union. In the meantime the Government conferred with Miss Das Gupta, on the ground that she appeared to be the *de facto* leader of the workers. Government were thus forced into the position of intermediary because the Jute Mills' Association refused to meet direct a trade union leader with whom they ultimately came to terms through a Government officer. The position of the Jute Mills' Association was up to a point justifiable; they let it to be known that unregistered bodies would not be listened to, but beyond that point their action was distinctly open to criticism. Government as well as the Jute Mills Association

prefer to deal with bodies which have some recognized status, but in industrial disputes the vital test of a trade union is not its registration certificate but its power to control the workers. Government took Miss Das Gupta into confidence on information that she was the leader, a fact of which the jute mills were also quite aware. In disputes of the magnitude of the jute mill strikes, scruples regarding theoretical principles may prove very embarrassing, even dangerous, as was recognized by certain employers in the post-agreement period. It is open to the jute mills in normal times to insist on registration of unions before they correspond with them, but insistence on registration in crises is a principle of very doubtful validity.

The strikes revealed palpable weaknesses in the organization of both employers and employees. The committee of the Jute Mills Association had power only to recommend certain action to its members. They had no authority to negotiate on behalf of members, and it is doubtful if they could have got such authority. Their weak position is due to the traditional attitude of managing agents towards wages. One of the clearest lessons of the dispute is that the Jute Mills Association must take some common action regarding wages and conditions of work. The present position can never stand against organized labour, and organization is bound to come in the future. The employers' wage case bristles with anomalies, and even if complete standardization is impossible, some measure of co-ordination is called for. The strike also revealed weaknesses in the relations between employers and their workers. The ease with which Miss Das Gupta, a newcomer, persuaded the workers to come out, and the difficulty the employers had, first, in ascertaining the case of their own employees, and, second, in persuading them that reasonable grievances would be looked into after resumption of work, points to a lack of confidence between men and masters.

This arises from the sirdar system. The immediate employer of a worker is his sirdar. The sirdar gives him his job, and it is by his will that the worker retains it. The sirdar is the official channel of communication between master and man, and the sirdar's view must be the man's view. Otherwise, the man's job is gone. Thus it is that the sirdar who is more of a master and employer—he is a kind of contractor—than an operative paid a weekly wage, is the source of the management's information regarding the worker. Thus it is, too, that dissatisfied or suborned sirdars may initiate and maintain a strike, whatever the workers' views may be. Probably, in the power of the sirdars lies the explanation of the loyalty of the few jute mills which did not go on strike. The sirdars are the real masters of the men. They employ them and dismiss them, and, in many cases, they house them and can unhouse them. They may own or control the shops which supply the men with food. The operative, too, pays his lump or recurring sum to the sirdar to retain his job. His life, indeed, at every turn is coloured with sirdarism. Normally he does not object, for he argues, what the sirdar is able to do to-day, I may do to-morrow; in due time, I, too, shall be a sirdar and reap the rewards.

The labour movement, such as it is in Bengal, has so far approached the sirdar question very gingerly. But it has been approached, and there are signs that the sirdar is nearing the parting of the ways. The Kankinnarah Union, for example, has more than once declaimed against the iniquities of sirdars. In particular, the bribery system has been condemned. It is well known that in all concerns the sirdar takes a consideration from those under him. Clerks are credited with the same habit. The sirdar system, indeed, like the serang system, has bred a mass of corruption. The victim is always the man at the bottom, and the course of his salvation it is difficult to foresee. Organized unionism may help, but here the operative is in a vicious circle, for unions which attack sirdars will be assailed by sirdars and men refused permission to join. Employers are more or less helpless, for the reason that to offend sirdars is to have perpetual trouble among the workers as a whole.

Still, gradual improvement is possible and one method of bringing it about is for big concerns to employ officers whose sole duty is to look after labour matters. Properly chosen welfare officers could do much towards fostering good relations between employers and workers. In the first place, such officers might be recruited from the British training centres. For some years they would be of little use, for they would have to find their bearings, especially with regard to languages. The pay and conditions would have to be attractive to the best type of man, who, in due course, would have a very full day's work, for he could be given charge of all the dispensaries, lines and other departments of work directly affecting the workers. A regular service of such workers could with advantage be started on the banks of the Hooghly, and in due course it could be manned by properly trained Indians, of the type appointed to the superior services of Government.

On the employees' side, the organization at present is in an infantile stage, and little more can be expected till the workers have some measure of education. Organized unionism must rest on an appreciation of common ends, which appreciation must be translated into regular subscriptions. The time is still distant when the



mixed jute population—Bengalis, Oryas, Madrassis, Beharis, Bilaspuris, Hindustanis from the United Provinces—will pay into a common fund regular subscriptions which show no immediate return. For one thing, most of them are illiterate, and they have no common means of communication. For another, their experience of "unions" to which they have subscribed has not been uniformly happy, for many cases have happened where unscrupulous persons have raised funds to raise wages and have decamped with the proceeds. Again, the sirdar system will oppose unionism among the workers as a whole. Development must be slow, and for some years will have to be fostered from outside. The strength of unions for some time will depend on the type of leader who comes into the movement. Employers as a class are very suspicious of the *bhadralog* leader, and not without reason. One thing is clear, and that is that leaders should take such means as are at their disposal to prove their sincerity. One such means is registration under the Trades Unions Act, which at least secures a regular constitution and audit of the accounts.

Local unionism, like unionism in its earlier days in other countries, suffers from intense jealousies among labour leaders. In the jute mill strikes the one constitutional union was elbowed out of the way temporarily by the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Personal feuds followed. Then the Jute Workers' Union split. More personal feuds followed. Counter unions were organized. At one stage, at some centres at least, three or four unions claimed the workers' attention and an attempt was made to organize a fourth after the Budge Budge strikes. Needless to say, this is disastrous to the cause of unionism, for the worker, confused, perhaps, as regards the original issues, is completely confounded at the end. Suspicious by nature of outsiders, he falls back on the man he regards as his natural patron and protector, his sirdar.

Under such conditions, the employer's task is as difficult as the man's. The great majority of employers, recruited from a country and industry in which they have been familiar with organized labour, recognize that properly organized unions would aid them in regulating labour conditions. But they are faced with the fact that there is no regularly organized union which can control the workers. If one succeeds temporarily in doing so, it will raise competitors who make the same claim. The numbers of interests which drive sirdars and workers this way or that way are many and mysterious. Disinterested outsiders, always suspect till their *bona fides* are proved, may gradually mould the workers' ideas into a common shape: but nothing permanent can be hoped for till the worker receives some education. With education and proper guidance, he inevitably will build up an organ to express his obvious community of interest with his fellows, first, probably, on general lines and then on functional. It is in the interest of employers and of the community at large that the basis of this organization should be well and truly laid, and one of the most vexed problems facing both Government and capital is how to safeguard the ground for proper organizers and workers as against those who wish to exploit the workers for their own or political ends.

Recent experience has clearly demonstrated that existing industrial legislation is not sufficient to cope with the problems which have arisen and which are likely to arise in the future. In the first place, the Trade Disputes Act has been shown to have at least one mechanical defect. The wording of section 3 is unfortunate. There may be cases in which it is desirable to hold a court of inquiry *after a strike has been settled*. The jute mills strikes were settled suddenly by negotiation. But the recovery left an open sore. Government recognized all through the strikes that it was desirable to have definite evidence on the hessian gambling allegations, yet they were not prepared to appoint a court unless the promise of a court could secure an immediate resumption of work. Even after the settlement it was desirable in the public interest that, if possible, the allegations should be examined by an authority possessing judicial powers. This course of action is not possible under the Act, and it is desirable that it should be.

In the second place, the oil strikes demonstrated the anomaly of defining "any industry, business, or undertaking, which supplies light" to the public as a public utility service, whereas an industry, which supplies the raw material of light and is not so defined, was brought into prominence.

In the third place, there is no provision in the Act for dealing with a so-called sympathetic strike like that at Budge Budge. The special provisions for illegal strikes and lock-outs were designed to prevent what is usually known as a general strike. The provisions are not applicable to a case like the oil depots strikes, where the workers were kept out because of a dispute at Golmuri, of which they were quite ignorant, and the responsibility for which had to be borne by other employers, other workers, and another Government.

In the fourth place, the existing law is not sufficient to cope with outsiders who instigate strikes for other than labour ends.

The last three questions raise a discussion on the principles underlying the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Acts. So far as the Trade Unions Act is concerned,

the strikes have raised a question, which was very generally discussed when the Indian Trade Unions Bill was under discussion of the compulsory registration of trade unions. The case was also raised after the Bill became law by Mr. Joshi, who proposed that the exemption conferred by section 17 of the Act should be conferred on registered unions. In England, the question of registration never became serious, because gradually the same law was applied to unregistered as to registered unions. In India, however, the law specifically confers exemption only on registered trade unions.

As regards compulsory registration, there is not much to be said. The compelling of registration is a matter between employers and employees, and even were compulsory registration introduced, employers could not very well be forced to recognize unions. And there is always the possibility that a body not calling itself a union may force recognition by virtue of its power. Employers should be alive to the possibilities of civil action against leaders of such bodies and also of unregistered trade unions. Such action is slow, and little likely to bring strikes to a close. It may, however, teach useful lessons to instigators. Unregistered bodies have, as a rule, no funds; there would therefore be no point in suing them. Their creators, however, are frequently men of means, and civil actions, with the expense and trouble they entail, would make them walk warily. So long as there are facilities for registration of trade unions, there is no excuse for fomentors of trouble, if they are genuine labour leaders, for not registering their unions, and, if, as might happen, advantage were taken of the Trade Unions Act to secure registration to escape liability, then that Act, the provisions of which are mild and innocuous, would have to be tightened up. It was passed by Government in good faith, in the belief that it would foster *bona fide* trade unionism. If it is used for other purposes, then provisions should be introduced requiring proof that the union either at its inception or a fixed period of years after its registration shows from its audited books that it represents a majority of its professed constituents. If it does not, the exemption from civil liability should be withdrawn throughout its entire existence.

Probably the reluctance of employers to utilize the civil law arises from doubt as to the legal position. The Taff Vale case in England and the Wadia case in Madras are sound enough precedents for action; but there would appear to be a case for examining the civil law with a view to making the position quite clear in India. The main issue is clear enough; it is that the field should be kept clear for *bona fide* labour workers, and that political or commercial exploiters should be rigorously banned. Such men are ruining the cause of labour.

Although compulsory registration is impossible, means may be adopted to make registration desirable. One is that employers should normally have the full support of Government in refusing to deal with unregistered bodies. "Normally" is used for reasons which have been made clear above. Exceptional circumstances may arise when, to save life or property, both Government and employers may have to negotiate with persons not connected with registered trade unions. These circumstances are rare; in ordinary disputes Government could refuse to appoint courts or boards, where unregistered unions asked for them, and utilize the means at their disposal under the Criminal Procedure Code to prevent an unregistered body supporting a strike and spreading disaffection among other workers. Such action would no doubt be interpreted as "taking sides," but it is always open to the body concerned to prove its *bona fides* under the Trade Unions Act.

The definition of "public utility services" in the Trades Disputes Act is entirely inadequate. It requires drastic revision. It does not include the supply of articles essential for everyday life, such as food, milk and coal, or the working of ferries, river services, or tramways. There are ample precedents for the inclusion of such services and, in Bengal, the inclusion of some of them is a matter of urgent necessity, e.g., the river steamer services, one of the main arteries of communication for passengers, mails, and goods in Bengal, in which there is regular agitation for increased wages every year just prior to the Pujas, the period of the year when stoppage would cause the maximum of inconvenience.

If the definition is defective, the special provisions regarding certain strikes in public utility services are ridiculous. The penal provisions apply to workers only. Experience in other countries, such as Australia, has amply proved that penal provisions cannot be applied to masses of men. In India, moreover, circumstances are such that in most cases the penal provisions should not be applied to workers, as they are not primarily culpable. Penalties should be made applicable to leaders and instigators, and in their cases the penalties should be of a substantially deterrent character.

Sympathetic strikes of the Budge Budge type could be regulated by a simple amendment to section 16 (1) (a) of the Trade Disputes Act, viz., by the substitution of "or" for "and" at the end of the clause.

The difficulty of drawing a fair line between the uses of the sympathetic strike and its prohibition is recognized, but there appears to be much more said for the

prohibition than against it. Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose openly declared that he was to attack the Burmah Shell Company throughout India to settle the Golmuri strike. If he had been successful in his threat, probably there might have been an even more ridiculous case than Budge Budge. The Standard Oil Company of New York at Rangoon or at Tuticorin, for example, might have been set upon by agitators as an accessory after the Golmuri fact. In cases like these, the pawns are the workers. There is no question of "sympathy" between Tuticorin oil depot operatives and up-country tin-platers in Bihar. Were there real sympathy, there might be a case for permitting sympathetic strikes, but it is well known that it is not the sympathetic appeal that sends the workers out. The credulity of ignorant men is worked upon by specious promises till they flare up and strike. They are kept out for weeks, usually to resume unconditionally. The strike leaders do not pay them strike pay, nor, as a rule, do they remember the "grievances" after the return to work. The plain truth is that the workers are blatantly, dishonestly, and cruelly exploited to serve the ends of self-seeking individuals.

The utmost limit of sympathetic strikes should be the same industry and in the same area. Beyond these the law should not be on the side of mercy until at least the education of the working classes has sufficiently developed to let them understand the real issues on which they are asked to fight.

The penalties under the illegal strikes part of the Act are as little calculated to be effective as those in the public utilities provisions. In the case of either a sympathetic or a general strike, the leader would probably be a politician with a political organization and funds behind him. Neither he nor his organization would be likely seriously to take into account a maximum penalty of three months' simple imprisonment or a maximum fine of Rs. 200.

Outsiders who exploit labour for other than labour-ends fall into two categories. One is the politician who wishes to secure political ends by means of general unrest. His sole interest in labour is to create general annoyance through strikes with a view to compelling Government to take a certain line of action. The other instigates strikes with a view purely to personal gain.

The alleged case of the hessian dealers furnishes an example of the latter type. Under the existing law it would appear that, had the allegations been brought home to individuals only, only a civil suit would have lain against them. It is not criminally illegal for individual dealers in a market to foment disputes in order to raise prices, in a non-public utility service, although had joint action on the part of several dealers been proved, they would appear to have been guilty of criminal conspiracy. Clearly there is a lacuna in the law here, for of all exploitations of workers, exploitation for personal ends is the worst. In the jute mill strikes rumours had it that the gains of the gamblers were large, and that therefore they could afford heavy contributions towards keeping the strike going. In such cases proof is always difficult, as bribery and corruption are usually perpetrated in back alleys and dark chambers. In strikes instigated for personal gain, however, some stand to lose, and there is a chance of the truth being revealed when blackguards fall out. The law requires to be made adequate to the issue, for nothing is more despicable than rich men swimming through sewers to greater riches.

The political and financial instigators work by similar methods. Both may work by the simple method of buying sirdars and shopkeepers. Or they may work through unions, registered or unregistered. They may cajole or buy themselves to office; or they may bribe the existing office bearers. If they work directly through hired agents, the strikes will in all probability take place over night. If they work through a union, probably some notice will be given, but the time permitted for a reply will be impossible. In any case, the "demands" will be impossible, such as the Budge Budge demands that the workers should get the Calcutta water-supply. The usual leaflet and platform campaign will follow. Well-paid orators will incite the workers; stealthy hirelings will visit the workers' houses in the silent watches and promise great gains or dire results. The workers will obey; they will serve the leaders' purposes for gain or for demonstration purposes, and then, after three weeks, they will crawl back beaten to the old rate of wages, with three weeks' total loss to their debit. By that time, the leaders will have disappeared.

At the moment of writing, the jute workers have gone back to work, it is said, for three months only. Why this period has been set is not clear. Some say it has been set to suit the hessian dealers, who have made contracts up to the end of the year, and who must have another excuse for cancellation. Or, it may be connected with the threatened general political strike at the end of the year. This strike is fomented on the ground of Dominion Status being granted to India. What grounds will be put forward by instigators to the illiterate workers is not known; but what is known is that it is beyond the wit of any agitator, Indian or non-Indian, male or female, young or old, to convince the jute-workers of Bengal that, if India is not given the status of Canada or the Irish Free State on the 1st January, 1930, then he must go on strike.

The worker must have some other inducement, for Canada, Ireland, and Dominion Status have never entered his vocabulary. The other inducement may set him aflame, and he will lose three weeks' wages, if not his life, for he may be dragged into civil commotion, of the ultimate cause of which he is entirely ignorant.

It is difficult to deal with such agitators in industrial agitation, as such legislation is normally framed on the assumption that disputes arise from *bona fide* industrial causes. The more appropriate place for the necessary provision is the Penal Code. In so much as *mala fide* leaders try to give a *bona fide* aspect to the disputes they foment, however, their actions must be taken into account in industrial laws. The methods of dealing with them must to some extent be based on their own methods of work, and from these methods arise the questions of the strike without notice, the sympathetic strike, contributions to support strikes, and, finally, the general strike.

The strike without notice has been a common feature of Indian industry for many years. In many cases, it is a lightning strike, arising from purely industrial causes, which are soon adjusted. The right to strike in this manner, though a nuisance to industry, is not a serious danger. In other, more prolonged cases the issues may also be industrial, in which case it is not desirable to interfere with the workers' right to strike. But there is the other *mala fide* class of cases, where the issues are not, properly speaking, industrial. It is admittedly difficult in many such cases to judge what causes are *mala fide* and what *bona fide*. A clear example of a *mala fide* case is the 'Budge Budge list of grievances which contained the workmen's compensation demand, and the settlement of the Golmuri strike. A possible method of meeting such cases is to declare all strikes without notice for a specific period illegal, and to leave it to Government, on the principles already contained in Sections 15 (4) and 16 (4) of the Trades Disputes Act to prosecute. This principle is not unknown in industrial legislation, e.g., in the 1918 Act, amending the New South Wales Act No. 17 of 1912 (*vide* Gilchrist, *Conciliation and Arbitration* : Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour, No. 23, page 91). The New South Wales Act makes any strike illegal which commences prior to fourteen clear days' notice being given. Legislation of this type would not only help to prevent the *mala fide* overnight strikes, but, by eliminating the strike from genuine causes without notices, would gradually foster proper negotiations between management and labour.

Sympathetic strikes have already been partially dealt with. Sympathetic strikes in the same trade or industry in the same area cannot be eliminated : what it is desired to kill is the exploitation of workers in different industries and different areas under the name of sympathy.

As regards contributions, Australian legislation also furnishes parallels. In Western Australia, for example, as also in New Zealand, persons making gifts of money to strikers are liable to heavy penalties (*op. cit.*, pages 105, 116 and 130). Likewise, newspapers abetting or helping strikes are made liable in some cases, as in New South Wales (*op. cit.*, page 92). Similar provisions might be made in the Indian law, with heavy penalties.

The law governing picketing and intimidation, contained in the Penal Code, also requires reconsideration in the case of illegal strikes.

So far as the general strike is concerned, there is the existing provision in the Trade Disputes Act. It has been pointed out that the substitution of " or " for " and " in Section 16 (1) (a) would materially improve the Act, but, as it stands, the provisions would seem to be sufficient for a general strike with one important exception, penalties.

In all legislation directed against *mala fide* strikes two principles are of paramount importance. The first is that the penal provisions should be very heavy. The second is that the legislation should be aimed at leaders, instigators, or fomentors, and their instruments, and not at workers as a whole. So far as penalties are concerned, the existing provisions are useless. In the case of public utility services no penalty is provided at all for leaders, while in the case of a general strike it is a maximum of three months' simple imprisonment or a fine of two hundred rupees, or both.

These penalties may be compared with those in some dominion laws. The Lemieux Act of Canada lays down that "any employer declaring or causing a lock-out contrary to the provisions of the Act is liable to a fine of not less than \*D 100 and not more than \*D 1,000 for each day or part of a day that the lock-out exists. Any employee who goes on strike contrary to the provisions of the Act is liable to a fine of not less than \*D 10 and not more than \*D 50 for each day or part of a day spent on strike. A penalty of not less than \*D 50 and not more than \*D 1,000 is laid down for persons who incite or in any way encourage employers or employees who declare lock-outs or go on strike, respectively."

\* Dollar.

In New South Wales, the 1918 amending Act prescribes that "if any person, including an industrial union of employers, does any act or thing in the nature of a lock-out, or takes part in a lock-out, or instigates to or aids in any of the above-mentioned acts, unless the employees working in the industry concerned are taking part in an illegal strike, the court may order him to pay a penalty not exceeding £1,000."

Heavy penalties are prescribed in Commonwealth legislation (*op. cit.*, page 76), Queensland (*op. cit.*, page 108), and New Zealand (*op. cit.*, pages 129-31).

In India a minimum penalty is necessary, as well as a maximum, and the minimum penalty should be much more substantial than those prescribed in well-organized countries, where industrial disputes are usually confined to the industries in which they break out. A minimum penalty for leaders of Rs. 5,000 with a maximum of Rs. 15,000, with an alternative of a minimum period of two and a maximum of five years in gaol, or both, would quickly make exploitation of labour unpopular. The civil liabilities should also remain. Such penalties should be made to apply to all instigators of illegal strikes, and also to persons proved to have instigated or supported strikes for their own ends, or for ends which in the opinion of a competent court are not *bona fide* labour ends.

Incorporation of provisions such as those suggested above, together with the utilization of the existing powers conferred on magistrates by the criminal procedure code, should be sufficient to expel effectively the class of exploiter which has become all too common in India. Where the outsider attempts to get control of labour by becoming an official of a registered trade union and by "packing" the executive of the union with his own followers, the position is much more difficult. The only remedy seems to lie in amendment of the Indian Trade Unions Act, Section 22 of which allows one-half of the total number of officers of a registered trade union to be outsiders. This section, it is true, has a proviso to the effect that a local government may by special or general order declare that the provisions of this section shall not apply to any trade union or class of trade union specified in the order. The utilization of this proviso would be a matter of extreme delicacy and might antagonize the percentage of the officers who were employees in the industry concerned. A case has recently occurred in Bengal in which a well-known political leader has been elected president of a registered trade union, which, prior to his election, was practically entirely manned by employees in the industry. To serve an order on this union that the provisions of Section 22 should not apply to the union would almost certainly antagonize the officers of the union who were responsible for the election of the politician as president. Were the evil of interested outsiders capturing registered trade unions to continue, the proper remedy would be not the utilization of the proviso under Section 22 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, but the elimination from the Act of Section 22 itself and the insertion of a provision in its stead that a hundred per cent. of the officers of every registered trade union should be employees in the industry concerned. The insertion of such a provision, of course, would practically ruin *bona fide* trade unionism in India.

One other class of person has to be dealt with, and that is the sirdar, or other petty official in a manufacturing concern, who is "bought" by an outsider. As in all cases of bribery, the difficulty in this case is proof. If proof is available, the remedy lies mainly with the employer. Prevention also lies with the employer, as it is his duty to give his workers as a whole complete information regarding such machinations. Otherwise, an employee dismissed for this reason becomes a permanent menace to the peace of the area in which he resides, because he poses as a victim of a capitalist system and appeals to the sympathy of other workers. Militant trade unionism owes much to the dismissed employee, who continues to air his grievances amongst his late fellow workers, in all parts of the world, and Bengal is not behindhand in this respect. The removal of a dismissed employee from the area in which he used to work and in which he continues to agitate is an extreme measure, which can be justified only in the interests of general peace and order. Hence, it lies with the employer to inculcate in the minds of his employees such principles of fair-dealing and honesty as will prevent corrupt men from spreading corruption.

Employers, also, should not hesitate to use the existing resources of the law themselves to extirpate *mala fide* labour agitation. During the jute mill strikes, for example, there was well authenticated evidence to show that some agitators were using the methods of blackmail in order to force employers to pay money to keep their workers loyal. Several complaints were made to leading commercial men by jute mill owners that individuals, who were named, had approached officials in mills in their agency with a proposition that if they were paid so many thousands of rupees, they would abstain from calling their men out. The sums were refused, and the men went on strike. The complaints, however, were not communicated to the police by the managing agents concerned, who had an excellent opportunity of

publicly exposing a particularly pernicious type of extortion. The supreme duty of employers, however, is to foster that ideal type of industrial society where strikes are impossible, because there are no reasons for strikes. Far too little attention has been given in the past to study by employers of the conditions under which their employees work. They have been content to carry on meeting difficulties as they arise, but no general, co-ordinated work has been undertaken with a view to removal of grievances as a whole. As has already been indicated, the jute mill industry, to quote only one in Bengal, is full of anomalies, which could never exist were there a properly organized jute workers' union. Local variations in wages, differences in the size of cuts, differences in housing conditions, differences in the amenities of life, differences in hours, all require study from this point of view, and such study cannot adequately be undertaken until the necessary organization is created for this type of work. Government can pass stringent legislation to safeguard industry against *maia fide* strikes, but the universal experience of such legislation points to the fact that it does not prevent strikes. It is for industry to take measures to extirpate the causes of *bona fide* strikes, and when these are abolished, it will not have much ground to fear the operations of *maia fide* leaders.

*Leaflet A.—To jute mill workers.*

Brethren,—You all know that from the 1st July the mill owners have issued a new order that you will have to work for six hours more in the week.

By making you work for these extra six hours, by wringing the blood out of your body they will make a profit of lakhs of rupees.

And what will you gain? Just look at this rough estimate: if you worked at the rate of 54 hours you would get:—

| Size of a roll.       | Remuneration<br>for a roll,<br>100 yards. | Number<br>of<br>rolls. | Remu-<br>nera-<br>tion.<br>Rs. | Reward. |    | Total<br>for<br>week. |    |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|----|-----------------------|----|
|                       |   |                        |                                | Re.     | a. | Rs.                   | a. |
| 8 9 27" :<br>sacking. | 8 annas.                                  | 10                     | 5                              | 1       | 6  | 6                     | 6  |

If you work at the rate of 60 hours, you would get:—

| Size of a roll.       | Remuneration<br>for a roll,<br>100 yards. | Number<br>of<br>rolls. | Remu-<br>nera-<br>tion.<br>Rs. | Reward. |    | Total<br>for<br>week. |    |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|----|-----------------------|----|
|                       |   |                        |                                | Re.     | a. | Rs.                   | a. |
| 8 9 27" :<br>sacking. | 8 annas                                   | 10                     | 5                              | 1       | 0  | 6                     | 0  |

Do you understand what you have gained? For weaving ten rolls of sacking you will earn six annas less.

This is merely a rough estimate that we have put up. In the spinning, beaming and all the other rooms also the earnings will fall off.

If you quietly put up with it, know for certain that a month afterwards your weekly wages will be still further reduced.

If you put up with it, you are done for.

Do you know what is the remedy?

If you want to live, you must fight. This is the opportunity. This is the opportunity for workmen in all the jute mills of Bengal to fight in combination.

Come brethren, combine—wherever any of you may be, let all unite and start a *hartal* in every mill. Stand up with chests inflated against the oppression of the pot-bellied owners.

There is no other way of surviving than starting a *hartal*. Victory is certain if you fight together.

Bengal Jute Mills Workers' Union,  
Head Office, 41, Harrison Road, Calcutta.

*Leaflet B.—To the labourers at the Jagatdal Chathal.*

Brethren.—This is a very critical time. If even a very small mistake takes place in your ideas great harm will be done. So beware! It is said that some pleader has advised you to the effect that your wages would be realized by action in the courts. You are very simple folks, so you have been enmeshed in the plans of an ordinary pleader. The mill authorities have reduced your weekly wages. What can the courts do if you do not want to work on low wages? They can do nothing. Did any contract take place between you and the mill authorities? Did they give you

anything in writing that you will receive such and such wages every week? Such a transaction did not take place. Then what can the courts do? You want to sell a thing for Rs. 5 and another man wants to buy the same for Rs. 4. Then can you realize these Rs. 5 through the court? Certainly not. If the customer has the necessity and need for it and you will not part with it for less than Rs. 5, he shall have to buy the same for Rs. 5. Where does the court come in here? Ask the pleader to mention this matter before us, we shall give the right answer to him. If this pleader speaks out these things before the court he will lose his practice. Who has advised you to weave a piece of cloth or half a piece of cloth a day? This will certainly cause loss to the mill authorities but it will also cause a reduction in your wages. Now there is going to be a strike and at this time you must have more money. Brethren! We say again that times are delicate. Differentiate well between friends and enemies. Hear everybody, take their advice, but act upon the counsel of those who appear to you to be in the right. Greater the delay you are making in going on a strike, the greater will be the harm to your interests. So long as all the mills do not close down pressure will not fall on the mill authorities. Step forward with courage and others will follow you. Now become ready to go on a strike. If all of you brethren act conjointly then victory will be yours because you have truth and right on your side.

(Sd.) Bengal Jute Workers' Union,  
41, Harrison Road, Calcutta.

*Leaflet C.—Oppression in the jute mills.*

On either side of the Ganges are jute mills. With effect from the 1st of July, 1929, 6 hours more work is being taken. There is a great demand for jute-cloth, specially in this city and other cities. This is why the millowners want to get more jute-cloth prepared. Keeping the mills open for longer hours they take more work from the labourers. The millowners will thus cause greater profits to accrue for the shareholders and bring about an increase in the incomes of the managing agents. So they want more work every week. He who is a weaver will do more work. Why should men, women and children work more? It is their intention that those who are drawing big salaries should get a bigger increase in their salaries without work and draw a gratuity of Rs. 100 per annum and Rs. 30 to Rs. 60 profits by causing the labourers to work longer hours.

Brethren! You do very hard labour every day. How much wages do you draw during the week? And the jute-cloth which is prepared by your labour profits the mill men after sales. Do ponder and think over the huge profits that have been made out of your 6 hours of longer work. Take an account of the profit which these 6 hours of longer work by you has given them. Should the fruit of your labours fill the bellies of the rich and leave you wringing your hands? No, but you should make an effort to put down this.

Man is not made of iron. It is to be regretted that you people do not get any rest. Do you get any gifts or commission in lieu of longer hours of work?

Every year the leaders of the labourers in England come and express sorrow at your condition and say that you people do not try for fixed hours of work and increased wages. There the weekly income of the labourers is high and they live in comfort. When they become ill they get some salary. Do you get anything? Women after conception get some allowance without work at home there. Do your women get the same? They say that work should not exceed 8 hours a day. What are you doing here? There is a law there that the millowner fines the *sirdar* for making the labourers work beyond the fixed time. There is such a bad management about time in your place that no inspector can check whether you have been made to work more or according to law. Have you made any efforts to put down this cunning of theirs?

Brethren! After all you are men and not brutes. Be ready to act according to the following and unite with other labourers to make the demand:—(1) We shall not work for even half an hour more even on being paid for it, for we want rest; (2) None of us whether men or women will work a minute more than 8 hours; (3) Such an arrangement should be made that no man or woman should get less than Rs. 8 per week; (4) Such an arrangement should be made that inspector should be able to find out if on any particular day work is taken more than 8 hours and the officials should be punished and their deceptions should be put an end to.; (5) Half salary should be given during illness; (6) Privilege leave with salary should be allowed every year; (7) Women labourers should be allowed leave on full salary before confinement.

One strike to-day, another after 6 months will not make you realize your demands. Brethren ! act on the above unanimously. If your demands are not granted then go on a strike all together. If you work with unity then you will succeed.

- (Sd.) Dr. Prohabati Gupta, M.A., Ph. D., Bengal Jute Workers' Union.  
 (2) Bankim Mukherji, Secretary to Bengal Jute Workers' Union.  
 (3) Kali Sen, Secretary to Bengal Jute Workers' Union.  
 (4) Abdur Rahman, Secretary to Bengal Jute Workers' Union.  
 (5) Manindra Singh, Bruz Jute Workers' Union.  
 (6) Sachinandan Chatterji, Champdany Jute Workers' Union.  
 (7) Abdul Momen, Shibpur Jute Workers' Union.  
 (8) Promode Ghose, Bhatpara Jute Workers' Union.  
 (9) Mia Jan, Changail Jute Workers' Union.  
 (10) Sikandar, Budge Budge Jute Workers' Union.  
 (11) Satya Narain, Titaghur Jute Workers' Union.

Since the arrest of Kalidas Babu, the Union offices have been located in Calcutta. Address, 41, Harrison Road (at the Amherst Street junction). If any labourer is oppressed upon or his body is injured he should at once report the matter here.

#### XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127. *Effect of Repeal of Workmen's Breach of Contract Act.*—So far as the Government of Bengal are aware, the repeal has had no adverse effect on industry.

128. *Types of Contract commonly in use.*—So far as the Government of Bengal are aware, apart from special contracts such as apprenticeship agreements and agreements with seamen, the ordinary contracts of labour are daily, weekly, or monthly engagements. Enquiries are being made, and further information will be forwarded, if available.

129. *Extent to which (i) Civil, (ii) Criminal Law is available and used for Enforcement.*—Only civil contracts or agreements are now in use : hence the civil law only can be used for enforcement.

#### LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, dated 16th December, 1929.

I am directed to forward herewith the memoranda of the Government of Bengal on XVII—Administration and XVIII—Intelligence, in the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Royal Commission.

2. The local government have no remarks to make on items (134) (International Labour Organization), (137) (Effect of differences in law or administration in Indian States and British India), (140) (Mines inspection) and (141) (Railways, State and Company).

#### XVII.—Administration.

133. *Central and Provincial Legislatures—Action and attitude on labour questions.*—Since the introduction of the Reforms, there have been two nominated members in the Bengal Legislative Council to represent labour interests, and most of the labour subjects which have been discussed in the Council have been raised by them. In March, 1921, Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri, one of the nominated labour members, moved the resolution\*, already referred to, regarding industrial unrest. The same member also moved a resolution, also referred to, recommending the establishment of industrial boards to determine minimum wages. The latter resolution was rejected without a division. Three more resolutions urging Government intervention in individual strikes were admitted in 1921, but were not reached in the session of the Council in which they were due for discussion. In February, 1922, Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri moved a resolution asking Government to institute an inquiry into the causes and agencies leading to the political exploitation of Indian labour. This resolution was withdrawn by the member after discussion in the Council. In December, 1925, Mr. Dand, also a nominated member representing labour interests, moved a resolution asking Government to grant a special franchise to the labouring classes by allotting at least eight seats to them to be filled by means of labour constituencies. This resolution, amended to exclude the actual number of seats to be allotted, was carried by the Council. One more labour resolution affecting industrial disputes was admitted during the July session in 1924, but was not discussed owing to the prorogation of the Council. In February, 1929, Babu Manmatha Nath Roy, an elected member of the Council, moved a resolution asking Government to appoint a committee to inquire into the condition of workers in Bengal. Effect was not

\* Vide Memorandum on XV.—Industrial Disputes.



given to the resolution owing to the announcement which had been made by His Excellency the Viceroy prior to the moving of the resolution that the Royal Commission had been appointed. A motion for adjournment of the Council was moved by Dr. B. C. Roy in August, 1929, on the subject of strikes in jute mills. The motion was carried without a division, after a motion that the question be put had been carried against Government by a small majority.

Several resolutions have been either moved or given notice of in the interests of workers in particular industries, e.g., workers in the Bengal Government Press, Calcutta Tramways, and local railways. During general discussions on the budget, special questions concerning labour have been raised from time to time, e.g., on the starting of co-operative societies in mill areas by Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri in 1929.

During the existence of the reformed Councils many questions have been asked on labour subjects, most of them with a view to eliciting information regarding industrial disputes and measures taken by Government for their settlement.

Generally speaking, the Bengal Legislative Council as a whole has not taken a deep interest in labour questions. The members nominated to represent labour have been responsible for most of the questions raised and resolutions moved. The Council as a whole has interested itself only in cases which have led to disturbances necessitating the intervention of the police, e.g., in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Strike at Kharagpore in 1927, and in the East Indian Railway Strike at Lillooah in 1928, or which have assumed prominence through their magnitude, as in the case of the recent jute mill strikes.

135. *Relations between Central and Local Governments.*—The relations existing between the Central and Local Governments, so far as labour legislation and administration are concerned, are generally satisfactory.

Minor causes of dispute have arisen in connection with important references from the Government of India arising from the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. In the case of several such references, the time permitted for replies was too short to allow proper consideration being given to them. The local government usually consult commercial and labour bodies on proposals to be discussed at Geneva, and such consultation requires considerable time, especially in the case of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which consults its affiliated associations. As the conventions of the International Labour Conferences have had appreciable influence in the moulding of Indian labour legislation since 1919, it is considered that more ample time should be permitted for the consultation of local governments by the Government of India.

The Government of Bengal also think that the Central Government would be well advised to arrange regular conferences between heads of provincial departments responsible for the administration of labour legislation. There have been no conferences of chief inspectors of factories for many years and no conferences of commissioners for workmen's compensation at all. The Government of Bengal are of the view that such conferences should be arranged at least once in three years.

Another point on which possible friction may arise between the central and local governments is the relative powers of local and central governments with regard to the creation of courts of inquiry and conciliation boards under Section 3 of the Trade Disputes Act, 1929. According to this section, if the employer is the head of a department under the control of the Governor-General or a railway company, the Governor-General may refer the dispute to a court of inquiry or to a board of conciliation. The local government have no status in such central disputes at all, but, as in the case of the East Indian Railway strike in 1928, the local government may be intimately connected with disputes arising from and entirely dependent on a dispute in a central concern. The East Indian Railway strike referred to was responsible for a great deal of unrest in private industrial concerns in the area of the East Indian Railway workshops. Had the Trade Disputes Act been in force at the time, the local government, under the Act, could have appointed courts of inquiry or conciliation boards in the private disputes; they had, however, no power to appoint a court of inquiry or conciliation board in the dispute, which was the origin of all the others. Whatever may be the opinion of the local government as to the merits of a strike in an All-India concern, which is causing subsidiary trouble in private concerns under the control of the local government, the local government are powerless to intervene. No instance in which difficulty has occurred since the passing of the Trade Disputes Act, but the local or board consider that in such cases the right of appointing the court of inquiry right of appointment should vest in the local government. As the Act stands, the of India as the court or board rests with the employer, and the Government and anxiety of both of which are borne by the local government and local community, Government which have a keener sense of the situation than the employer the opinion of the Government in either Delhi or Simla. The Trades Dispute Act, in of Bengal, should be amended accordingly.

136. *Administrative authorities in various Governments.*—*Work of special labour offices or officers.*—All industrial labour laws in Bengal are administered by the Government of Bengal in the Commerce Department. The Assam Labour and Immigration Act, so far as it concerns Bengal, is administered by the Revenue Department. The only special labour officer in Bengal is the Labour Intelligence Officer, who is also the Registrar of Trade Unions and Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Commerce and Marine Departments.

The appointment of Labour Intelligence Officer was created temporarily for 2 years in March, 1922, to replace that of Industrial Intelligence Officer, which appointment had been created temporarily on the 1st July, 1920. The latter post, which was attached to the Industries Department of the Government, was created as a result partly of the recommendations of the Industrial Commission, and partly of the abnormal labour conditions that arose after the war. The purpose of the post was to provide intelligence of all kinds appertaining to Bengal industries, but practically the entire time of the officer was taken up by the labour work. In 1922, the office was converted into a purely labour office, the labour intelligence office, and the control was transferred from the Industries to the Commerce Department. Immediately after the creation of this office, it was recommended for abolition by the Bengal Retrenchment Committee.

The original intention of the creation of this post was that it should form the nucleus of a labour bureau or labour office in the presidency of Bengal. This intention, however, has never been carried out owing to financial stringency. The Government did not accept the recommendation of the retrenchment committee that the post should be abolished, but the office itself was not expanded. The office consisted of 1 clerk and 1 stenographer, the stenographer later being withdrawn and replaced by an additional clerk when the officer was made the Registrar of Trade Unions in 1927. In 1922, the Labour Intelligence Officer was given the duties of deputy secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Commerce Department, which department, as already indicated, is responsible for the administration of all industrial labour measures in the presidency. In November, 1926, the Labour Intelligence Officer was also appointed deputy secretary in the Marine Department of the Government, and from the 1st June, 1927, the date on which the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, came into force, he was appointed Registrar of Trade Unions.

The Labour Intelligence Officer keeps a record of industrial disputes in the Presidency and also of the number of labour organizations. From time to time, as circumstances permit, he conducts special enquiries, partly as Labour Intelligence Officer and partly as Deputy Secretary in the Commerce Department. The first enquiry undertaken, emanating from a suggestion of the Government of India, was a census of wages in 1922. This census had to be abandoned owing to the lack of staff. Enquiries into the system of fining in Bengal, the amount and type of welfare work done in the organized industries in the Presidency, and the method of payment of wages in industrial concerns and other labour problems have been conducted by the officer in his dual capacity of Labour Intelligence Officer and Deputy Secretary to the Government in the Commerce Department. Reference has already been made to the results of these enquiries.

139. *Factory inspection.*—(i) *Adequacy of staff.*—Prior to the passing of the amended Factories Act in 1922, the sanctioned cadre of inspectors for the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and Assam, was one chief inspector and 5 inspectors, one of whom was to be an Indian. An attempt was made to secure an Indian, but the only suitable candidate for the vacancy accepted private employment on higher pay, and, after that attempt was made, the appointment of the Indian inspector was kept in abeyance owing to retrenchment. This cadre had been increased from the smaller cadre allowed by the Secretary of State after the passing of the Act of 1911, which consisted of one chief inspector and 2 inspectors for the three provinces. When this cadre was sanctioned, the number of registered factories in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and Assam, was 364, employing an average daily number of 135,610 operatives. By 1918, this number had risen to 647, employing 453,794 persons, and it was to meet this increase that the increased cadre referred to was sanctioned.

In 1921, the Government of Bihar and Orissa created a factory inspection staff of their own, but the passing of the amended Act in 1922, so increased the work for Bengal and Assam that an immediate increase in staff was necessary. The total number of factories in Bengal and Assam in 1922, was 1,070; employing an average daily number of 546,621 persons. That number has since increased to 2,062 factories, employing 618,921 persons. Since 1922, the factory inspection staff has been gradually increased, until, at present, it stands as follows:—(a) Chief inspector; (b) 6 inspectors (5 Europeans and 1 Indian); (c) 3 assistant inspectors (Indians); and (d) 2 full-time certifying surgeons of factories.

The qualifications required of inspectors and assistant inspectors are as follows :—

*Inspectors.*—(1) a first class general education ; (2) A full apprenticeship as a mechanical engineer and training in the drawing office ; (3) (a) a degree or diploma in engineering of a British university, or technical college ; or (b) an associate membership of a recognised British institute of engineers ; or (c) a certificate of competency issued by the Board of Trade as extra first class engineer ; (4) Some years' experience in the profession of engineering in responsible posts ; (5) ability to deal with all questions connected with electrical and structural engineering that may occur in the course of an inspector's duties ; (6) Experience in the construction and maintenance of boilers.

*Assistant Inspectors.*—A good general education ; a full apprenticeship in mechanical engineering in recognized works ; a knowledge of machine drawing and design and the theory of engineering ; a general knowledge of the principles of sanitation ; and experience in responsible posts.

The terms of service are as follows :—*Chief Inspector.*—Pay Rs. 1,050–100–1,550 a motor-car allowance of Rs. 150 per mensem and overseas pay of £30 to incumbents who, at the date of their appointment to Government service, had their domicile elsewhere than in Asia.

*Inspectors.*—Pay Rs. 400–400–25/2–500–50/2–900, plus a motor-car allowance of Rs. 100 per mensem ; a compensatory allowance at the rate of Rs. 80 to Rs. 125 per mensem when posted in the Calcutta area and overseas pay from Rs. 150 up to a maximum of £30 per mensem to inspectors, who at the time of their appointment to Government service, had their domicile elsewhere than in Asia.

All inspectors of non-Asiatic domicile are given passages in accordance with the provisions of the Bengal Passage Rules, 1926.

*Assistant Inspectors.*—Pay Rs. 300–300–25/2–400–400/50/2–600 plus (a) a motor-car allowance of Rs. 100 per mensem, if a motor-car is maintained, or (b) a conveyance allowance of Rs. 50 per mensem, if no motor-car is kept.

The grade of Assistant Inspector was created in 1924 with a view to recruiting Indians. Experience showed that it was practically impossible to find Indians with the requisite qualifications as full inspectors. It was, therefore, deemed necessary to create a self-contained grade for the recruitment of young men with a good general education and some engineering experience with a view to training them in inspection duties, giving them at the same time a reasonable scale of pay and also the chance of promotion to the grade of inspector. Since the grade was instituted one Assistant Inspector has been promoted to the inspector's grade.

At present there are two posts of certifying surgeon attached to the department. These are full-time posts, and the holders have been recruited from the Indian Medical Department. The first full-time post of certifying surgeon was sanctioned in 1909 and the second post was added in 1927. The policy of the Government of Bengal is to place all certification work in the larger industrial areas in the hands of full-time specialist officers. In outlying areas, where factories are few, the work of certification continues to be in the hands of the civil medical authorities. At present, besides the two certifying surgeons, the following civil medical officers also perform the functions of certifying surgeons :—

The civil surgeons in the districts of Bakarganj, Bankura, Birbhum, Bogra, Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Dacca, Darjeeling, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Jalpaiguri, Jessore, Khulna, Malda, Murshidabad, Naidia, Noakhali, Rajshahi Rangpur, Midnapore, Mymensingh, Tippera, Pabna and Burdwan, and the assistant surgeons of the subdivisions of Uluberia, Ghatal, Tangail, Jamalpur, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Serajganj and Asansol.

The following statement shows the number of factories on the register of the year last under report, viz., 1928, the number of visits during the year, including special inquiry of investigatory work, and the number of factories which were visited once, twice, three times, and more than three times.

|  |         |       |
|--|---------|-------|
| Number on register                               | .. .. . | 1,446 |
| Total number of visits paid during the year      | .. .. . | 2,478 |
| Number of factories inspected during the year :— |         |       |
| Once   | .. .. . | 887   |
| Twice  | .. .. . | 233   |
| Thrice   | .. .. . | 86    |
| More than three times                            | .. .. . | 121   |

In addition, 103 visits were paid during 1928 for various purposes to small concerns not on the factories register.

The figures show that the number of uninspected factories has gradually fallen from 442 in 1922 and 320 in 1923, the first full year during which the new Act was effective to 21 in 1928. It is clear, therefore, that the gradual expansion of the staff has proved sufficient to overtake the work that has to be done under the existing Act, provided Section 2 (3) (b) is not largely resorted to.

Since the passing of the amended Act in 1922, a certain amount of decentralization has taken place in the organization of the department. A separate office was opened at Barrackpore in 1926 and at Jalpaiguri in 1927. The jurisdiction of the Barrackpore office is the whole of the Barrackpore sub-division in the district of the 24-Parganas and the district of Hooghly and that of the Jalpaiguri office is the whole of the Rajshahi division. The creation of the Jalpaiguri office has greatly facilitated the regular inspection of tea-garden factories, which were brought under inspection by the amendment Act, of 1922.

The staff is not yet considered sufficiently strong to cope with the work, and administrative approval has been granted by Government to the creation of one new post of inspector and one new post of assistant inspector. The creation of a new post of Assistant inspector for statistical purposes is referred to elsewhere. Although no further decentralization is contemplated in the immediate future, it is probable that when finances permit, a new branch office will be opened in the Burdwan area. Owing to the increasing complexity of the work, it is, however, necessary to keep a number of inspectors at headquarters. At present, the chief inspector is overburdened with office work, and the Government of Bengal have approved of the conversion of one of the posts of inspector into that of deputy chief inspector. So far it has not been found possible in Bengal to organize specialized sections in the factories office, but it has been found necessary to keep at headquarters one or two officers who are engaged largely in making enquiries of a specialized character, e.g., into humidification. It is anticipated that enquiries of this kind will increase in the future, and that they will ultimately lead to an increase in the cadre of inspectors, as such specialized inquiries mean that inspectors for the time being cannot be engaged in the usual work of inspection. Additional staff is also necessary to meet leave requirements. Under ordinary circumstances, European inspectors are granted from six to eight months' leave every 3 to 3½ years, so that, on an average, the services of at least one inspector has to be discounted for about 8 months every year.

The further expansion of the Factories Department will depend on the gradual extension of the Act to premises employing less than 20 persons, whether using power or not. The policy of the Government of Bengal in this respect has already been indicated in the extracts given above.

The Government of Assam still require the services of the Bengal Factory Inspection Department, and the reports for that province are contained in the annual reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories, published by the Government of Bengal. It is understood that the Government of Assam are now making arrangements for a separate inspection staff. When these are completed, the factory inspection staff of Bengal will be relieved of a portion of their work, but the amount of work done for Assam by permanent inspectors at present is not so appreciable as to alter the policy of the Government of Bengal regarding the future expansion of the department.

(ii) *Uniformity of administration in different provinces.*—Reference has been made elsewhere to the view of the Government of Bengal that regular conferences of Chief Inspectors of Factories should be convened by the Government of India in order to obtain uniformity of administration in different provinces. Hitherto, such uniformity has, to some extent, been secured by correspondence between the factories departments of the different provinces.

In January, 1927, an informal conference between the chief inspectors of the two most industrial provinces of India—Bengal and Bombay—was held in Calcutta, and matters appertaining to the administration of the Act were discussed and an attempt made to obtain such uniformity as conditions in the two provinces would permit. As a result of this conference, exemption notifications, classification of accidents, departmental forms, etc., were brought into line, as far as possible. The agenda and conclusions arrived at at the conference were printed in pamphlet form and forwarded for information to the Chief Inspectors of Factories of Madras, Burma, Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces.

The last conference of provincial chief inspectors of factories, convened by the Government of India, was held in 1924, under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Member in charge of Industries and Labour, and this conference had some bearing on uniformity of administration. The main object of the conference was the consideration of amendments to the Act, and the ground covered included recommendations for the amendment of various sections, conditions governing exemptions granted under Section 30, unification of classification of factories for provincial reports and statistics, holiday returns and their usefulness, the recommendations of the

International Labour Office in regard to factory inspection, and the relative strength of the different provincial factory inspectorates. The results of the deliberations formed the basis for the amendments embodied in the amended Act of 1926. The proceedings of the conference were printed by the Government of India.

The extent of uniformity in administration cannot be judged by the Government of Bengal, as they have not got complete information regarding the differences which exist between the rules and exemption notifications issued by local Governments. It is, however, considered that owing to the wide difference in the nature and extent of industries in the various provinces, the different customs, and climatic conditions, complete uniformity in administration is not possible.

(iv) *Prosecutions and their result.*—The following table gives a summary of prosecution cases instituted in Bengal under the Indian Factories Act, during the period 1922–1928 :—

| Year.    | Cases instituted. |                      |        | Result of prosecution. |            |              | Extent of fines.  |                   |                    |               |
|----------|-------------------|----------------------|--------|------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|          | Jute mills.       | All other factories. | Total. | Convictions.           | Aquittals. | Withdrawals. | Rs. 25 and under. | Rs. 50 and under. | Rs. 100 and under. | Over Rs. 100. |
| 1922 ..  | 3                 | 13                   | 16     | 16                     | —          | —            | 4                 | 4                 | 6                  | 2             |
| 1923 ..  | 17                | 10                   | 27     | 22                     | 4          | 1            | 6                 | —                 | 5                  | 11            |
| 1924 ..  | 29                | 10                   | 39     | 36                     | 1          | 2            | 9                 | 14                | 5                  | 8             |
| 1925 ..  | 73                | 114                  | 187    | 170                    | 8          | 9            | 105               | 23                | 24                 | 18            |
| 1926 ..  | 41                | 116                  | 157    | 142                    | 12         | 3            | 61                | 35                | 11                 | 35            |
| 1927 ..  | 52                | 68                   | 120    | 111                    | 4          | 5            | 35                | 40                | 28                 | 8             |
| 1928 ..  | 55                | 80                   | 135    | 127                    | 5          | 3            | 88                | 25                | 9                  | 5             |
| Total .. | 270               | 411                  | 681    | 624                    | 34         | 23           | 308               | 141               | 88                 | 87            |

The table shows a very big increase in the total number of cases instituted from 1925 onwards, and it also shows that the great majority of cases resulted in convictions.

The results of the prosecution cases also show, on the whole, inadequacy of the fines. This has a considerable bearing on the adequacy of the staff for the enforcement of the Act; for the smaller the fine, the more is the chance of a repetition of the offence and the greater is the need for repeated inspection. The biggest proportion of fines falls under the classification "Rs. 25 and under" and the Factories Department complain that the imposition of fines of such trifling magnitude has, to a certain extent, stultified and jeopardized the principles of the Act. The department reports that small fines are often met with indifference and have the reverse of the desired effect. This is particularly the case in illegal employment of labour in which the financial gain which accrues at the expense of a small fine is a direct encouragement to continued infringement of the Act.

In factories other than jute mills, the number of prosecutions under the various chapters of the Act has been fairly evenly distributed, but in jute mills, approximately 94 per cent. of the cases arise from the illegal employment of labour. Out of the total of 270 cases, shown in the table, a total of 253 were instituted on account of infractions of the labour provisions of the Act; 126 were for illegal employment of adults; 104 for the illegal employment of children; and 23 for default in the maintenance of employment register. The multiple-shift system of working, which is still in force in about 50 per cent. of the jute mills, is reported by the department to be primarily responsible for the large number of infractions of the employment provisions of the Act. The working hours of these mills are spread over 13½ hours a day and are so arranged that no workman may be employed in excess of the legal provisions of the Act. The system of overlapping shifts readily lends itself to collusion on the part of time-clerks, sirdars, and the actual workers, with the result that it is often impossible for either managers or inspectors to check, even approximately, the total infractions which daily occur. It is seldom possible for an inspector to check the names of more than a few people discovered working illegally, as, when the news is spread that an inspector is in the mill, large numbers of children and adults

speedily leave the mill, or are driven out by the time-clerks and sirdars. Further, the department reports that in many cases, where illegal employment is evident, various means are resorted to by the time-clerks and sirdars to confound the inspectors, with the result that it is exceedingly difficult, and often impossible, to obtain evidence sufficient to support a prosecution. The department has also found it exceedingly difficult to get workmen themselves to give evidence of illegal employment. The workers are, in the first place, probably, themselves ignorant that they are illegally employed, and, in the second place, they are frightened of victimisation by sirdars if they gave evidence. It is significant that not a single workman in the Bengal jute mills, during the currency of the 1922 Act, has voluntarily offered to give evidence on infractions of the employment provisions of the Act.

Owing to the large number of prosecutions which have been instituted in the last few years, full advantage has been taken by managers of mills and their legal representatives of technical defects in the law. Particulars and comments on typical cases have been given in the annual reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories on the administration of the Act.

**142.—Plantations, Docks, and other Industrial Establishments.—Extent and nature of inspection.**—There is no official inspection of such establishments unless they come within the scope of special laws, such as the Indian Electricity Act. The Factory Inspection Department occasionally visits premises which are not statutory factories, particularly in connection with fatal accidents. Official plantations are subject to inspection visits by senior officers of Government, while in docks the superior staff regularly inspect the various departments. Small factories are subject to no regular inspection of any kind.

### XVIII.—Intelligence.

**143.—Existing Statistics.**—Statistics relating to industrial labour are collected through two agencies; (1) the Factories Office, and (2) the Office of the Labour Intelligence Officer. The factories office, in the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, gives all the statistics required for the returns prescribed under the Indian Factories Act, and, also, from time to time, a census of wages for the most important industries in Bengal. The most complete census of wages for industrial employees hitherto published in Bengal is in the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for the year 1927, and the following extract from his report gives an indication of the method of collection, and also of the accuracy of the figures :—

“ Greater attention has been given to the wages and general condition of operatives in order that the statistics of wages might convey a better representation of the earnings in the industries concerned. The collection of data for Appendix VI depends to a great extent on the goodwill of managers, and when the conditions in a factory are such as to necessitate the application of force for the proper administration of the Act, information which is outside the scope of the Act is either given with reluctance or withheld. In these circumstances, the averages of wages tabulated are rather in the nature of estimates deduced from register records of representative factories of the industries concerned, and are not the exact averages of wages of the total number of employees in these industries.”

Appendix VI of the report referred to is headed “ Estimated average monthly wages,” but the averages were obtained from actual payments made in representative factories in the industries concerned. They may, therefore, be taken as accurate averages of a representative type.

Statistics of industrial disputes have been collected regularly since July, 1920, in the office of the Labour Intelligence Officer, Bengal. The results are not published locally; they are sent quarterly and annually to the Government of India, by whom they are issued for publication in the press.

The statistics collected cover the whole range of industries and trades in Bengal and also include other services which employ manual labour such as the telegraph, telephone, transport, and municipal services. No dispute, however, is taken into account which does not involve at least 10 men and last for at least one full day.

The main source of information regarding industrial disputes is the District Magistrate, but occasionally, figures are collected directly from employers involved in disputes. In no case have figures been furnished by trade unions. For each dispute in progress or reported to have come into existence, information is required from local officers under the following heads :—(a) the place where, and the dates on which, the strike or lockout has occurred; (b) the concern or concerns, etc., involved; (c) the full strength of the concern or concerns; (d) the number on strike; (e) the number affected as the result of the strike; (f) the general and immediate cause of the dispute;

(g) whether a trade union had been formed, and, if so, details of its organization; (h) specific demands of the strikers; (i) any evidence of outside interference; (j) general attitude of strikers, non-strikers, and employers; and (k) other items of special interests or importance.

The above heads give the preliminary facts connected with a dispute as well as any unusual circumstances that may be connected with its origin or continuance. Supplementary information, however, is usually necessary regarding the course of a dispute and its termination. The supplementary reports usually concern (1) the extension or reduction in the number of concerns affected by the strike or in the number of employees on strike; (2) the course of events, and (3) the date and terms of settlement.

After the strike has been declared to have terminated, the data are analysed and dealt with statistically according to recognised methods. In the case of each dispute the aggregate duration and the total economic loss to the concern are expressed in terms of man-days—a quantity measured on the basis of two factors, viz., (1) the average number of vacancies in the establishment concerned for each day of the dispute and (2) the number of actual working days during which the dispute lasts. The issues involved in disputes are classified under the following heads:—(i) pay, (ii) bonus, (iii) personnel, (iv) leave and hours, and (v) others.

The results of the disputes are indicated from the point of view of workers only, and are based on a general appreciation of the results which have been achieved. The following classification of results is self-explanatory:—(i) success, (ii) partial success, (iii) failure, and (iv) indefinite.

The accuracy of the statistics compiled on the above methods depends on the information which is collected. So far as disputes in small concerns involving only a few workers are concerned, the figures may be said to be reasonably accurate. In the case of disputes affecting large concerns, however, the calculation of the aggregate economic loss in man-days is more of the nature of an estimate. This is due, in the main, to the peculiar character of strikes in India. In long-drawn-out disputes it usually happens that the employers make an attempt to keep work going by means of such labour as they can obtain, either from the strikers themselves or from outsiders. Their number varies from day to day, and, in the absence of any definite statements from employers of the actual numbers employed from day to day, the number of vacancies not filled up daily has to be estimated on rough figures. It not infrequently happens also, that employers may succeed in working for a few days with a skeleton staff in the middle of a strike, but that the skeleton staff later joins the strikers either through conviction or because of intimidation. In such cases, especially where the period of intermediate employment during the strike is very short, the final estimate usually discounts work of this type, and the total of man-days lost is taken over the whole period irrespective of sporadic attempts to start up work in the meantime. The most incalculable element in strikes, however, is the actual date of cessation. In many strikes work starts up on a given date, but the full staff does not rejoin for some considerable time after the strike has been officially declared closed. This is due to the fact that, especially in prolonged strikes, workmen either go to other concerns or leave for their homes. An outstanding example of this is the East Indian Railway strike in 1928, when the terms of settlement included a fairly long period of grace during which workers who had been on strike were permitted to return to work. Accurate estimation of the actual number of man-days lost to industry through strikes would require detailed statistics for varying lengths of periods after the strike is officially declared to be over. In very few big strikes in Bengal does a concern start up immediately after the cessation of the strike with a full complement of workers.

Wages statistics for agricultural workers are collected quinquennially by the Agriculture and Industries Department. These statistics include wage-rates not only for agricultural labourers, but also for selected artisans, e.g., blacksmiths and carpenters. These returns are collected on a sample basis. The sub division is adopted as the unit of collection, and 20 villages in each sub-division are selected for the collection of material. The census is conducted by sub division officials under the general supervision of collectors. Non-official returns are also collected and checked by means of the official returns.

Statistics arising from the Workmen's Compensation Act are published in the annual reports of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal.

144. *Possibility of Improvement in Statistics.*—The improvement of existing statistics depends mainly on staff. The Government of Bengal have given administrative approval to the appointment of a special statistical assistant, in the grade of Assistant Inspector of Factories, in the office of the Chief Inspector of Factories, whose duties will be entirely connected with statistics relating to factories, including wages. In Bengal, as in other provinces in India, there is no Statistics Act, under which figures can be compulsorily obtained, but the Chief Inspector of Factories has access to the

wages-books in the ordinary course of his duties under the Indian Factories Act, and it is anticipated that, with the necessary extension of his staff, the census of wages which have hitherto been appended to the annual reports will be considerably enlarged.

Without a considerable extension of the office of the Labour Intelligence Officer, no improvement can be expected in the compilation of statistics of industrial disputes. Personal investigation by full-time officers would lead to more accurate statistics. Accurate returns cannot either be enforced on, or expected from employers, so as to cover the whole loss that individual disputes entail.

145. *Nature of Special Investigations Conducted.*—Special investigations have been made from time to time into particular problems, e.g., welfare, and maternity benefits.

No cost-of-living enquiries have been instituted by the Government of Bengal. The question was fully considered in 1921, arising from the Government of India, letter No. L.-919, dated the 8th March, 1921, in which the Government of India asked :—(1) Whether the construction of cost-of-living index-numbers on the lines suggested by the Government of India in the letter referred to was generally concurred in ; (2) whether arrangements could be made with the least possible delay to collect family budgets ; and (3) whether the system of collecting and publishing retail prices, as suggested in the same letter by the Government of India, was considered suitable by the local Government.

The reply of the local Government, in their letter No. 261 T.—Com., dated the 1st October, 1921, contained their views on all these questions. An extract from this reply is reproduced below :—

7. Briefly, then, the view of the Governor in Council is that the construction of cost-of-living index numbers is not necessary or even desirable in the present stage of industrial development in Bengal, that untrustworthy statistics would be worse than useless, and that the compilation of trustworthy statistics would occupy much labour and time and would entail expenditure out of all proportion to the value of the results to be achieved. The last consideration is specially relevant in Bengal at the present time, since the income of the Presidency is insufficient to meet its necessary recurring expenditure, and the recent decision of the Government of India to limit financial relief to a remission of the provincial contribution for three years necessitates a curtailment of many essential administrative functions and renders it impossible for the Local Government to undertake any economic experiments of the nature now under consideration. The Governor in Council fully appreciates the importance of doing all that is possible to grapple with new development of the industrial problem in Bengal, and, with this object in view, he is carrying out the policy laid down by the Committee on Industrial unrest, which will provide many opportunities for acquiring knowledge and information regarding the economic condition of the working classes. But for the reasons given above, he is unable to concur in the construction of a cost-of-living index number on the lines suggested by the Government of India.

The question has not been reconsidered since, because, owing to financial stringency, there has been no prospect of creating official machinery for statistical work of this type.

146. *Future Developments Necessary.*—The Government of Bengal have not considered in detail the future developments necessary in connection with labour statistics for the reason that no money has been available for the extension of existing work, and that, when the provincial finances improve, other and more urgent schemes have a prior claim. It has been indicated above that Government have approved of the creation of a special post of statistical assistant in the Factories Office, and it is hoped that the creation of this office will result in fuller and, if possible, more accurate statistics with regard to wages in factories. As regards other concerns, such as transport and municipal services, wage-rates are collected from time to time by the various departments concerned, but no co-ordinated census is possible until the work is in charge of a special office. As already indicated it was proposed in 1921 to create a special Labour Bureau for this purpose, but this office has not been established for financial reasons.

The following deals with a number of headings of the List of Subjects in respect of the Asansol Coal Mining Area :—

#### LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

Dated 21 Oct.—12 Nov., 1929.

I have the honour to enclose herewith 40 copies of a Report on Labour conditions in the coal mines of the Asansol sub-division by Mr. J. A. Beale, who is at present sub-divisional officer of Asansol. Mr. Beale was placed on special duty for the collection of the information contained in the report at the beginning of July, and, owing



to the shortness of the period at his disposal, was instructed to conduct his enquiries on a sample basis. Mr. Beale, however, while utilizing the sample method in some instances, has been able to compile information which is applicable to all mines in the Ranigunge field. As sub-divisional officer of Asansol, Mr. Beale is also *ex-officio* vice-chairman of the Asansol mines Board of Health and has had access to the reports and papers of that Board. His notes on the health sections of the list of subjects may, therefore, be regarded as authoritative.

3. The opinions expressed in Mr. Beale's report are personal opinions, but in the main the local Government agree with them. Their views on "I, Recruitment :— (3) Methods of recruitment : (iii) public employment agencies ; (a) desirability of establishing (b) possibility of practical schemes ; (7) Unemployment : (iv) unemployment insurance (v) application of International Conventions relating to unemployment" have already been forwarded to the Commission. Under item "V.—welfare (other than health and housing, but including education)," the Commission have included an item, viz., "No. (39) possibility and desirability of a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund." This is a subject which the local Government have not hitherto considered, and on which they are not prepared at the present stage to give a categorical opinion. As Mr. Beale points out, apart from medical relief, very little welfare work is undertaken in the Ranigunge coalfield, but whether at the present stage it would be advisable to start a fund for the encouragement of sample welfare activities in the mine-fields as a whole is a subject which would have to be considered in the light of definite proposals. If such a fund is instituted, the local Government consider that it should be centrally administered, as, presumably, it would be applicable to all the mine-fields of India.

4. The most important items in the list of subjects on which the Royal Commission require the views of the local Government are "IX—Hours—B—mines—(66) possibility of reducing maxima ; (67) suitability of the law relating to shifts ; (68) possibility of introducing an effective daily limitation ; (71) adequacy of existing provisions" and "X—special questions relating to women, young adults, and children—B—mines—(91) exclusion of women : (i) suitability of regulations (ii) probable effect on industry (iii) economic effect on workers (iv) speed of withdrawal." These questions have been considered by the local Government since the passing of the Indian Mines Act in 1923. Generally speaking, the local Government have been in entire agreement with the policy of the Government of India in respect of these. They consider that the existing hours-of-work provisions of the Mines Act are satisfactory and should not be altered at present, although they would recommend reconsideration of the higher limit for surface workers were the maximum limit of hours for factories to be reduced. They are also in agreement with the policy of the Government of India with regard to the exclusion of women and the institution of a system of shifts.

5. The above questions were all fully considered in connection with the Government of India letter No. M. 665, dated the 22nd June, 1923. This letter raised the two questions of the employment of women in mines and the introduction of a system of shifts in coal mines, and local Governments were asked for their opinions on the questions generally, and, in respect of the shift system, with particular reference to the following points :—(a) whether the introduction of a compulsory system of shifts is practicable and advisable ; (b) what period of grace should be given before any legislation enforcing such a system should be imposed ; (c) what limit should be placed on the working day, and what particular system of shifts should be enforced ; and (d) whether such legislation should apply to any mines other than coal mines, and, if applied only to coal mines, whether it should be enforced to coalfields without exception.

6. With regard to the proposed introduction of a system of shifts in mines, the local Government replied in their letter No. 720 Com., dated the 26th January, 1924, extracts from which are reproduced below :—

"From the communications of the public bodies and officers who were consulted,\* copies of which are enclosed, it will be seen that there is a very marked division of opinion on the main issue, namely, whether the introduction of a compulsory system of shifts is practicable and advisable. The two bodies which represent the colliery industry, the Indian Mining Association and the Indian Mining Federation, are both definitely against the proposal, as also is the Mines Board of Health, Asansol. The district magistrate, Burdwan, within whose jurisdiction are practically all the collieries in this presidency, agrees with the sub-divisional officer, Asansol, in opposing the proposal ; on the other hand, the Commissioner of the division favours it, in common with the chief inspector of mines, the district magistrate of Bankura, and the mining and Geological Institute of India. The opinions on either sides are weighty, and in

\* Not forwarded here.

deciding in favour of the shift system, the Governor in Council is fully cognizant of the difficulties which the reform will entail, and the opposition which its enforcement may involve. On the other hand, he is convinced that the difficulties will only be temporary, and that the coal mining industry, the only mining industry with which this Presidency is intimately concerned, will be healthier on account of the introduction of shifts and ultimately grateful for a reform which at present is opposed on grounds not of principle, but of fear that such a vital industry will be prejudiced by adjusting an ignorant labour force to new conditions.

"As the Government of India are aware, the labour conditions of the Bengal coalfields differ somewhat from those prevailing in Bihar and Orissa. Under present conditions, the restrictions of section 23 (a) and (c) of the amended Mines Act will not bear hardly on either field. Very few miners in either Asansol, Ranigunge or Jheria work for more than four days a week or more than 54 hours. The average is very much less. In the Jheria area, however, there is a much larger semi-settled labour population. The miners settle down on or near the mine in which they work for a considerable period of the year, during which period they earn just enough to provide themselves with food and liquor. Once that is earned, nothing will compel them to work longer and earn more. They go into and leave the mine very much as they choose, but as contrasted with the Ranigunge miner, the Jheria miner does not work for very long spells. He can work for shorter periods because his temporary home is near. In Ranigunge, on the other hand, a large proportion of the labour force comes in from the neighbouring villages. The miners work intensively for about three or four days, and then return to their farms, to work or rest as their inclination may be. While at the mine the Ranigunge miner allows himself little leisure for food, sleep or recreation. He works intensively and continuously, in order to allow him to return to the leisure or casual work of his farm. His long rest periods are spent at his own home. It may be said that the balance of hours is in favour of the time off per week, though it is not distributed over his period of work in the method which the recognized principles of efficiency demand. It is obvious that the shift system will radically alter the methods of work of the Ranigunge miner, and it is equally obvious that, at the outset at least, a system which will compel him to go down and leave the mine at a given time, and to work for only what he considers a small portion of the day and night will be distasteful to him.

"The introduction of the shift system will mean spreading the miner's work over a longer period in the week, and it is probable that a number of miners may prefer staying on their farms to settling down at the mines, for, spreading the time of work over a longer period will compel all the farmer-miners, save those who live within an easy radius of the mine, to settle down at the mine. The type of person most likely to be affected is the miner who at present comes in from a distance of 8 or 10 miles. To this extent, therefore, the shift system would affect the labour supply, and it is against this contingency that the arguments of the mining interests are directed. The Governor in Council recognises the importance of this side of the question, and were he persuaded that it is a final argument he would oppose the proposal for the introduction of shifts. He is aware that the mining industry suffers from a short supply of labour, but he is not convinced that the shift system would materially accentuate it. Other considerations, moreover, have to be borne in mind, and the balance of argument in his opinion undoubtedly comes down on the side of the Government of India's proposal.

"In the first place, particularly so far as the Asansol-Ranigunge miner, as distinct from the Jheria miner, is concerned, it does not appear reasonable to expect that the need which impels the former to seek employment in the mines will disappear. He leaves his farm to earn more money, and the shift proposal in itself will not alter this fundamental fact. The farmer will continue to require the additional income, but the income will have to be earned under conditions, which, though temporarily distasteful to him, will bring the mining industry into line with regulations universally accepted as necessary to the good of the industry, and with practice common in all parts of the civilised world. The miners will gradually come to the knowledge that they must work on a system, and that, outside that system, no work can be done at all, and no income earned. If the income is not needed, the farmer will stay on his farm, but the experience of the Jheria field plainly shows that when the income is needed the farmer settles down, for a period, to become a miner. There is no reason why this should not be so in the Bengal colliery areas in respect to that section of miners which comes to the mines from a distance. In the second place, if, as the Government of Bengal recommend, the shift system is made universal in coal mines, much of the ground of the present fear of the coal owners' interests that labour will leave the mines, will disappear. As conditions are at present, both in Jheria and Ranigunge, the mine manager cannot enforce time discipline because if he did so, the labourer would leave him for a mine with less stern discipline. No mine manager at present can afford to recruit labour to lose it to others, and the result is a general

lack of discipline which, while it accords with the free and easy disposition of the present type of miner, is usually ascribed to the nature of the miner, when the real cause is the lack of a unified attempt on the part of owners and managers to enforce it. When discipline is universal, this cause of labour loss will disappear, for the wandering miner will fail to find a mine where he is his own master in respect to time of work. The stricter discipline of the shift system will require stricter inspection, and the Government of India doubtless have borne this in mind when making the proposal. This aspect of the case, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, requires some emphasis, as it is only fair that managers who do their best to obey the law should not be handicapped by the existence of a number of mines, the management of which will not hesitate to evade the law in order to increase their output.

"The reasons for the application of the shift system, as enumerated by the chief inspector of mines are that the present irregular nature of the going and coming of the workmen—(a) increases the difficulties of keeping a proper record of the number of persons in the mine—a most important point in the event of a serious accident; (b) complicates supervision, as workmen who have commenced work under the direction of one overman, or sirdar, may finish work under another; (c) may result in the overcrowding of the workings of the mine due to one group or gang of workmen arriving at a place of work before the previous group or gang has left; (d) increases the number of accidents, as long hours tend to laxity and carelessness; and (e) reacts adversely on the general supervision and discipline in the mine.

"The shift system will eradicate these evils, and, it has to be added that under the amended Mines Act, it is a legal obligation for managers to know the number of days and hours a miner works. Apart from this, there can be no doubt whatever that from the point of view of mine management alone, a regulated system of work is preferable. The letter of the subdivisional officer, Asansol, shows that there is no agreement among the mine managers on the general issue of the shift system, but it goes without saying that every manager must prefer regulation of his labour supply to the present haphazard system. The method may be debateable, but, were the mine manager persuaded that he would not lose labour, there seems little doubt that he would support the shift system, as the Mining and Geological Institute, on which the technical side of mining is well represented, has done. The remarks of the chief inspector of mines on the subject of safety also require the most serious consideration. As he points out, the present system increases the number of accidents, owing to the fact that long hours lead to laxity and carelessness. In deep mines in which the menace of a fire damp or coal dust explosion is ever present, a system of shifts, he regards as essential; and the Government of Bengal, desire strongly to support his view. The danger to human life, added to the other arguments, appears to them conclusive.

"One further consideration has to be taken into account. During the last few years increasing attention has been given to the condition of Indian labour, both in India and outside. Her high place in the international world of labour demands that India should exert herself towards improving the condition of labour in accordance with the recognized principles of more highly industrialised countries. While not advocating rapid reforms among a class which does not appreciate reforms, the Governor in Council contends that the time is ripe for sowing the seeds of progress. The proposal of the Government of India is a mild one. The shifts are liberal, and combined with the period of grace advocated by the Government of Bengal, they should lead to no insuperable difficulties. The system proposed provides ample opportunity for the necessary readjustments in the present system, and will not only remove a present abuse, but show that India is eager to maintain the reputation in the international world which the amended Factories and Mines Acts have already secured for her. The enforcement of the provision proposed only requires good will on the part of the mine owners and managers, just as the new provisions of the Factories Act require co-operation on the part of factory owners and managers. The lack of this good will in instances may hamper the reform but His Excellency in Council is of opinion that the reform will in due course prove its own worth and disarm all opposition.

"The second question to which the Government of India desire an answer is what period of grace should be given before any legislation enforcing the shift system should be imposed. The opinions on this point vary. A period of five years is favoured by the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division, the Mines Board of Health, and the District Magistrate, Burdwan, and three years, by the Chief Inspector of Mines. After careful consideration of the question, the Government of Bengal have decided in favour of the five years period. This will give ample time for the mine owners and managers to warn their labour and make all arrangements necessary for the change. The longer period of grace will moreover mitigate the mine owners' opposition.

"On the next question—the limit that should be placed on the working day, and the system of shifts to be introduced, the Governor in Council supports the two shift system from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. He also agrees that at present the question of a shorter working day with definite rest interval should not be raised. As the Government of India remark, as the labourers become used to the stricter regulation of hours which a shift system postulates, the time will come when a shorter working day with definite rest intervals will have to be imposed.

"The Government of Bengal are not intimately concerned with the fourth question, whether such legislation should apply to mines other than coal mines; but on general principles they would support the extension of the system to all mines.

"On the last issue, namely, whether the system, if applied to coal mines only, should be enforced in all coalfields without exception, the answer of the Government of Bengal has already been given. The grant of exemptions would defeat the whole object of the proposal."

The subsequent developments in the shift question were concerned with matters of detail, in most of which the local government have accepted the views of the Government of India.

7. As regards the employment of women in mines, the views of the local government have undergone some change. They have, however, all along accepted the principle that the employment of women should be forbidden in mines. In their letter No. 1258 Com., dated the 20th February, 1924, they replied to the points raised in the letter of the Government of India mentioned above in the following terms—

"The subject of female labour in mines came under the consideration of the Government of Bengal in connection with the prohibition of the presence of children below ground, which was carried into effect by the passing of the amended Mines Act in 1923. In their reply to the Government of India on this subject, the Government of Bengal, in their letter No. 5869 Com. dated the 13th December, 1922, stated the opinion that in all probability the prohibition of child labour would result in the cessation of female labour underground, and "for this most desirable end," it was deemed advisable to give a period of grace before the actual prohibition was carried into effect. In principle, therefore, the Government of Bengal accept the general proposition that female labour should be abolished in the coal mines. But they are not willing at present to fix a date by which such prohibition should become operative. The actual effect of the prohibition of children still remains to be seen, and if this prohibition creates or accelerates a tendency for women not to work in the mines, it will in itself give an index both to the Government and to mine owners as to the future course to be pursued with regard to female labour. To set a date, however, for the actual prohibition of female labour in coal mines is in the opinion of the Governor in Council premature.

"The Government of Bengal have consulted the usual bodies whose opinions they take on references such as the present, and it will be seen from their replies copies of which are enclosed,\* that the weight of opinion is undoubtedly against the prohibition of female labour or the setting of a given date by which it should be prohibited. The bodies intimately concerned with the coal mining industry are unanimous in their opposition; and it will be noted from the replies that bodies which were emphatic in the support of the shift system in coal mines are equally emphatic in opposing the abolition of female labour. The Chief Inspector of Mines stands practically alone in supporting the abolition of female labour. He does so on the general principle that such prohibition is inevitable at some time in the future. With this general statement the Government of Bengal are in full agreement. There seems to be no reasonable doubt that at some time in the future, female labour in coal mines will be prohibited either by Government or by the force of communal feeling in the coal mining population. The note of the Chief Inspector however is by no means convincing in favour of giving a period of five years' grace for the prohibition. In fact, the figures which he gives go to prove that a five years' period is much too short a period to enable the coal industry to readjust its labour supply to conditions in which female labour would not play a part. As things are at present two factors stand out prominently, one is that female labour underground in the coal mines forms a big percentage of the total labour force. In Bengal it amounts to 34.5, while in Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces it is 45.3 and 34.6, respectively. The average works out at considerably over one third and a proposal which affects so big a proportion of the labour supply in the coal mines obviously warrants the very gravest consideration. It is a truism to state that the coal industry suffers from a perennial shortage of labour, and it seems beyond question that the abolition of female labour even

\* Not forwarded here.

at the end of a 5 or 10 year period would very materially affect the numbers at the mines. It may be argued that female labour could be replaced by male labour or machines. In the present state of colliery labour supply this seems exceedingly doubtful. The evidence goes to show that the prohibition of female labour will mean a diminution in the male labour supply, for a system of family work is deeply ingrained in the aboriginal colliery labourer and there is good reasons to fear that the prohibition would result in many male labourers seeking labour in other directions, for example, the tea gardens where their female folk could go and work with them. The replacement of labour by machinery is largely a matter of capital. In the larger mines, coal cutting machinery and mechanical transport have, to a certain extent, already been installed, but it would be unreasonable to expect all mines within the next few years to be able to instal mechanical devices to save labour. The policy of installing machinery is largely an economic one. Where concerns find that it pays, they instal it, but in every case it costs a considerable amount of money, and at present the smaller concerns are not able to find the money for the purpose. The abolition of female labour and the consequent loss of labour supply thus, in all probability would mean the closing down of several of the smaller mines, which the Government of Bengal think very undesirable.

“ The Governor in Council would particularly invite the attention of the Government of India to the fact that the present class of labour in the coal mines is opposed to the proposed prohibition. This in itself, of course, is not a final argument, for the particular class of labour concerned is opposed to most reforms imposed from above. It is, for example, opposed to the reform already recommended by the Government of Bengal, namely, the introduction of the shift system. The question of the abolition of female labour, however, and the shift system are not quite on the same plane. The one is a matter of the enforcement of the law and the regularisation of the conditions of work in mines. The abolition of female labour is a social and moral matter which arose originally from the feeling that the risk of danger to the health of female workers was very great in mines. It has not, however, as yet been conclusively proved that the female worker suffers from working underground, and, in this connection, the Government of Bengal would invite the attention of the Government of India to the reply of the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division, an officer who has had long experience in the administration of the Division which includes practically all the coal mines in this presidency. There is evidence to show that the female underground worker is as healthy as, if not more healthy than, the woman who works outside the mines—in loading or in general coolie work. From the moral point of view, the mining community will for many years be better served by the continuance of the present system than by breaking up the family method of working. Ever since the colliery industry started, it has been the recognized custom of the aboriginal workers to work together in family groups, and this custom is so universal, and so deep seated amongst the people, that to break it at the present stage of development must mean either a very considerable diminution of the labour supply of the coal mines, or a jolt to the normal family moralities of the communities involved. The Government of Bengal consider that the opinion of the great majority of the workers on this question should not be lightly cast aside. The tendency of much of our modern labour legislation is to give a considerable place to the will of the worker and in the present instance, although the result of that may not be in accord with what Western practice considers to be best for female workers, its unanimity gives reason to pause before enforcing in a community with a relatively low standard of development what in the West is regarded as socially and economically sound. The Government of Bengal recognise that it is essential in many cases to go against the will of such communities and to force them to adopt habits and methods which are opposed to their traditions, but in the present case, there is not sufficient justification to do so. Moreover, there are signs at present that the customs of the people may change naturally in the direction of the abolition of female labour. The evidence shows that when the miner rises in the social scale he refuses to allow his women kind to go down the mines. How far this tendency may develop it is not easy at present to say. The Government of Bengal are of opinion that before the drastic change involved in the abolition of female labour is contemplated more study should be given to the tendencies which the growth of industrial communities in the mining areas naturally brings about. If, in the course of a few years, the tendency among the people is to prohibit women from going down the mines the question of the final prohibition of such labour may again be reopened. In the meantime, the Government of Bengal are definitely against the prohibition of female labour now, or at a fixed date in the near future. On the other hand they are of the view that every reasonable precaution should be taken to ensure that the female worker in the coal or other mines is guarded against physical danger, and to this end they are ready to support every reasonable measure, restricting hours of work, guaranteeing safety during work and of providing maternity benefits to female workers.”

8. In 1927, the Government of India, in their letter No. M. 1055, dated the 20th May, forwarded a draft of regulations under section 29 (j) of the Indian Mines Act for the purpose of definitely prohibiting the employment of women underground in mines, and on this draft the Government of Bengal, after consulting the Mining Board, Bengal, replied as follows, in their letter No. 4497 Com., dated the 25th August, 1927 :—

“ In reply, I am to forward\* for the information of the Government of India, copy of the reply of the Mining Board in their letter No. 84 M.B., of the 30th July, 1927. From that reply it will be seen that there is a marked divergence of opinion on the Board with regard to the prohibition of the employment of women underground. On the general question, however, the Government of Bengal propose to offer no remarks as the principle has already been accepted by them, *vide* letter No. 1258 Com., dated the 20th July, 1924. In accepting the principle of the abolition of female labour underground, the Government of Bengal were definitely against the prohibition then or at a fixed date in the near future. The Government of India now propose to abolish such labour gradually with effect from the 1st July, 1929. It is doubtful whether any marked tendency has developed amongst the mining classes against women going down mines in the last three years, but the Government of Bengal accept generally the view that the process of abolition should be spread over a number of years starting from 1929. At the present stage they are not prepared to say how many years this process should be spread over, but there seems to be no adequate reason for fixing a period of seven years as against ten years, which would give an annual percentage of 10 per cent. for each of the years in question.

“ The Government of Bengal are not concerned with mines other than coal mines, so they do not offer an opinion on the absolute prohibition of female labour underground in mines other than coal mines from the 1st July, 1928. With regard to the further proposal that the prohibition should apply only to deep coal mines and not to inclines and quarries, the Government of Bengal are definitely of the opinion that no distinction should be made between those classes. It is doubtful whether the conditions of women's work are easier in quarries and inclines than in mines proper, and on this ground alone it might reasonably be contended that no distinction should be made. From a commercial point of view, however, the argument against discrimination is overwhelming. The Government of Bengal offer no opinion as to whether the proposed abolition of female labour underground is likely to mean economic gain or loss to the concerns affected, but if it may involve the latter, then it is essential that coal mines of all types should be placed on the same basis. Where deep mines are forced to give up female labour underground there seems to be a reasonable probability that there will be a flow of labour from such mines to inclines and quarries giving the latter an undue advantage. No discrimination should be made, and the Government of Bengal trust that the proposed distinction will be removed before the regulations are finally circulated for criticism.

“ I am to say that the proposed token system is, in principle, approved by the Government of Bengal.”

9. In 1928, in their letter No. M. 1055 (1), dated the 16th June, 1928, the Government of India forwarded to local Governments a copy of a notification publishing for criticism, in accordance with section 31 (1) of the Indian Mines Act, a further set of draft regulations for the prohibition of female labour underground, and the local Government replied in their letter No. 2014 T.—Com., dated the 29th October, 1928, as follows :—

“ I am to say that after careful consideration of the various views which have been expressed, the Government of Bengal generally accept the revised draft regulations, subject to the following remarks. In the first place, they wish to re-emphasise the views expressed in paragraph 3 of their letter No. 4497 Com., dated the 25th August, 1927, and in this connection they invite the attention of the Government of India to the very strong case made out by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, in their reply to the present reference, for the extension of the regulations to quarries. The Government of Bengal doubt whether, under the existing law, *viz.*, Section 29 (i) read with Section 3 (f) of the Indian Mines Act, the Government of India could not extend the regulations to open workings; in this connection I am particularly to invite the attention of the Government of India to the remarks of the Indian Mining Association in paragraph 6 of their letter, and to the appropriate passage in the report of the Chief Inspector of Mines for 1927, pages 6 and 7, read with plate I, opposite page 8, and they are convinced that, on grounds of equity, no distinction should be made between quarries and mines. If, however, the Government of India

\* Not forwarded here.

are of the final view that, under the law as it stands, the extension of the regulations to open workings is not possible, then I am to express the considered view of the Government of Bengal that the necessary additional powers should be sought without delay from the legislature.

"In the second place, I am to say that after fuller consideration of the token system in the light of the criticisms which have been received, the Government of Bengal prefer the alternative principle mentioned in paragraph 5 of the letter of the Government of India, and they recommend for adoption the scheme advocated by the Bengal Mining Board, and the Chief Inspector of Mines in paragraph 4 of his letter."

The local Government still adhere to the above expressed views.

## REPORT ON LABOUR CONDITIONS IN THE COAL MINES OF THE ASANSOL SUBDIVISION.

### I.—Recruitment.

3. (i) Special attention has to be given to the recruiting of coal-cutting and loading labour; all other labour is more or less easily obtained. The following methods exist in the coal mines here for the recruiting of labour:—(a) through recruiters or sirdars who are advanced money for train fares, food, etc., to recruit labourers from their native districts; (b) through contractors; (c) through recruiting staff who go round villages and pay advances, especially in the case of local labour; (d) through chaprasis for local labour; (e) through head sirdars, by payments made to them of a tonnage on coal cut by the miners they bring in; (f) occasionally through recruiting Babus who are paid advances; but this method is not so common as it used to be; (g) sometimes through zemindars, who are paid to send their tenants as labourers; (h) sometimes through representatives kept in labour districts, they attend to the wants of miners at home by advancing money for special requirements, such as cultivation, weddings, etc. Contractors sometimes try and keep a hold over the people in this way.

Sometimes a gang of labourers moves round the Mining Settlement seeking employment; when engaged these people work for a few days, and then move on to the next colliery after having received "khoraki" and other concessions.

"Poaching" of labour is not generally resorted to nowadays, but it is not entirely absent.

(ii) It is generally considered that the existing methods of recruitment are satisfactory. But it is also considered that better results might be obtained if the villagers could be induced to co-operate with each other in connection with the cultivation of their fields.

(iii) (a) It is generally considered undesirable to establish Public Employment Agencies. Mining labour is independent, and will only work at collieries which the individual thinks suits him. He will leave a well-appointed colliery when the coal is hard, the lead from the tubs to the face long, and the galleries wet, for a badly appointed one where the coal is soft, the lead short and the galleries dry. It is considered that in view of the fact that the expenditure on recruitment of labour at some collieries approximates 4 annas per ton of output, the necessity for the establishment of employment agencies does not arise. There are, however, other considerations which favour the establishment of public employment agencies. There is no check on the expenditure recruiters are supposed to incur. Expenses are unnecessarily increased by competition between rival parties for particular gangs of workers. There are losses caused by labourers taking advances, etc., from one recruiter and going over to other recruiters. There are losses due to recruiters absconding and to labour leaving after a day or so on a colliery.

Recruiting expenses could be controlled, and the chances of losses would be reduced if employment agencies were established.

Moreover, arrangements could be made at villages regarding the cultivation of fields so as to maintain a more regular supply of labour at collieries.

For good and satisfactory results all labour agencies must be ensured against partiality to any particular colliery.

(b) Colliery labour settlements under public agencies near the coalfields could be tried now that there are more facilities for transport. But fixed hours for working would have to be adopted for satisfactory results. Moreover, it is not desirable to have such settlements as the management of the collieries would have no control at all over the work people, and would not get to know the men properly. Whole settlements could be induced by mischievous people to go on strike at times of agitation.

4. There is no disturbance of family life as far as the resident and locally recruited labour is concerned. There is very little disturbance in the case of outside labour. Wives are sometimes deserted by men of outside labour. The percentage of labour at present working in families is as follows :—(a) 80 per cent. for local labour, and (b) 55 per cent. for outside labour. It must not be presumed that all the so-called "families" working underground consist of husband and wife, for there are many unattached women who work along with the men. The percentage of unattached women working underground in the whole "Raniganj" coalfield may be put at 25, and the corresponding percentage of women working with their husbands at 65. The Chief Inspector of Mines in India in his note on the proposed prohibition of women in mines in 1925 put the percentages at 30 and 60, respectively, a conclusion which he arrived at after conducting a partial census of women employed underground. The former percentages are probably more accurate now as the elimination of women is being given effect to. The remaining 10 per cent. may be taken as representing the percentage of women who are related in other ways to the men with whom they work.

Conditions will alter as the elimination of women from underground work proceeds, and there will probably be a greater disturbance of family life in the case of the outside labourer.

7. (i) There is no unemployment among miners and other colliery labourers.

(ii) Clerical and technical staff (as overmen) have lost appointments by the closing down of some of the smaller mines and by retrenchment.

(iii) No means of alleviating or remedying any distress can be suggested.

(iv) There is no unemployment insurance, nor is such insurance considered necessary.

8. It is very difficult to obtain figures for the purpose of ascertaining labour "turnover" as some collieries apparently do not maintain statistics of labour. Some managements cannot even give an estimate of the normal labour staff and the number of recruitments made in a year. It is not understood how expenditure on recruiting is accounted for if no figures of recruitments are kept.

A statement showing annual normal staff and the numbers recruited in the year has, however, been prepared from figures supplied by other selected collieries and is attached (Statement F).

(i) The same conditions are not found in every part of the coalfield. Generally speaking, skilled labour works more or less throughout the year. In some collieries permanent labour—resident and local—works the whole year except during the agricultural season and festivals. About 2 per cent. of this labour leaves, and has to be replaced. But many collieries have not a real permanent labour force. Outside labour work from six to nine months in the year, but not continuously; they are absent from 10 to 14 days at a time. At the most they work for two or three months continuously. About 25 to 50 per cent. of this class of labour leaves during the year, and has to be replaced. Sometimes almost the whole force leaves at different times during the year. The same man may be recruited more than once.

(ii) Casual labour is mostly employed for brick making, building, earthwork and the repairing of huts. Here again it is difficult to obtain figures—actual or approximate—from some collieries. Percentages or figures have, however, been obtained in the case of certain selected collieries, and these are given in Statement G attached.

(iii) (a) Miners are very independent, and turn out to work just when and as often as they like. They certainly never consider their collieries, nor do they worry about any loss in wages. There is one day in the week which the workers have as a general holiday; it is Sunday at practically all mines. In most cases miners absent themselves from work on Monday or the day after the holiday. They begin coming in to work the following day, but some still absent themselves. The local labourers are the biggest offenders in this respect. Excluding holidays miners are absent from work invariably for one day and sometimes for two days. At some collieries miners work for a month and stay away for ten days to a month before thinking of returning; the colliery concerned has to incur expenditure to engage workers for these periods.

(b) As has already been stated the largest number of miners are absent during the agricultural season. They also go away for marriages which generally take place in the months of March, April and May, and are absent for about four days per marriage.



## II. Staff Organization.

12. (i) There is no special recruitment of the subordinate supervising staff. There are some five centres in the coalfields for scientific technical training and a mining college at Dhanbad. The following institutions grant the degrees, diplomas or certificates specified against them :—Benares Hindu University—Degree of Bachelor of Science in Mining; Bengal Engineering College, Sibpur—Diploma in Mining; Calcutta University—Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in the Branch of Mining Engineering; Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad—Certificate in coal mining and Diploma of Associateship in Mining Engineering.

The following Technical Institutions teach surveying for certificates specified against them :—Bengal Engineering College, Sibpur—Certificates of the third year course in Engineering; Mainamati Survey School—Certificates granted to candidates successful in the survey final examination.

The students are then taken on in the mines, sometimes, as paid apprentices or assistants. Men of the better classes who have served in the mines in minor capacities are selected and appointed. Examinations have to be passed by those who wish to have higher appointments.

Workmen who appear to be a little intelligent and command a certain amount of respect are picked out and appointed as sirdars after they have obtained the necessary certificates which are given on their passing an oral examination. Sirdars, overmen and assistants come for work. The manager appoints all under him.

The superior supervising staff are selected and appointed as noted above.

(ii) *Facilities for training and promotion of workmen*—There are lectures and classes conducted by the Government Mining Lecturer at various centres, and facilities are given every one for attending them.

There is practically no actual training of the miner; a new man is put in with the old workers and learns his work from them. As stated above, promising men are selected for promotion to sirdars, and they are encouraged to pass the examination.

13. *Relations between Staff and Rank and File.*—Relations between staff and rank and file are good. Mining labour is very independent, and would not work at any mine where it did not receive good treatment. The managements fully realize this.

There are no works committees in existence in these coalfields. Direct access of labour to the management is encouraged, even in the case where recruiting contractors are employed. Intermediaries are in no way necessary.

14. *Timekeeping, Piecework, Contract and Attendance Registers.*—(i) *How and by whom kept and checked.*—The timekeeping register is kept and checked by the timekeeper, who is called the "Hazri" Babu.

Piecework is looked after by overmen and sirdars.

Contract and attendance registers are kept by the attendance clerk.

All these registers are checked by the manager.

(ii) *How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.*—A clerk called "munshi" supervises loading of tubs underground and gives the miner a chit for the number of tubs loaded; the miner presents the same to the cashier who pays him and takes his thumb impression on the reverse of the chit.

15. *Contractors as intermediaries.*—(i) *Extent and character of work given on contract.*—The character of work given on contract varies on different collieries, but generally speaking works of construction, building and the manufacture of stores are given on contract. These works include items such as underground main gallery driving, sinking of shafts, erection of buildings and the manufacture of bricks.

The raising of coal is also given on contract by some collieries, the contractor receiving a fixed rate per ton of coal raised to the surface and loaded in wagons, and being responsible for all expenses connected with running the mine, but not for the supervising staff under the Act.

The loading of railway wagons is also given on contract sometimes. Loading is usually included in the contract for raising and despatching.

The recruiting of labour is done for some mines by contractors.

(ii) On the whole there is very little sub-contracting. It is not favoured by most managements. Recruiting, building, and occasionally raising contractors sometimes resort to sub-contracting.

(iii) The management exercises full control over the working conditions which are regulated in accordance with the legal provisions. The management supervises all the work through its technical and supervising staff, and sees that everything is done to ensure safety. The manager is responsible.

(iv) There are advantages in having the work done through contractors. In most cases it results in economy in working; the managing staff also has a certain amount of relief.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) Housing is provided by all collieries for all classes of workers who wish to stay either permanently or temporarily on the colliery premises. All labour recruited from outside the sub-division and those of the sub-division who live at a distance from their place of work are provided with quarters by their employers. There are also arrangements for resting places for the local labour who live in neighbouring villages. About 80 per cent. of the labour in the Asansol mines live on the premises in quarters provided by the employers. The percentage of quarters provided by collieries in the case of certain selected collieries is given in Statement H.

(ii) No quarters are provided by Government or other public agencies.

(iii) It is not known whether any workers rent houses from private landlords in their own districts, but probably a few do. The miner being an agriculturist has invariably his own house in his native district. There are no houses provided by private landlords on the colliery premises.

(iv) Local labourers provide their own houses in their villages. In practically all cases the collieries pay towards the expenses of repairing these houses. Roughly about 20 per cent. of all the colliery labour live in their own houses outside the collieries. The extent to which quarters outside the collieries are provided by the workers themselves in the case of certain selected collieries is given in Statement H.

17. Land cannot be acquired for collieries for workers' houses under the Land Acquisition Act. There are no facilities, and private arrangements for land have to be made. As property which a colliery holds for mining purposes is undermined in the course of extracting coal, many collieries find it very difficult to select and set apart suitable sites for houses. The concerns owning zemindaries have not this difficulty.

18. (i) Most quarters are in barrack form, but some are detached. Generally speaking, there are five different classes of quarters on the collieries; they are as follows:—(a) pucca, (b) pucca and kutcha-pucca (brick built in mud mortar) walls with Raniganj tiled roofs, (c) kutcha-pucca walls with ordinary country tiles, (d) kutcha-pucca walls with straw thatched roof, and (e) kutcha walls with straw thatched roof.

There are also some quarters with corrugated iron roofs. The several types of houses found in certain selected collieries is given in Statement I.

No class of labour, except perhaps the Sonthal, has any special choice for housing. Sonthals generally prefer to live in kutcha houses (mud built with thatched roof) in open plots of land away from others. These houses have not a single window, and not a ray of light enters into them. Small groups of these houses are built at the expense of the managements. But the Sonthals have not now any very strong objections to living in houses with pucca roofs and pucca or kutcha-pucca floors; many of them are actually living in such houses.

The workers do not object to live in back-to-back quarters, but such type of house is being replaced by other types as it has been declared unhealthy by the Asansol Mines Board of Health.

The quarters provided are suited to the workers' demands, and fulfil the minimum requirements of the rules laid down by the Asansol Mines Board of Health for the construction of quarters or "dhowrahs" as they are called.

(ii) The existing best types of houses are those built according to the plans and specifications of standard dhowrahs as laid down by the Asansol Mines Board of Health. These are considered to be best types of houses from the health point of view. The following are the specifications and requirements of the Mines Board of Health: (a) All dhowrahs of whatever material built must be weather-proof. (b) Each block of huts must be separated by at least 15 feet from the nearest block of huts either in the same line or parallel to such block. (c) The floor area of each room must be at least 96 square feet. (d) The air space in each living room must be at least 1,100 cubic feet. (e) The width of the verandah must be at least 7 feet. (f) Each room must have a door of at least 2½ feet by 6 feet dimensions and an open window in the wall opposite the door of not less than 4 square feet for securing through ventilation. The window should be built at a height not less than 7 feet from the floor level. (g) The plinth and floor level must be at least 1½ feet above ground level. (h) The construction of dhowrahs back-to-back is forbidden. Many of the existing dhowrahs have no windows and in the majority of houses the windows have been closed with bricks or tins. The miner does not see the necessity of having a window, especially when he finds the rain beating in through it.

(iii) Each miner is provided with a small unprotected smoking kerosine light; kerosine oil is supplied.

Good wells are provided for drinking water in different parts of the colliery.

There are no latrines except for the clerical staff. Workers prefer the open fields. Sweepers are employed to keep the premises clean.

Dustbins are provided under orders of the Mines Board of Health; these are generally used for collecting ash for the paddy fields.

Tanks are provided for bathing purposes.

20. All houses on the collieries are occupied free of rent.

22. Only one family lives in each quarter in one or more rooms as necessary. Housing conditions are not to any very great extent responsible for immorality. Some of the labour have not ordinarily a high moral code. Compound walls to each set of quarters may make an improvement with the privacy they would give, but they are not as a rule considered beneficial to health.

#### IV.—Health.

23. (ii) In the matter of birth rate and infant mortality the neighbouring villages are as much concerned as the collieries themselves, and the two cannot be separated for these figures. Very many of the outside female labourers go away to their native villages for the birth of their children, and the local labourers stay in the neighbouring villages. The birth rate and infant mortality for the whole mining settlement of Asansol for ten years (1918 to 1927) will be found in Statement J attached. The Asansol mining settlement has an area of 413 square miles, and in it there are about 263 collieries and 490 villages having a population of 329,356 and an approximate floating colliery population of 1,00,000.

The sanitary assistants of the Asansol Mines Board of Health are the recognized birth and death registrars for the above area. There are 13 sanitary assistants entrusted with this work. The municipalities of Asansol and Raniganj have their own arrangements. Each assistant obtains information of occurrences from the village chaukidars at the weekly chaukidari parade held at the police stations, and later personally verifies the reports. He also makes independent enquiries during his visits to the villages. A register of births and deaths is maintained by him, and he submits copies of it weekly to the board's office at Asansol, where a consolidated return is prepared for the whole settlement.

(iii) Working conditions at work places are on the whole satisfactory. Old arrangements are constantly being improved, and new and better arrangements made. Attention is given to ventilation and temperature. Humidity increases underground during the monsoons, as the air passing into the mine contains excessive moisture. This of course causes some discomfort. The larger mines have the advantage over the smaller mines as far as the arrangements underground are concerned. No discomfort worth the mentioning was experienced in the main galleries of the Ningah Mine, some 1,400 feet underground. It will not be out of place to say that the most up-to-date methods are being employed at this colliery, and excellent arrangements are being made for housing, welfare and the general comfort of workers of all classes.

The conditions at home are also good, and all collieries are improving the houses of workers—some rapidly and some very slowly. At two or three collieries visited there were complaints of water leaking through the roof; no great attention seems to be given to these little complaints. It should be added, however, that the visits were made during a period of very heavy rain daily. The miners earn just what they consider sufficient for their requirements and savings; many of them could earn very much more than they care to. They are consequently able to provide themselves with sufficient clothing and food.

(iv) Rice is the principal food of the workers. Some workers—generally all up-country men—eat the handbread made from flour. Dal and vegetables carried in oil are taken with the rice. Fruit is also eaten. Some workers eat meat, generally goat's flesh, but sometimes fowl. It is a great pity that the majority of the workers throw away or give to animals the rice water, though they probably all know its value, for nursing mothers sometimes drink it. The lower classes take country liquor which is brewed from boiled rice and which they consider essential to their diet; they will not, however, drink the fresh rice water.

The worker has two meals a day, and eats about three-fourths of a seer of rice each day. It costs a single person Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 a month to feed himself. The cost per head for a family is less.

(v) On the whole the workers are hardy, particularly the women. The people recruited from outside this subdivision—Sonthals, Koras, Bilaspuris, etc., have a better physique than the local low class Hindus who are called Bouris.

(vi) The Bouris class of labour are regarded as not having a very high moral code. The aboriginal labourers are rather better in this respect, and the Sonthals have very definite moral codes which are rigidly adhered to by the majority of the men and women.

(vii) It cannot be stated what part housing plays in connection with mortality as special observation has never been made. In the year 1922 the Asansol Mines Board of Health prepared standard plans for quarters according to hygienic requirements, and the collieries were required to adopt the same in all future constructions and renewals. A census taken three years later in 1925 showed that 14 per cent. of the houses conformed to standard plan. The percentage has considerably increased now.

The figures of mortality in the collieries are given below :—

| Year.      | Total number of deaths. | Year.      | Total number of deaths. |
|------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1920 .. .. | 1,716                   | 1924 .. .. | 960                     |
| 1921 .. .. | 1,445                   | 1925 .. .. | 669                     |
| 1922 .. .. | 1,055                   | 1926 .. .. | 959                     |
| 1923 .. .. | 970                     | 1927 .. .. | 724                     |

No specific relation between housing and mortality can be inferred from the available data ; all-round sanitary improvements were responsible for the decrease of mortality during the period shown. It can, however, be inferred that improved type of houses had something to do with the good results attained.

24. (i) Medical facilities are wholly provided by the employers. All collieries have medical men, mostly of the sub-assistant surgeon class, and have well equipped dispensaries. Groups of collieries have a senior medical officer. Some collieries have hospitals also, and all have isolation huts. All medical attendance is free. There are trained men for ambulance and first aid work.

(ii) There are no medical facilities provided by Government.

(iii) There is an excellent hospital with dispensary in Asansol town, aided by the municipality and the district board of Burdwan with a Government assistant surgeon in charge. Some colliery accident cases are sent to this hospital. The Asansol Mines Board of Health, which is maintained by cesses on collieries calculated on raisings and by cesses on royalty receivers, has a fully qualified health officer and a staff of qualified inspectors and assistants whose main duty it is to procure proper observance of the regulations and rules for general health and the prevention of epidemic diseases. Free vaccination is done by the vaccination staff of the board. Midwives employed by the board attend women at childbirth free of charge when called in or informed.

(iv) A few collieries are reported to employ dais or village midwives temporarily to look after their female labour for a week during the lying-in period.

The Asansol Mines Board of Health has a staff of three midwives whose work is to visit houses and give *ante* and *post natal* advice and assistance to women requiring it. This small staff is not able to render very much assistance beyond a limited area. It is worth considering whether maternity aid should be made one of the functions of the Board of Health under the Bengal Mining Settlements Act.

25. (i) Generally speaking, medical facilities are utilized freely by all labour. Only some of the outside recruited labour do not care about such facilities ; people like the Sonthals prefer to take their own herbs, and when these have no effect they go to the dispensary.

(ii) The above applies to women as well as men.

26. (i) There are no latrines at work places. There are specified places for fouling underground when necessary. Sweepers clean up or earth is put over the foul matter. There are no latrines at home, as already stated.

(ii) Running water is obtainable underground. There are wells for drinking water, as has already been stated.

(iii) Good tanks are provided for bathing purposes.

27. (i) The Asansol Mines Board of Health was appointed by the local Government for the Asansol Mining Settlement. The board consists of the following nine members :—Four *ex-officio* members—the district magistrate of Burdwan, the sub-divisional officer of Asansol, the civil surgeon of Burdwan, and the chief inspector of mines in India ; four members nominated by owners of mines or their representatives ; one member nominated by receivers of royalties, rents or fines from mines.

The Board's sanitary staff consists of a fully qualified health officer called the chief sanitary officer, 6 sanitary inspectors, 13 sanitary assistants, 3 anti-malarial investigators, 3 midwives, and a sub-assistant surgeon in charge of school hygiene.

The following are the Board's outdoor activities :—(1) Notification of epidemics ; (2) suppression of epidemics ; (3) vaccination ; (4) collection of vital statistics ; (5) anti-malarial investigation ; (6) provision of burning ghats and burial grounds ; (7) improvement of water supplies ; (8) lectures on elementary hygiene to school children ; (9) medical inspection of school children ; (10) provision for aid to women in childbirth ; (11) education of the public on health, etc. ; (12) miscellaneous.

The details of each of these items of work are given in the attached Statement I. The beneficial results of the work carried on by the Mines Board of Health are well known.

(ii) *Inspection of Plantations.*—All mines are regularly inspected by the chief sanitary officer and the Board's inspecting staff. Officers of the Department of Mines do not make special inspections regarding health, but during the course of the ordinary inspections note whether local government rules made under Section 30 of the Indian Mines Act are being observed.

29. (i) Industrial diseases are practically non-existent among the mine worker. There may be some cases of miners' nystagmus, but none have come to the notice of the managements or the health officers.

The number of cases of anæmia reported from collieries during the year 1927 was 13 and there were 9 deaths.

Accidents in 1928 and respiratory disease during that year have been shown in the attached Statement L.

(ii) The main work of the Mines Board of Health is to fight cholera and smallpox which diseases occur from time to time in epidemic form. Cases of malaria have been considerably reduced by the activities of the Board's staff. The attached Statement M shows the number of cases of cholera, smallpox and malaria, and the number of deaths from cholera and smallpox for a period of ten years (1918 to 1927). This statement is for collieries only. As a large number of the workers live in the villages within the mining settlement, a similar statement for cholera and smallpox has been prepared and is attached (Statement N) ; only cases of these two diseases are reported and investigated by the Board's staff as far as the non-mining are concerned.

The majority of the labour is infected with hookworm, but Ankylostomiasis as a result of it has been rarely reported. Hookworm is prevalent throughout all classes of labour in India, and is not confined to the mines. Kala-Azar is not known here.

Figures, as reported from the collieries, of cases of leprosy and filariasis, the other two tropical diseases common in the mining settlement, would be no criterion of their actual prevalence. There are a very large number of cases in this sub-division. It will not be out of place to mention that the leper asylum at Raniganj is doing excellent work to relieve and cure and care for sufferers from the dread disease of leprosy. This good work is limited for the want of funds.

31. The collieries have no schemes for maternity benefits. The women usually go home. Some collieries pay 4 annas a day for subsistence while the woman is absent from work, but still on the colliery premises. Some collieries pay Re. 1 in the case of a male child and 8 annas in the case of a girl born on the colliery.

There seems to be room for legislation to provide for a period of compulsory leave, the payment of a reasonable bonus or a daily subsistence allowance during the period of absence and also for adequate and expert attention. Provision for the last item is very necessary as the untrained local dais or village midwives frequently do a deal of harm by their unscientific and unclean methods.

#### V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

34. (i) There are no provisions for refreshments and creches. Workers supply their own food. Most collieries allow a vendor of groceries to occupy one of the goat's pens with the convenience of the workers. There are Government liquor shops, throw away or give to for most collieries. Unoccupied quarters are used as shelters, value, for nursing mothers collieries will be found a football field, a football club and a which is brewed from boiled the clerical staff that benefits by these. The miners may they will not, however, drink it but they apparently do not care about it, probably The worker has two meals a day backward to join in with the clerical staff and superior each day. It costs a single person to induce or encourage the miners to participate in any per head for a family is less. tion. In one or two collieries there are attempts

at sports for feats of skill and strength. There is a story told that a manager once held some sports for miners and that when the village champion was defeated by a man of a rival village in one of the events there was a regular riot. That manager did not make another attempt at sports. The lack of education was responsible for the trouble.

The Mingah colliery, mentioned previously, is making provision for a good sports ground for the workmen. But this colliery has no use for the Sonthal labourer and employs other classes of labour.

35. The results achieved are nil as far as the miner is concerned. The clerks and some boys from schools which are given footballs occasionally and small donations by certain collieries, get a certain amount of exercise and recreation.

36. There are no provisions for educational facilities by employers. There is no such institution as a colliery school with the exception of one school or perhaps two schools. One of these schools was visited; it was the Ghusick Colliery School. It was pleasing to find boys of only the poorer and lower classes at this school. The classes are accommodated in a building of the colliery. There are 51 boys, all of whom are sons of men working on the colliery, many being coal-cutters' sons.

There are village schools throughout the mining settlement and some of the miners' boys attend these schools. Some collieries pay Rs. 2 or more to some of these institutions. The Borera village has 29 boys and 4 girls, who read in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes; 15 of them are miners' sons. The Boria colliery gives the school Rs. 2 a month. In the Jamuria School, on the other hand, only 2 boys are miners' sons of a total of some 40 boys. The Rai Sahib U.N. Mandal Primary School newly opened at Sanctoria, has some sirdars' sons, but 50 per cent. of the boys are the sons of colliery clerical and medical staffs.

#### VI.—Education.

40. As has been stated above, there are village schools throughout the mining settlement. There are also middle schools and high schools in this area. There are 9 high English schools, 11 middle English schools, 180 primary schools (village schools), 45 Madrassahs and mukhtabs for Muhammadans, 3 tols for Sanskrit, within the mining settlement. The boys of all classes of workers are at liberty to attend any of these schools.

41. There is one industrial school; it is run by the mission at Ranigunge. Carpentry is taught.

42. Practically none of the workers are educated. Their standard of living and their industrial efficiency would certainly improve. The worker does not realize the necessity of improvement. As more machinery and improved methods of working are introduced and when the elimination of women from underground is complete, the worker must move with the times and improve himself. If he does not, the present class of labour will probably not find employment on the coalfields. In the present time, as has already been noted, one colliery has no use for the Sonthal.

The following true stories related by a colliery manager will show the necessity for, and the effect of, education. Both the incidents referred to in the stories occurred on his colliery. The manager, after some trouble, induced a miner to bring down a large quantity of coal by under-cutting and side-cutting and firing a few shots. The miner was very pleased to see the quantity of coal, but was worried about the loss he thought he would incur during the period of preparation prior to the coal coming down. The manager did his best to put his mind at rest on this point. Then the miner found it was impossible for his wife, who was working with him, to remove all that coal herself. The manager advised him to get others to assist in removing the coal. But the miner did not see the point of this at all, his contention was that no one beside his wife and himself should get any benefit from the coal which he had taken the trouble to bring down. Thereafter he would have nothing to do with this method of working, but went back to his old method of cutting and bringing down just enough coal for his wife to remove.

The other story is equally interesting. The manager had two Sonthal brothers who were young coal-cutters. They left him and went to a school. Some time later one of the boys returned. He was apparently taking a little more interest in himself as far as personal appearances went. He asked for work. The manager offered him the work of a coal-cutter. The young man refused this and said that he had bettered himself by going to school and was above cutting coal along with the uneducated people, and begged to be given some other work. The manager put him on to the electric pump and trained him to work it. He was very pleased to get that work and did very well. Moreover, he took a keen interest in all machinery, and used to watch the manager whenever the latter examined and attended to machinery.

There are indications that workers would welcome schools to which their children could be sent. Sonthals at a certain colliery headed by a man who had received a small education complained that there was no school in the vicinity of their colliery.

### IX.—Hours.

#### B.—Mines.

63. (i) Underground labour attend work from six to nine hours a day in most collieries by custom—some miners preferring to work at night and some during the day. Other labourers attend work from six to ten hours a day and surface labourers take a couple of hours off for meals. They work for about 50 hours a week. Outside labour work for longer hours.

(ii) The number of hours that a miner actually works is four or five; he is resting the rest of the time. He comes and goes when he likes. Other labour, such as engineers, winding men, firemen, etc., are at work during the whole period of their attendance; but their work is intermittent.

(iii) Workers are on call only during the actual hours that they stay to work. The engineering staff is always on call in case of emergencies and accidents.

64. Underground workers work four to five days per week and the surface workers five to six days. Miners who do not stop on the colliery but live at their homes some distance away come to the mine two or three times a week and return home after doing double shifts.

65. The present restrictions are 54 hours for underground work and 60 hours for surface work; furthermore the mines are closed for one day in the week.

(i) Formerly a proportion of the miners used to come in and work daily, some resting one day and others another; but now the supervising staff, haulage staff, etc., have a day of rest. Labour do not appreciate the restrictions as more "actual" work has to be put in. Local labour living at a distance in some cases experience difficulty. But actually, on the whole, the effect of restrictions is practically nil, as the workers never worked for the full number of hours a week allowed them (i.e., 60 and 54 hours). Their earnings have not been reduced, but their attendances have not increased.

(ii) The industry has not suffered, and the output per man shift has not been adversely affected; as a matter of fact the output has risen. Machine coal-cutters are probably responsible for the increase in a measure.

In some cases expenditure may be increased to engage extra men; but on the other hand it is more economical to work a colliery for six days a week instead of seven days, since the same quantity of coal is raised in six days as in seven and the wages for the seventh day of trammers, haulage bands and others are saved.

66. As the miner never works the full period during which he is underground, the maxima could be reduced without adversely affecting the output. If the hours per week are reduced, the hours per day must necessarily be reduced also. This would necessitate the introduction of three shifts of eight hours each. The miner would have to improve his attendances and work for more days a week than he does at present. A reduction of the maxima would, however, hit the local non-resident miner living six to eight miles away. He would probably continue coming in two or three times as usual and work his double shifts each time by doing one shift in one mine and a second shift under another name in an adjoining mine.

67. The above applies to the introduction of shifts. As long as all the labour is not resident, it is considered undesirable and perhaps impossible to introduce a regular system of shifts. It must be remembered that the workers are primarily agriculturists, and those living at a distance would require a certain amount of elasticity of hours; they would not leave their homes to live on collieries. The workers being illiterate and undisciplined do not understand the necessity for punctuality. The advantages of a regular shift system are acknowledged, but it is generally felt that this is not the proper time to introduce it and that the law relating to shifts which limits the daily working hours to 12 is sufficient for the present.

It has yet to be seen what the effect of elimination of women from underground will be as it proceeds.

68. There is already a provision for daily limitation of hours to 12. The law on the subject will be in force in 1930. It is generally considered that it is neither desirable nor advisable to make any further limitation at present. What has been said above (*vide* (66)) applies here also. Regular shifts and the limitation of hours coming on top of the elimination of women from underground will turn most of the miners away from the collieries, as, they being ignorant, will not understand the object of new legislation and will not appreciate any advantages that may result.

69. (i) Workers take rest and intervals when they like. The miner underground spends a good deal of his time resting.

(ii) Two hours in the day (12 noon to 2 p.m.) are allowed for meals and rest. But the miners underground as a rule do not require or take an interval for meals; they have a meal in the morning and another in the evening, to which they are accustomed.

(iii) All the festivals, all Sundays or days of rest, and generally the weekly market days are taken as holidays. The number of days of religious festivals and Sundays is 76 in the year. Miners take any day off they like. These holidays do not include the long periods taken for cultivation purposes and marriages.

71. The existing provisions are considered suitable by all, as the rule *re* 12 hours' maximum shift is considered sufficient safeguard against the exploitation of labour. The number of hours per shift may be reduced later when the miners have become accustomed to working under the 12-hour rule. Some managers are wisely trying to regulate the coming on and going off of workers to get them accustomed to regular shifts. Punctuality has been achieved in certain cases, but labour from distant villages require some elasticity in hours.

72. The exempting provisions under Section 25 of the Indian Mines Act are considered quite adequate. Little use has been made of them when only the number of hours worked per week are restricted at present. The provision will be taken advantage of on more occasions of emergency and breakdowns when the hours worked per day are restricted.

### **X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.**

#### *B.—Mines.*

90. The Act of 1923 has been applied successfully and strictly. It has not diminished the number of women going underground. The elimination of children is generally considered a correct move. The provisions are rarely put into operation as the managers do not employ any child about whose age the inspector may have some doubt.

91. (i) 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 in mines and not suited to women. It is feared in some quarters that State quarries will benefit at the expense of private concerns. The regulations are expected to improve the industry later.

(ii) The effect on industry will probably not be apparent for 2 or 3 years. A few smaller collieries are feeling the effect already, and consider the regulations neither desirable nor necessary. Collieries that have coal-cutting machines do not feel it. Modern methods of loading coal by machinery will be introduced by all well-equipped collieries and working systems will have to be modified to meet the new conditions. Mines that do not equip with modern devices will not be able to compete with those that do. There will be an increase in the cost of production and some shortage of labour for a while.

(iii) The miners, including women, are dissatisfied with the regulations. The miner will earn less and will demand an increase of wages. To make up the loss of the earnings of his wife he will have to be more regular and work harder. With the introduction of more up to date methods of mining the present-day class of miner will gradually disappear from the mines and will be replaced by quite a different class of miner, a class that is educated a bit and skilled. There will be a certain amount of hardship at first for families and especially for unattached women, but they will probably turn to tea gardens for an occupation.

(iv) It is generally considered that the time fixed is sufficient for the industry to adapt itself to the new conditions, but at the same time it is considered that the time should be much shorter, so that whatever dislocation there might be, may be faced and overcome as soon as possible.

### **XII.—Wages.**

96. (i) The average daily earnings in the mine field of this sub-division during the year 1927, will be found on page 5 of the annual report of the chief inspector of mines in India for 1927. The earnings in 1928, were more or less the same, there being a decrease in the case of some classes of labour and a slight increase for other classes.

99. All payments are in cash. Besides, wage workers are given free houses, coal, oil, tools and medical attendance. They also receive "baksheesh" on occasions of festivals, and an allowance for grog for a birth or a death in a family. Some receive extra rates for special days, Mondays. On some mines settled labourers are given land free of rent or a donation in lieu thereof.



109. There are no bonus or profit-sharing schemes in force. Varying commissions are paid for good work by most collieries; the miner, for instance, in some collieries is paid at the end of the week 9 pies per ton on the coal cut by him. The supervising staff of some collieries receive a bonus at the end of the year.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. The subordinate supervising staff is now more efficient through the added requirements of the law relating to mines and through additional educational facilities provided. There has been a marked improvement in the last 10 years in the efficiency of skilled Indian workers, such as enginemen, pumpmen, mechanics and electricians.

There has been no change in the mine workers due to their objection to, and disregard for, more scientific methods of coal-cutting. They have no sense of personal duty or responsibility. Statistics show a gradual increase in the output per person employed in Indian coal mines, but the improvement is due to the greater use of coal-cutting machinery, and the large outputs won from recently developed open quarries. No increase is apparent in comparatively deep mines.

113. The mine worker in India is lazy and considerably less efficient and skilful than those in other countries. The worker here has immense possibilities of producing large outputs provided by the nature and the comfortable working conditions that obtain generally underground, but the worker is inefficient, suspicious of innovations and reluctant to try new methods of mining. His prolonged absences for agricultural purposes, his insistence on observing innumerable feasts and ceremonies, his low vitality, his lack of ambition and his laziness, all effect the efficiency of the Indian mine worker. The only foreign worker found here is the Chinese carpenter who is far superior to any Indian carpenter.

#### Statement F.—Labour Turnover.

*Average normal staff and recruitments in certain selected collieries.*

| Colliery.   | Annual normal staff.                             |   | Number recruited in the year.               |         |                           |         |
|---|--|---|---|---------|---------------------------|---------|
|   |  |   | Burdwan district.                           |         | Other districts.          |         |
|   | Male.  | Female.   | Male.                                       | Female. | Male.                     | Female. |
| Joyramdanga .. ..   | 235<br>(Permanent force).<br>100<br>(Recruited). | 165<br>(Permanent force).<br>50<br>(Recruited). | 60  | 30      | 140                       | 70      |
| Victoria .. ..  | 884  | 381   | Nil.  | Nil.    | 269                       | 174     |
| Central Kajora .. ..  | 210  | 106   | 80  | 75      | 325                       | 200     |
| Jote Dhemo .. ..  | 187  | 115   | 50  | 45      | 463                       | 241     |
| Searsole .. ..  | 166  | 64  | 100   | 50      | 260                       | 150     |
| Kuardi .. ..  | 60   | 40  | Nil.  | Nil.    | 75                        | 25      |
| Jambad .. ..  | 203  | 48  | 159<br>(male and female).                   |         | 411<br>(male and female). |         |
| Sodepur, pits 9 and 10<br>Sitalpur .. ..<br>Choto Dhemo .. .. | 2,450<br>(male and female).                      |   | 3,384<br>(male and female, all localities). |         |                           |         |

## Statement G.

Casual employment during a year in certain selected collieries.

| Colliery.                      | Number of workers on casual employment.   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Dishergarh .. .. .             | A very small number every year. A few are employed for brick making, hut repairing, and earth cutting. Twenty persons for periods varying between 1 week and 3 or 4 months. |
| Aldih .. .. .                  |   |
| Joyramdanga .. .. .            |   |
| Victoria .. .. .               | Less than 1 per cent.   |
| Sodepur, pits 9 and 10 .. .. . | Approximately 1 per cent. of the whole labour.  |
| Sitalpur .. .. .               |   |
| Choto Dhemo .. .. .            |   |
| Central Kajora .. .. .         |   |
| Jote Dhemo .. .. .             |   |
| Kuardi .. .. .                 | 53 persons.   |
| Jambad .. .. .                 | 15 males and 25 females.  |
| Searsole .. .. .               | 3 per cent. of the whole labour.  |
| Jamuria .. .. .                | About 250. Several new quarters are being constructed.  |
| Sibpore .. .. .                | 10 males and 25 females.  |
| Bara Dhemo .. .. .             | 30 or 40 persons.   |
|                                | Very little.  |
|                                | Ditto.  |

## Statement H.

Houses provided by employers at collieries and by workers in their villages.

| Colliery.                      | By employers. By workers. |           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
|                                | Per cent.                 | Per cent. |
| Dishergarh .. .. .             | 85                        | 15        |
| Aldih .. .. .                  | 80                        | 20        |
| Victoria .. .. .               | 95                        | 5         |
| Sodepur, pits 9 and 10 .. .. . | 90                        | 10        |
| Sitalpur .. .. .               | 90 about                  | 10 about  |
| Choto Dhemo .. .. .            | 90                        | 10        |
| Central Kajora .. .. .         | 86                        | 14        |
| Kuardi .. .. .                 | 50                        | 50        |
| Jambad .. .. .                 | 95                        | 5         |
| Searsole .. .. .               | 80                        | 20        |
| Jamuria .. .. .                | 100                       | Nil.      |
| Sibpore .. .. .                | 100                       | Nil.      |
| Bara Dhemo .. .. .             | 73                        | 27        |

## Statement I.

Showing different types of houses and the number of each type in certain selected collieries.

| Colliery.                      | Roof.     |        |        |             | Walls.  |        |               | Floor.              |        |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|-------------|---------|--------|---------------|---------------------|--------|
|                                | Thatched. | Tiled. | Pucca. | Corrugated. | Cutcha. | Pucca. | Cutcha-pucca. | Cutcha.             | Pucca. |
| Dishergarh .. .. .             | 800       | 150    | 40     | Nil.        | 800     | 40     | 150           | 950                 | 40     |
| Aldih .. .. .                  | 238       | 164    | 26     | Nil.        | 238     | 26     | 164           | 428                 | Nil.   |
| Joyramdanga .. .. .            | 50        | 12     | 20     | Nil.        | 50      | 32     | Nil.          | 62                  | 20     |
| Sodepur, pits 9 and 10 .. .. . | 150       | 200    | 140    | Nil.        | 100     | Nil.   | 390           | 490                 | Nil.   |
| Sitalpur .. .. .               | 364       | 170    | 87     | Nil.        | 364     | 257    | Nil.          | 621                 | Nil.   |
| Choto Dhemo .. .. .            | 180       | 40     | Nil.   | Nil.        | 180     | Nil.   | 40            | 220                 | Nil.   |
| Central Kajora .. .. .         | 20        | 42     | Nil.   | 4           | Nil.    | Nil.   | 66            | 48                  | 18     |
| Jote Dhemo .. .. .             | 35        | 36     | Nil.   | 31          | Nil.    | Nil.   | 102           | All but few cutcha. |        |
| Kuardi .. .. .                 | 177       | 100    | 30     | Nil.        | 30      | 277    | Nil.          | 277                 | 30     |
| Jambad .. .. .                 | 9         | 99     | 50     | 28          | Nil.    | 50     | 136           | All but few cutcha. |        |
| Searsole .. .. .               | 5         | 113    | Nil.   | 5           | 5       | Nil.   | 118           | 123                 | Nil.   |
| Jamuria .. .. .                | 600       | 45     | 21     | Nil.        | 600     | 66     | Nil.          | 600                 | 66     |
| Sibpore .. .. .                | 692       | 280    | Nil.   | 70          | 692     | 350    | Nil.          | 942                 | 100    |
| Bara Dhemo .. .. .             | 50        | 130    | Nil.   | 16          | 50      | Nil.   | 146           | 196                 | Nil.   |

## Statement J.

*Birth rate and infant mortality for ten years in the Asansol Mining Settlement.*

| Year.                        | Birth rate<br>per<br>1,000. | Infant<br>mortality<br>per 1,000. |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1918 .. .. .                 | 28·6                        | 169                               |
| 1919 .. .. .                 | 23·6                        | 141                               |
| 1920 .. .. .                 | 25·3                        | 147                               |
| 1921 .. .. .                 | 25·1                        | 171                               |
| 1922 .. .. .                 | 28·0                        | 146                               |
| 1923 .. .. .                 | 26·1                        | 154                               |
| 1924 .. .. .                 | 26·0                        | 146                               |
| 1925 .. .. .                 | 28·9                        | 117                               |
| 1926 .. .. .                 | 27·7                        | 137                               |
| 1927 .. .. .                 | 24·2                        | 133                               |
| Average for 10 years .. .. . | 26·3                        | 146·1                             |

## Statement K.

*Extent and nature of work done by the Asansol Mines Board of Health.*

1. *Notification of epidemics.*—The chief epidemic diseases in the settlement are cholera and small-pox. Under the regulations for the prevention and control of these diseases as formulated in the Bengal Mining Settlements Act—(a) it is incumbent on the owner, agent, or the manager in the colliery areas to immediately notify the occurrences of cases of either disease by sending a special messenger with notification to the nearest member of the Board's outdoor staff; (b) it devolves on the male member of a house in the non-mining areas to notify within 24 hours either personally or by the village choukidar the occurrence of cases of either disease.

Prompt notification and location of cases are further facilitated (1) by the reward of Re. 1 which is given for supplying first information of the occurrence of these cases, (2) by supplying choukidars with coloured printed cards—red for notifying cases of cholera and blue for notifying cases of small-pox—with the name of choukidar entered on the card by the assistant, the location of the case becoming easy even if the assistant is out on his round and the choukidar is thus unable to report to him verbally as the card is left behind, and (3) by making it compulsory for medical men to notify immediately those cases which they attend.

2. *Suppression of epidemics.*—The spread of cholera is prevented by the closing and chlorination of contaminated water courses and by guarding drinking water supplies, by the disinfection of the patient's dejecta and by the systematic administration of the prophylactic the Essential Oils Cholera Mixture to all house contacts.

In the case of small-pox besides isolation of the patient—possible only on collieries—wholesale vaccinations and re-vaccinations of the contacts and those residing in the neighbourhood successfully check all outbreaks, mild or severe.

3. *Vaccination.*—All children born within the mining settlement have to be successfully vaccinated by the sanitary assistant before the age of 1 year. The sanitary assistant maintains for this purpose a register in which the births of all children in his circle are recorded week by week, village by village, he being the officially declared birth registrar of the area.

4. *Collection of vital statistics.*—The vital statistics are collected by the sanitary assistants through the village choukidars during the weekly choukidari parade held at the police station. The assistant verifies these occurrences during the week by

personally visiting the villages. He also makes enquiries in each village in his area, which he usually visits once a month, regarding any births or deaths which may not have been reported by the choukidar. A permanent register of corrected returns of births and deaths is maintained by the sanitary assistant, who submits copies of it weekly to the Board's office, thus making the preparation of a consolidated return for the whole settlement possible.

5. *Anti-malarial investigation.*—Throughout the malarious season of the year when any outbreak of fever is reported the anti-malarial investigator is sent to the area to ascertain the splenic index and to examine all tanks and water courses in and around the area with a view to discover which of them is infested with malaria carrying Anopheline larvæ. Clearing of such tanks of weeds either by the well-to-do owners at the request of the chief sanitary officer or by the Board has led to the subsidence of fever and usually to very satisfactory results.

6. *Provision of burning ghats and burial grounds.*—Before the establishment of the Board cholera was frequently spread in the settlement by contamination of the rivers, as corpses of those who died of cholera were buried in the river bed sand or thrown uncremated or partially cremated into the streams. The Board, being so empowered under the Act, selected the most suitable of the existing sites commonly used as cremation grounds—burning ghats—in the settlement and gave them "recognition" and closed the remainder. These burning ghats are kept in sanitary order by the sanitary assistants with a staff of Domes employed by the Board. It is the duty of the latter to see that all bodies are thoroughly cremated or effectively buried. The cost of such cremation of cholera corpses has sometimes to be borne by the Board to prevent contamination of water courses.

7. *Improvement of water-supplies.*—(a) The chief sanitary officer recommends the most sanitary sites for wells which the local board wish to excavate in the villages in the mining area. More than half the villages now possess local board wells. These wells, besides being inspected by local board officers are regularly inspected by the staff of the Mines Board of Health, who report on their condition.

(b) Recommendation for the construction of wells for the provision of drinking water on the collieries is made to the management by the chief sanitary officer. The construction of such wells has to conform to the standard sanitary plan laid down by the Board. The Mines Board does not contribute anything towards the cost of construction or maintenance of either these wells or the local board wells.

(c) During the epidemic season tanks are reserved with the consent of the owners for drinking or bathing purposes, and contaminated water supplies are sterilized and guarded at the board's expense.

8. *Lectures on elementary hygiene to school children.*—These lectures are delivered weekly by the sanitary assistant in the primary schools of his circle. A primer on elementary hygiene in simple language compiled by the chief sanitary officer is distributed free to all scholars. The pupils are periodically examined on the subject-matter of the primer and prizes are distributed annually to the boy or girl in each school who is best acquainted with the subject.

9. *Medical inspection of school children.*—A qualified Sub-Assistant Surgeon is employed for this purpose. Common defects of children of the school-going age in the settlement are thus ascertained. In the case of a child being found defective a report is sent to the guardian suggesting the remedy, which is not infrequently profited by when the guardian is literate.

10. *Provision for aid to women in childbirth.*—A staff of three midwives is maintained by the Board. No charges are made. The work of the midwives lies almost entirely among the colliery population. They visit houses and give *ante* and *post natal* advice and assistance to women requiring it.

11. *Education of the public on health, etc.*—(a) During the cold weather and time of epidemic, lectures on public health illustrated by magic-lantern slides are delivered by the sanitary inspectors.

(b) The midwives when visiting the houses of women deliver simple lectures on domestic hygiene and cleanliness.

(c) Baby shows are held annually in selected places.

12. *Miscellaneous.*—(a) Sanitary precautions are taken by the Board's staff at annual fairs and festivals in the settlement.

(b) The Board's inspecting staff looks into the sanitary conditions of the pachwai shops and recommends improvements when necessary.

## Statement L.

| Name of month.  | Respiratory diseases. |         |                 |         |                  |         |                |         |        |         | Acci-<br>dents. |         |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|------------------|---------|----------------|---------|--------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|                 | Influenza.            |         | Pneu-<br>monia. |         | Bron-<br>chitis. |         | Phthi-<br>sis. |         | Total. |         |                 |         |
|                 | Cases.                | Deaths. | Cases.          | Deaths. | Cases.           | Deaths. | Cases.         | Deaths. | Cases. | Deaths. | Cases.          | Deaths. |
| 1928.           |                       |         |                 |         |                  |         |                |         |        |         |                 |         |
| January .. ..   | 53                    | —       | 41              | 13      | 254              | 7       | 2              | 1       | 350    | 21      | 405             | 3       |
| February .. ..  | 171                   | —       | 65              | 20      | 314              | 7       | 2              | 1       | 552    | 28      | 475             | 1       |
| March .. ..     | 484                   | —       | 90              | 31      | 336              | 7       | 2              | 1       | 912    | 39      | 417             | 5       |
| April .. ..     | 296                   | —       | 83              | 27      | 229              | 4       | 3              | 2       | 611    | 33      | 389             | 4       |
| May .. ..       | 65                    | —       | 53              | 27      | 181              | 3       | 7              | 4       | 306    | 34      | 345             | 7       |
| June .. ..      | 32                    | —       | 35              | 11      | 168              | 1       | 2              | 1       | 237    | 13      | 430             | 2       |
| July .. ..      | 61                    | 1       | 32              | 12      | 232              | 7       | 2              | 1       | 327    | 21      | 264             | —       |
| August .. ..    | 134                   | —       | 40              | 14      | 257              | 4       | 5              | 1       | 436    | 19      | 304             | 3       |
| September .. .. | 202                   | —       | 22              | 9       | 104              | 2       | 2              | 1       | 330    | 12      | 233             | 1       |
| October .. ..   | 442                   | —       | 57              | 15      | 308              | 4       | 3              | —       | 810    | 19      | 336             | 9       |
| November .. ..  | 8                     | —       | 38              | 14      | 232              | 1       | 2              | 2       | 280    | 17      | 272             | 1       |
| December .. ..  | 32                    | —       | 51              | 18      | 182              | 3       | 3              | 2       | 268    | 23      | 247             | 3       |
| Total .. ..     | 1,980                 | 1       | 607             | 211     | 2,797            | 50      | 35             | 17      | 5,419  | 279     | 4,117           | 39      |

## Statement M.

Showing the number of cases and deaths from cholera, small-pox and malaria in the mining area.

| Year.      | Cholera. |         | Small-pox. |         | Malaria. |
|------------|----------|---------|------------|---------|----------|
|            | Cases.   | Deaths. | Cases.     | Deaths. | Cases.   |
| 1918 .. .. | 182      | 82      | 29         | 4       | 20,865   |
| 1919 .. .. | 1,849    | 949     | 73         | 2       | 27,066   |
| 1920 .. .. | 113      | 45      | 201        | 14      | 21,440   |
| 1921 .. .. | 260      | 119     | 22         | 2       | 21,704   |
| 1922 .. .. | 99       | 46      | 24         | —       | 23,982   |
| 1923 .. .. | 112      | 60      | 11         | —       | 20,769   |
| 1924 .. .. | 205      | 115     | 17         | 3       | 20,549   |
| 1925 .. .. | 51       | 22      | 76         | 6       | 13,089   |
| 1926 .. .. | 247      | 162     | 684        | 65      | 9,640    |
| 1927 .. .. | 75       | 30      | 126        | 11      | 9,475    |

## Statement N.

Showing the number of cholera and small-pox cases and deaths in the non-mining area.

| Year.      | Cholera. |         | Small-pox. |         |
|------------|----------|---------|------------|---------|
|            | Cases.   | Deaths. | Cases.     | Deaths. |
| 1918 .. .. | 260      | 143     | 51         | 3       |
| 1919 .. .. | 1,662    | 852     | 125        | 11      |
| 1920 .. .. | 255      | 125     | 594        | 51      |
| 1921 .. .. | 990      | 498     | 52         | 8       |
| 1922 .. .. | 252      | 123     | 28         | —       |
| 1923 .. .. | 233      | 123     | 43         | 5       |
| 1924 .. .. | 330      | 202     | 58         | 7       |
| 1925 .. .. | 143      | 67      | 586        | 77      |
| 1926 .. .. | 744      | 408     | 1,053      | 131     |
| 1927 .. .. | 213      | 90      | 416        | 61      |

### INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (BENGAL PROVINCIAL BRANCH).

(The Welfare Department of the Society is affiliated to the Bengal Council of Women.)

#### V.—Welfare.

32. The Titaghur Mills Welfare Centre has functioned since 1924.

Messrs. Jardine, Skinner & Co. established a welfare centre at their Kankinarrah Jute Mills in 1926.

The Reliance Mill Welfare Centre was opened on 15th October, 1929.

The plans of a Model Bustie Welfare Centre have been approved, which Messrs. Bird & Co. will erect in connection with their "Kinnison" and "Standard" Mills at Titaghur, in the near future.

The advantage of the Bustie clinics.—It will be a building of the same type as the homes of the employees, and the people will be shown that it is possible to keep them clean and sanitary, which is so important in maintaining health. It is anticipated that the Bustie Clinic will be the type used by mills where the employees live outside the mill lines.

These welfare centres are run under the auspices of the Bengal Branch Red Cross Health Welfare Division.

The Kesoram Mills Management is contemplating a welfare centre.

The Dacca Maternity Trust has carried on maternity and child welfare work since the end of the war.

Darjeeling Welfare Centre has functioned since 1924.

Under the Health Welfare Division of the Bengal Provincial Branch, Indian Red Cross Society, the following welfare centres function in Calcutta:—The St. John Ambulance Sisters' Clinic for Anglo-Indians, since March, 1921; The National Indian Association Clinic since May, 1921; The Northern Centre Clinic since March, 1922; The Kidderpore Centre since December, 1922; The Entally Clinic since July, 1923.

In the Mofussil Districts.—Orakandi Welfare Centre opened March, 1929; Chapra Welfare Centre will start January, 1930; Ratanpore Welfare Centre will start January, 1930.

33. These welfare centres are conducted by qualified health visitors.

34. The women and children attend the welfare centres and clinics. The former are advised as to the proper feeding of and rearing their children; childish ailments are treated, anything more serious is referred to the mills medical officer. The children are bathed. Sewing classes are held for women and children. The women are visited in their lines and are advised on the best way of keeping their homes clean and food protected.

The very important subject of ante-natal care has special attention. All child-bearing women are examined and advised as to the best way of maintaining their health in their condition. These women receive maternity benefit, i.e., receive pay, but are exempted from work for four weeks after confinement.

The instruction of indigenous Dais is an important part of the work. Classes are held and these Dais instructed in the best and most sanitary methods of conducting confinements.

#### VII.—Safety.

46. The Bengal Provincial Branch, St. John Ambulance Association, carries out extensive propaganda by the means of instruction to the employees of mines, railways, docks, tramways, etc., and the general public in "First Aid" and prevention of accidents.

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Mr. W. J. HERRIDGE, MANAGER, CALCUTTA CLAIMS BUREAU,  
CALCUTTA, ON WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

I give evidence on behalf of (1) the Calcutta Claims Bureau, of which I am manager; (2) the Calcutta Accident Insurance Association; and (3) the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

The Calcutta Claims Bureau was set up by most of the leading insurance companies in the Calcutta area, with effect from 1st July, 1924, especially to handle Workmen's Compensation claims on behalf of employers who insure their liability to pay compensation under the Act with those companies.

51. (i) *Extent of use.*—The Act is now fairly generally known in all the larger industrial areas throughout the country, but is still unknown to workmen and employers in most of the less important areas and in rural areas in the mofussil. Experience shows that the Act is made greater use of in the three Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras which have, with certain minor exceptions in the case of Bombay, appointed one official as commissioner for the whole Presidency whereas, in the other Provinces, the district official is usually the commissioner appointed under the Act in his local jurisdiction. Thus, the appointment of a single official for the Presidency as a whole has done much to make the Act better known, more capably administered, and reduce to a considerable extent delay in the disposal of cases. The appointment of such an official is, therefore, much to be commended.

Trade union officials, where trade unions exist, notably in the jute mill and engineering industries locally around Calcutta, and legal practitioners, particularly in the Ranigunge and Jharia coalfields, have been active in filing claims on behalf of their members or clients, as the case may be, in the last two years, and this has given the Act wide publicity. Again, the increasingly large number of workmen who have received or claimed compensation under the Act, most of whom have at some time or other appeared personally before the commissioner, has been responsible for the spread of knowledge that the Act is in existence.

Generally speaking, however, it may be said that workmen employed in isolated areas in the mofussil, such as employees in cotton gins and presses, rice mills, oil mills, printing presses, workmen on buildings and employees of small indigenous colliery concerns do not make use of the Act owing to their ignorance of it.

(ii) *Comparison with extent of possible claims.*—The following table, published in the Fifth Report of the working of the Calcutta Claims Bureau, containing details of the total accidents reported and registered year by year since the commencement of the Act, shows that, with the exception of the year 1927-28, the percentage of cases in which compensation has been paid to the total number of possible claims has steadily increased, while, on the other hand, the percentage of cases filed as "no claim" has steadily decreased:—

*Claims disposed of by years.*

| Year.                           | Claims reported. | Compensation paid. |             | Filed as "No Claim." |             | Outstanding on 31st Dec., 1928. |             |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
|                                 |                  | Number.            | Percentage. | Number.              | Percentage. | Number.                         | Percentage. |
| 1924-25 ..                      | 1,901            | 717                | 38.0        | 1,184                | 62.0        | —                               | —           |
| 1925-26 ..                      | 2,295            | 914                | 40.0        | 1,381                | 60.0        | —                               | —           |
| 1926-27 ..                      | 2,878            | 1,279              | 44.0        | 1,599                | 56.0        | —                               | —           |
| 1927-28* ..                     | 5,181            | 1,802              | 34.8        | 3,363                | 64.9        | 16                              | 0.3         |
| 1st July to 31st December, 1928 | 2,593            | 586                | 22.0        | 1,476                | 57.0        | 531                             | 21.0        |
| 1924-28 combined.               | 14,848           | 5,298              | 36.0        | 9,003                | 60.0        | 547                             | 4.0         |

The proportion of cases in which compensation is paid to the number of possible claims will continue to increase, year by year, in future.

The number of claims shown in the "claims reported" column in the above table includes *all accident cases reported however trivial they may have been* as the principle adopted in the insurance of risks is that every accident is reported to the insurance company. Thus, the numbers of claims shown to have been filed as "no claim" include also those cases in which the disablement did not exceed the "waiting period" of 10 days and in which no compensation was, therefore, legally due.

\*This year was abnormal owing to a large increase in the number of trivial accidents reported by a certain new concern.

Taking the total figures for the period 1st July, 1924, to 31st December, 1928, during which 14,848 accidents were reported, the following shows, approximately, the disposal of the cases :—

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| (i) Cases in which full compensation was paid ..   | 36 per cent. |
| (ii) Cases in which no compensation was due<br>(disablement less than 10 days) .. ..   | 40 ..        |
| (iii) Cases filed as " no claim " owing to denial of<br>liability, cases contested and won, workmen<br>returning to their villages without notice,<br>" time-barred," etc. .. .. . | 20 ..        |
| (iv) Pending .. .. .   | 4 ..         |
| Total .. ..  | 100 ..       |

(iii) *Effects on industry.*—Whilst the cost of paying claims under the Act has fallen directly upon industry, in both insured and uninsured risks, the cost has been insignificant as compared with the total cost of production.

Insured employers have little or no increased work under the Act as they are advised regarding the disposal of every claim. In the case of the companies connected with the bureau, the procedure adopted is briefly as follows :—

Insured employers report all accidents occurring in their establishments, on special claim forms supplied for the purpose, to the insurance company concerned which, in turn, forwards these reports to the bureau. The bureau then corresponds direct with the employer and advises him as to the disposal of every claim, authorises payment of the correct amounts of compensation, registers agreements, arranges for examination and special treatment of injured workmen, appears before the commissioner whenever necessary on behalf of the employer, and, in short, does everything which is necessary to be done by the employer to comply with the provisions of the Act until the claim is finally settled. The papers of the claim are then returned to the insurance company and the insured is reimbursed for the total amount of compensation paid and all other expenses incurred in the claim.

Uninsured employers, therefore, have more responsibility under the Act, especially as regards procedure. The compensation payable for a single serious accident to an employee may involve payment of a very large sum and consequential heavy loss, especially in the case of small employers, and it is the latter class of employers who appear to evade liability under the Act.

(iv) *Availability and use of insurance facilities and value from workers' point of view.*—All the leading insurance companies operating in India conduct workmen's compensation insurance business and from time to time have advertised freely in the press or by special pamphlet their willingness to accept the responsibility imposed on employers of labour under the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act, at a consideration. In addition, the respective companies are represented by agents in all parts of the country and the facilities for all employers of labour to obtain the protection and the security offered by the insurance companies are present if those employers wish to avail themselves of them. However, a very large number of small employers have not protected themselves by effecting insurance.

In view of Section 14 of the Act, insurance by the employer of his liability is the only sure guarantee of payment of compensation to the injured worker, especially during times of trade depression. Moreover, the insured employer has the advantage of the experience of the insurance company, or its organization, in the handling of the claims and the injured worker in such cases gets an equitable and speedy settlement. In other cases, arrangements are made for special treatment, wherever necessary, thereby conferring greater benefits on workers than would otherwise be the case. Moreover, the principle adopted by all insurance companies from the outset has been to pay compensation to injured workers automatically when, in their opinion, liability to pay such compensation appears to be clear. The injured worker's claim is, therefore, settled without recourse to legal proceedings in the vast majority of cases which is not the case in uninsured concerns.

(v) *Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.*—Any scheme of compulsory insurance, at any rate in the case of unorganized industries, would, however, be attended with serious administrative difficulties. So far as organized industries are concerned, compulsory insurance is neither necessary nor desirable. Very few large employers are uninsured. The one or two large employers of labour who are not insured have established their own funds to meet compensation claims. It would be undesirable to compel such employers to insure merely because smaller employers



have not insured or may be unable to meet claims. No departure from the voluntary system of insurance as in England, which was favourably commented upon by the Holman-Gregory Committee of Enquiry in 1920 in that country, is called for. The same committee reported against the advisability of any scheme of state insurance and such a scheme is neither desirable nor necessary in India.

The interval between the occurrence of an accident and the injured workman making a claim to compensation is short. This interval will be reduced as the Act becomes better known. There will normally, be little possibility of the employer becoming insolvent in the meantime. Some protection should, however, be given to the dependants of a deceased workman to ensure that they institute their claims as soon as possible after the accident. To this end, a practical course, which would not impose an unbearable burden upon employers, would be to compel them to submit a report to the workmen's compensation commissioner of their district of every fatal accident; this report should be submitted at the time of submitting the usual report to the inspector of factories or mines or the police. The initial report should be followed at an interval of, say, not more than one month, by a supplementary statement as to whether liability to pay compensation in respect of the accident is admitted or not.

52. *Desirability of extending Act to other occupations.*—No great extension of the scope of the Act is at present possible if the principle of including only those persons employed in industries which are both organized and hazardous is adhered to. It is certainly neither practicable nor desirable to extend the Act to include all classes of manual labourers, as in the case of England and other countries more highly industrially developed than India. Workmen employed in unorganized industries, particularly rural labour, cannot be brought within the scope of the Act. The Act might, however, gradually be extended to all workmen in branches of industries which are sufficiently organized to justify the extension, and little difficulty would now be experienced in extending Schedule II to cover the following:—(a) Workmen employed by public bodies such as corporations and municipalities, or their contractors, in road-repairing work and scavenging. (b) Workmen employed in earthworks and excavations exceeding 20 ft. below the level of the surrounding surface, as opposed to excavations for the purpose of searching for or obtaining minerals. This would bring within the purview of the Act such work as the construction of docks and/or harbours. (c) Members of crews of inland steam vessels, as defined in section 2 of the Inland Steam Vessels Act, of registered tonnage of less than 100 tons. (d) Durwans, peons, bearers and messengers in the employ of the Government of India, local governments, municipalities, local bodies and registered companies when employed within the limits of a municipality or corporation. (e) Workmen employed in laying down, taking up, repairing or maintaining any underground telegraph or telephone lines or electric cables and in electric sub-stations.

At present Indian seamen employed on ships not registered under any Act in India are not, strictly speaking, covered under the Act, but most shipping companies operating in India have by a special agreement agreed to pay compensation to such seamen under the terms of the Act, which agreement is entered on the articles of the crew. The shipping companies have honoured the terms of the agreement and paid compensation to Indian seamen injured on their ships but it is within the rights of these companies to withhold payment of compensation in certain cases, especially in the case of death. In fact, the agreement does not apply to the dependants of Indian seamen at all as they are not parties to it. I appreciate that this question involves certain international difficulties but I consider it deserves the attention of the Government of India as it is necessary to see if some steps can be taken to mitigate the existing hardship to Indian seamen and their dependants.

*Possibility of providing against insolvency of employers who might be so covered.*—The same remarks as contained in the reply to Item 51 (v) apply here. These classes of workmen referred to above, in respect of whom Schedule II might be extended, are all employees in organized industries, or of large employers of labour, and are not likely to sustain any loss owing to insolvency of their employers.

53. *Suitability of provisions relating to—(i) Scales of compensation.*—The adoption of the principle underlying the recommendation of the Seventh International Labour Conference regarding the minimum scales of compensation would involve a considerable enhancement of the existing scales. The present scales of compensation are reasonably adequate and should not be enhanced either for the more poorly paid workmen or for workmen generally. The scales of compensation for death and permanent disablement are on a liberal basis. In the case of temporary disablement, the amount of compensation provided is sufficient to maintain a workman during his disablement. A suggestion to reduce the present waiting period is referred to later. If the scales for temporary disablement were increased, one of the greatest safeguards to the employer against malingering would be removed. With the standards of

living as they are at present in this country, and as they are likely to remain for a considerable time to come, the temptation will be in favour of resting as long as there is no incentive, such as need of funds, to bring a man back to work.

(ii) *Conditions governing grant of compensation.*—These are generally suitable and no changes in the underlying principles of the provisions governing the grant of compensation should be introduced until longer experience is obtained of actual working conditions. Any radical amendments, which tend to complicate the settlement of claims, will have an important bearing on the ultimate cost to the employer. It is, therefore, highly undesirable to introduce many radical changes at a single step. The present Act, since its introduction in July, 1924, has worked remarkably smoothly, but it is still premature to gauge the effect of material changes until more experience is gained.

There is, however, some case for the "waiting period" to be reduced as the present period of ten days, combined with payment of only half wages, causes some hardship. Any principle of "dating back" in India is, owing to the strong temptation to malingering, most undesirable, but the disadvantage to the workman of the present period of ten days can be mitigated by reducing it to seven days. This reduction of three days would involve an increase of about 25 per cent. in the number of possible cases and an increase of about 10 per cent. in the average cost of all cases of temporary disablement. The change would not cause any administrative difficulty, as all large employers are fully acquainted with the method of payment of compensation for temporary disablement and it is, without doubt, more desirable to effect such a change than to introduce any principle of "dating back."

(iii) *Industrial diseases.*—The Act at present covers the industrial diseases of lead and phosphorus poisoning (and sequelae) and anthrax for workmen employed in occupations in which these diseases occur. So far as I am aware, not a single case of anthrax or phosphorus poisoning has come to notice. Compensation has been paid for a number of cases of lead poisoning. The existence of industrial diseases, other than those specified, is almost unknown and there is no necessity to increase the present list.

(iv) *Machinery of administration (a)—Wholesale Commissioners.*—The Local Governments of Bengal, Bombay and Madras have appointed one official as commissioner under the Act for the whole Province (in the case of Bombay for all important industrial areas) but in other Provinces, district magistrates or, in the case of the Central Provinces, district and sessions judges have been appointed commissioners in their respective districts. In view of the material changes in the Act likely to be effected in the near future and the growing complexity of the handling and disposal of claims, it now appears desirable that one commissioner should be appointed for those Provinces in which no single commissioner at present exists. The disadvantages of the present system of appointing district officials as commissioners are briefly as follows :—(1) Hardship caused by delay in the disposal of cases ; (2) Inconvenience to the parties ; (3) Absence of an expert commissioner acquainted with workmen's compensation law ; and (4) The undesirability of an executive officer being called upon to adjudicate in contested claims.

Experience shows that district officials are, generally speaking, already fully occupied with a large volume of other judicial and executive work and are not able rapidly to dispose of the cases which come before them. Such officials are not available for consultation with employers' and workmen's representatives and, in view of pressure of other work, workmen's compensation cases are, not infrequently, protracted by numerous postponements. Moreover, these district officials' courts are not adequately equipped with clerical staff and other appliances necessary for the speedy handling of claims and the correspondence connected therewith.

With regard to inconvenience to the parties, factory and colliery managers and other important officials are frequently detained at courts much longer than should be necessary. It is undesirable that the official appointed commissioner for the administration of the Act should be the same person who is liable to be called upon at any time to hold an official enquiry, in executive capacity under the orders of the local Government, into the circumstances of an accident.

(b) *Medical Referees.*—The time has come when a Medical Referee for each important industrial district or Province as a whole should also be appointed. The appointment of such a medical referee would eliminate a number of the contested cases which now arise owing to differences of opinion between the medical advisers of workmen and employers. The likelihood is that the opinion of an entirely impartial medical officer, in the capacity of a medical referee, would generally be accepted by both parties without question.

(v) *Other Matters—(a) Suits for recovery of full wages for period of disablement due to accident.*—A case has recently arisen in Calcutta in which a workman, who has already been paid full lump sum compensation for the loss of sight of an eye, i.e.

30 per cent. loss in earning capacity under Schedule I, has instituted a suit for recovery of full wages from his employer during the period of his incapacity prior to receipt of the lump sum as compensation on the grounds that throughout the period he was under treatment prior to the lump sum settlement, the relations of master and servant still subsisted. The injured workman was not paid any half-monthly compensation prior to the receipt of the lump sum. Had any such payment been made, it could have been deducted from the lump sum under the proviso to Section 4 (1) D. During the period of disablement in respect of which the worker claimed full wages, he was not working in any capacity but was temporarily totally disabled and receiving treatment for his injured eye.

It was not intended that a workman should be able to claim full wages for temporary disablement in addition to compensation as laid down in the Workmen's Compensation Act. In England, it has been held that absence from work due to illness or incapacity by accident does not terminate the contract of service, neither does the receipt of compensation terminate the service. It has, however, been held that "a workman who has received or is receiving compensation cannot sue for any of his wages during the period of incapacity" (*Elliott v. Liggins* (1902) 2, K. B. 84).

To prevent the possibility of such suits being instituted and the employer being put to much inconvenience and expense, they should be declared not maintainable in any civil court. An amendment to this effect should follow Section 3 (5) of the present Act, which precludes a workman from instituting a civil suit for damages in respect of an injury against the employer or any other person if he has instituted a claim for compensation in respect of the injury before a commissioner and *vice versa*.

The suggested addition to Section 3 should be as follows :— "After Section 3 (5) the following new sub-section should be added :—Where a workman is in receipt of, or has received compensation, either for temporary total or permanent disablement, as laid down in this Act, no suit for recovery of his ordinary wages in respect of the period of temporary total disablement, or for the period he is unable to obtain work as a result of his disablement, prior to or after receipt of a lump sum as compensation, shall be maintainable in any Court of Law."

(b) *Computation of wages in the case of casual labour.*—It is necessary to insert an amendment to Section 5 to facilitate the calculation of monthly wages where the workman has been in the service of the employer only for a short period. Such a suitable amendment was included in Bill No. 26 of 1928, published by the Government of India in the *Gazette of India* dated September 8th, 1928, but, for some unaccountable reason, when the Bill was passed into law and became Act V of 1929, the proposed addition was completely dropped.

The following proposed amendment to Section 5, which follows that originally proposed in Bill No. 26 of 1928, should be made :—

"In sub-section (1) of Section 5, Clause (b) shall be re-lettered as Clause (c) and after Clause (a) the following new clause shall be inserted, namely :—

"(b) Where the workman has been in the service of the employer during a continuous period of less than one month immediately preceding the accident, his monthly wages shall be deemed to be the average monthly amount which, during the twelve months immediately preceding the accident, was being earned by a workman employed on the same work by the same employer or, if there was no person so employed, by a workman employed on similar work in the same locality."

The following further slight change will be necessary to give effect to the above :—

"In the proviso to sub-section (1) of Section 5, for the words and letters 'Clause a) or Clause (b),' the words, this sub-section, shall be substituted."

54. *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers' Liability Act, 1880.*—The original Workmen's Compensation Bill presented to the Legislative Assembly on 13th September, 1922, contained a chapter (Chapter II) relating to Employers' Liability, which closely followed the provisions of the English Employers' Liability Act, 1880 (Sections 1 and 2). The latter Act, whilst providing for the payment of damages in respect of proved negligence, abolished the defences of "Common Employment" and "Assumed Risk" for certain classes of workmen, established by the famous case of *Priestley v. Fowler* (1837) in which the maxim *volenti non fit injuria* (injury cannot be done to a person who willingly incurs the risk) was applied. Clause 3 of the draft Bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly was designed to remove the defence of "Common Employment" and Clause 4 the defence of "Assumed Risk." Clause 5 laid down the period in which the claim could be made. No mention was made of any scales of compensation recoverable. The compensation recoverable under the Employers' Liability Act of 1880 is a sum not exceeding the earnings during the three years preceding the accident. No scale of weekly compensation is provided. The damages are payable in one lump sum.

The Joint Committee of the Indian Legislature, appointed to consider the Bill and replies received from bodies thereon, stated in paragraph 3 of their report :—

“Perhaps the most important alteration which we have made in the Bill is the elimination of the provisions relating to employers’ liability. The majority of us are not satisfied that it is either necessary or wise to retain these provisions in the Bill. It has not been demonstrated to our satisfaction that the Courts in India will apply the judge-made doctrines of common employment and assumed risk. If these doctrines are accepted by the Courts in India, legislation on the lines of the Employers’ Liability Act, 1880 (43 and 44 Vic. cap 42), will have to be considered. But in that event the defences of common employment and assumed risk, if they are regarded as inequitable, should be removed not merely for the very limited classes of workmen to whom this Bill will apply, but for all workmen. On the whole, therefore, we are of opinion that it is wiser to restrict the scope of the present Bill to Workmen’s Compensation and to avoid anticipating a difficulty which may not arise, and for which the Bill, as drafted, contained only a partial remedy.”

The chapter relating to employers’ liability was, therefore, completely dropped. The experience gained in the period the Act has been in operation still does not warrant the inclusion of any such provisions. As pointed out by the Joint Committee, if the defences of “Common Employment” and “Assumed Risk” are accepted by Courts in India they should be removed for all workmen. There is absolutely no case for this to be done at the present stage.

The compensation payable in respect of the death of a workman under the Indian Act is thirty times the “assumed wages,” and that for permanent total disablement forty-two times the “assumed wages.” The introduction, therefore, of any scale of compensation or damages similar to that of the Employers’ Liability Act of 1880 will confer no greater benefit upon workmen in India than they at present enjoy under the Workmen’s Compensation Act. The present Act has been in operation for just over five years, and as it is still in its infancy it is highly undesirable to consider such a drastic change which may introduce serious complications and increase litigation. It is infinitely more desirable to extend the scope of the present Act and take adequate steps to ensure that employers, especially the smaller employers, do not evade their liability, than to introduce any litigious provisions relating to employers’ liability.

## THE INDIAN IRON AND STEEL CO., LTD., BURNPUR.

### Introductory Particulars.

We beg to submit the following particulars regarding the Hirapur works of Messrs. Indian Iron & Steel Co., Ltd. :—

*Nature of Business.*—(1) Pig iron manufacture ; (2) coke manufacture ; (3) By-product manufacture.

*Output.*—(1) Pig iron, 40,000 tons per month ; (2) coke, 45,000 tons per month ; (3) sulphate of ammonia, 500 tons per month ; tar, 1,400 tons per month.

*Period of Operation.*—The firm started construction in 1919, and production commenced at the end of 1922.

*Number of Employees.*—Men, 2,800 ; women, 750 ; boys, 5 ; girls, nil.

These figures do not include contractors’ labour, which vary anything from 1,000 to 1,500 according to the quantity of raw materials handling required.

### I.—Recruitment.

1 to 3. There is no recruitment of labour as :—(a) From the days of construction, we have trained up, by careful selection, a labour force which is practically permanent ; (b) there is always available in the district sufficient skilled and unskilled labour to meet our requirements ; (c) migration of labour is seasonal and practically confined to unskilled and coolie labour ; (d) the greater proportion of coolie and kamien labour is engaged in the handling of raw materials and this work is exclusively carried out by contractors.

The proportions of our daily labour are approximately :—Hindu, 77 per cent. ; Mahomedan, 20 per cent. ; Christians, 2½ per cent. ; others, ½ per cent.

As far as we are concerned, we do not see that public employment agencies would assist us.

8. (iii) Absenteeism is generally fairly low at this works. This is due to the fact, as practically all our plant is continuous production plant, it has been necessary for

us to adopt a very strict attitude in dealing with absence without leave. Otherwise, on a plant such as ours, it would be necessary to carry a large number of excess labour in order to fill the places of absentees on each shift.

Generally, there is no marked difference in the number of absentees on different days of the week.

Skilled labour and process men are generally more regular in attendance than unskilled labour.

Total absenteeism due to all causes is about 8.5 per cent.

During August, 1929, the number of man-hours lost due to absenteeism on account of sickness totalled 7,400.

The above statements refer to our own labour only and do not apply to Contractors' labour.

Absenteeism amongst our own labour shows only a slight increase during the cultivation seasons, and this is mainly on account of unskilled labour absenting themselves in order to go to their fields.

Amongst contractors' labour, there is a marked increase in absenteeism at the times of the cultivation seasons, but we are not able to state the extent of this.

## II.—Staff Organization.

12. Since this works is comparatively new, practically the whole of the subordinate supervising staff has had to be trained under the direct supervision of European managers and foremen, and this close supervision has led to the development of a very efficient subordinate supervising staff.

Generally, workmen start at a lower position, and are trained, and as improvement is shown, promotion is given. We have found this to be a good policy, and generally speaking, as far as possible, when a vacancy occurs a man in a lower position is promoted to fill the vacancy.

13. Relations between staff and rank and file are very good. Foremen of sections are essentially in close touch with their labour and generally deal with minor matters brought to their notice. All labour, however, are free to approach their departmental managers if they wish.

Works committees do not exist as we have never considered that they would be of any material use.

15. The whole of the loading, unloading and general handling of raw materials is given out on contract. When it is necessary to handle pig iron by labour (this is comparatively rare, as the work is usually done mechanically), this is also done by contract labour.

In the handling of raw materials we believe sub-contracting is fairly general, but we have no detailed information.

The work of all contractors is directly under the supervision of the manager of the department in which the contractor's work is being done.

The system is generally found to be good : (a) The contractor is engaged solely in the handling of materials and is therefore able to give far more supervision to his particular job than would be possible for a manager with many other duties to perform.

(b) It is to the interest of the contractor to employ suitable labour in order to get his work carried out properly, and also to give his labour proper treatment in order to retain them.

## III.—Housing.

16. The greater part of our labour is housed in Burnpur town and in Napuria village, both of which have been built by us and are under our control. Other labour live in Asansol and villages near Burnpur. It is only of our own town that we are able to give information.

Approximately 1,500 of our labour are housed in Burnpur, and which represents about 54 per cent. of our male labour. We have no figures concerning housing of female labour.

17. Our whole area including works and town is being acquired under Government land acquisition and acquisition for areas for quarters is therefore included in this.

18. We have had no demands from labour except a request that each unit of our coolie type quarters should be provided with a small courtyard, and this was met. There are 172 such units.

There are the following quarters for labour : 29 blocks of Khalasi quarters, each block of ten units ; each unit consists of one room, one verandah and one courtyard ; 20 blocks of single, and eight blocks of double Mystry type quarters ; each single quarter has two rooms, one verandah and one courtyard ; the double type quarter contains double the accommodation of the single type. Each block consists of six units.

All the above quarters are pucca buildings, cement floored and tile-roofed.

Artificial lighting is not provided inside quarters.

Conservancy is under the the direct supervision of our medical and sanitary department.

The whole town is provided with first class filtered water, samples of which are sent regularly for examination by government analysts. During the hot weather and monsoon, the water supply is chlorinated. Hydrants are provided at suitable points throughout the town, but it is not possible to lay water lines inside quarters owing to the wastage of water which occurs.

19. Full advantage is taken of all accommodation available.

20. All quarters are provided rent free.

#### IV.—Health.

24. Free medical attention and medicines are provided to all staff and labour and members of their families. We have our own hospital with four qualified doctors and necessary hospital staff. The hospital has two wards, dressing rooms, a dispensary, and an operation room where both major and minor operations are conducted.

25. Labour generally avail themselves to a very large extent of the facilities offered.

The hospital is not largely used by women, but a large number of women are treated in their homes.

#### V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

The company has provided an association for Indian staff and labour. This is run by a committee elected by the members.

There are no particular welfare officers, as the whole of the town is under our direct supervision.

Provisions for refreshments are made by local dealers in the bazaar, all of which are under our supervision. Creches do not exist.

The Indian association has its own tennis court, gymnasium and football club. Necessary assistance and support is given.

36. (i) A year ago with the assistance and arrangements made by the Director of Industries, Bengal, a series of technical classes were started. About 80 students enrolled but many did not continue the course. The second session is now due to commence and 20 students, all of whom attended the classes last session, have enrolled. It is proposed to arrange for the technical classes to cover a three years' course. The curriculum is mainly arranged on lines in conjunction with the practical work which students are doing on the plant.

(iii) The company, with Government assistance, has built and maintains The Mary Fairhurst M.E. School, where the children of our staff and labour receive education. A scheme is also on foot at present for the early provision of a primary school.

(iv) Full advantage is taken of the facilities offered.

#### VII.—Safety.

46. Every precaution possible is taken to prevent accidents. Safety rails and barriers are provided at every point in the works where persons may come from a concealed corner and cross running tracks. All precautions are taken in the matter of prevention of electrical and mechanical accidents, suitable guards being provided and implicit instructions given to all foremen and overseers. We have not found that Safety First posters from the Safety First Association, in England, are of much use, in that the wording is in English and frequently labour do not see the point of the posters, and, in some cases, even misconstrue their meaning.

48. It is a rule that if any person is hurt on duty, no matter how slight the injury may be, the person receives first-aid from the departmental first-aid box, and is then sent to the works hospital for treatment and decision by the medical officer as to whether the injured person is to be allowed to resume duty or not.

49. We think that every precaution possible is taken on the works and regulations for safety are very rigidly enforced. Disciplinary action is taken against persons who deliberately neglect to observe the regulations laid down.

50. We have no definite information on the point, but we do not think that accidents occur more frequently at night than during the day.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories.

55. Daily labour : 6.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. ; 12.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. A large proportion of our labour is shift labour and this labour works on eight-hour shifts. Overtime is only worked for special work or breakdown.

\*56. Daily labour work six days per week and are laid off on Sundays. Shift labour are laid off one day in every 14 days.

59. We do not see that a reduction in maxima is possible in our class of work.

60. We see no reason for change of the intervals for rest and meal times.

(iv) *Number of holidays given.*—As far as possible, the usual number of holidays are given, but as the plant is on continuous production, it is not possible for all men to be allowed off, and process and shift men have to attend duty.

61. *Day of Rest.*—Daily labour : Sundays ; Shift labour : One day in 14 days.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made of them.*—Exemption provisions are only used in case of breakdown or urgent jobs.

### XII.—Wages.

96. (i) We attach herewith a schedule showing the maximum and minimum rates paid for each class of labour in the works.

100. As explained previously, contractors are only employed for handling of materials, and this Clause does not apply to any other form of labour in the industry as far as our works is concerned. We have no reason to believe that the earnings of contractor's labour are not on a par with wages earned by similar labour employed directly by us, and this is confirmed by the fact that the contractor's labour shows no disposition to leave the contractor and take on cooly work under us.

105. We do not think the establishment of the minimum wage would assist owing to the different conditions obtaining here and in other iron works in India ; also a minimum, if established, would have to be very low.

106 (i) Fines are inflicted for repeatedly bad attendance and also for damage to tools, etc., due to deliberate carelessness.

(ii) No other deductions.

(iii) Paid into the Provident Fund and used for charitable donations.

(iv) We do not consider the prevention of fines would assist as it is our experience that a careful and proper infliction of small fines has a beneficial disciplinary effect.

107. Wages are paid monthly on a daily rate. Payments are made to departmental labour from the 10th to the 14th of the month following that for which wages have been earned.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of workers.

112. As already explained, we have only been in operation a short time, and have had to train up our own staff and labour, and any increase in efficiency which has occurred is directly the result of training labour in our particular class of work.

113. Our work involves a good deal of heavy work, and at times exceptionally arduous work, and the Indian workman compared individually to the European workman is not so strong physically, nor has he the stamina to continue work of this nature for so long a period.

116. We consider that education must come first, as this will give labour an appreciation and pride in efficiency. Any progress, therefore, must necessarily be slow.

## XVII.—Administration.

138. Although the extracts of the Factory Act are prominently posted in the works in the vernacular, we do not think that labour as a whole are acquainted with the provisions, and in our opinion the Act is necessary in order to protect the worker from possible exploitation by an unscrupulous employer.

*Daily Rates of Pay of Labour at Hivapur Works.*

| Trade.                              | From |    |    | To  |    |    |
|-------------------------------------|------|----|----|-----|----|----|
|                                     | Rs.  | a. | p. | Rs. | a. | p. |
| Armature winder .. .. .             | 2    | 0  | 0  | 2   | 2  | 0  |
| Blacksmith .. .. .                  | 1    | 0  | 0  | 2   | 8  | 0  |
| Bell operator .. .. .               | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 2  | 0  |
| Boiler tindal .. .. .               | 1    | 0  | 0  | 2   | 8  | 0  |
| Boiler khalasi .. .. .              | 0    | 10 | 0  | 0   | 12 | 0  |
| Carpenter .. .. .                   | 0    | 13 | 6  | 2   | 0  | 0  |
| Cleaner .. .. .                     | 0    | 8  | 0  | 1   | 0  | 0  |
| Coil maker .. .. .                  | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 0  | 0  |
| Core maker .. .. .                  | 0    | 12 | 0  | 1   | 0  | 0  |
| Core mistry .. .. .                 | 2    | 4  | 0  | 2   | 4  | 0  |
| Cooly .. .. .                       | 0    | 6  | 0  | 0   | 10 | 0  |
| Crane driver, electrical .. .. .    | 0    | 12 | 0  | 1   | 6  | 0  |
| Crane driver, steam .. .. .         | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 8  | 0  |
| Chinese carpenter .. .. .           | 3    | 8  | 0  | 3   | 8  | 0  |
| Chargehand, fireman .. .. .         | 2    | 0  | 0  | 2   | 0  | 0  |
| Dice moulder .. .. .                | 0    | 14 | 0  | 0   | 14 | 0  |
| Dooly man .. .. .                   | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 0  | 0  |
| Driver, coal handling plant .. .. . | 1    | 12 | 0  | 1   | 12 | 0  |
| Driver, loco. .. .. .               | 1    | 8  | 0  | 1   | 8  | 0  |
| Driver, Turbine .. .. .             | 1    | 4  | 0  | 1   | 8  | 0  |
| Driver, gas exhausters .. .. .      | 1    | 5  | 0  | 1   | 5  | 0  |
| Driver, coke ram .. .. .            | 1    | 4  | 0  | 1   | 8  | 0  |
| Driver, hoist engine .. .. .        | 1    | 6  | 0  | 1   | 10 | 0  |
| Driller .. .. .                     | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 7  | 6  |
| Electrician .. .. .                 | 1    | 12 | 0  | 1   | 14 | 0  |
| Fireman, loco. .. .. .              | 0    | 12 | 0  | 0   | 14 | 0  |
| Fitter, Electrical .. .. .          | 1    | 0  | 0  | 2   | 10 | 0  |
| Fitter, mechanical .. .. .          | 0    | 10 | 0  | 2   | 8  | 0  |
| Gunner .. .. .                      | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 4  | 0  |
| Gas regulator .. .. .               | 1    | 5  | 0  | 1   | 10 | 0  |
| Helpers, cast house .. .. .         | 0    | 14 | 0  | 1   | 6  | 0  |
| Moulder .. .. .                     | 1    | 6  | 0  | 3   | 0  | 0  |
| Hot iron breaker .. .. .            | 0    | 14 | 0  | 1   | 4  | 0  |
| Khalasi .. .. .                     | 0    | 10 | 0  | 1   | 4  | 0  |
| Mason mistry .. .. .                | 1    | 11 | 0  | 2   | 14 | 0  |
| Sulphate of ammonia maker .. .. .   | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 12 | 0  |
| Keeper, general .. .. .             | 2    | 4  | 0  | 3   | 8  | 0  |
| Painter .. .. .                     | 0    | 9  | 9  | 1   | 5  | 6  |
| Pump tindal .. .. .                 | 1    | 6  | 0  | 1   | 6  | 0  |
| Rivetter .. .. .                    | 0    | 10 | 0  | 1   | 4  | 0  |
| Riggers .. .. .                     | 1    | 3  | 0  | 1   | 3  | 0  |
| Stove tender .. .. .                | 1    | 4  | 0  | 1   | 8  | 0  |
| Switch board attendant .. .. .      | 1    | 4  | 0  | 2   | 5  | 0  |
| Tinsmith .. .. .                    | 1    | 4  | 0  | 1   | 10 | 0  |
| Turners .. .. .                     | 0    | 12 | 0  | 2   | 4  | 0  |
| Welder .. .. .                      | 3    | 8  | 0  | 4   | 0  | 0  |
| Wireman .. .. .                     | 1    | 0  | 0  | 1   | 0  | 0  |

## THE SUPERINTENDENT, METAL AND STEEL FACTORY, ISHAPORE.

Metal and Steel factory, Ishapore, deals with the production of steel for guns and shells, of metal for Q.F. and small arm, ammunition, fuzes, etc., of steel bars and rods; of shell forgings; and of Q.F. cartridge cases.



### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) The extent of migration is not great with two exceptions—Oryas who are mostly coolies or work as more or less unskilled attendants on machines usually flow to and from the factory and their own country during the grain and cropping seasons of the year. The other exception is the labour employed on the skilled open hearth furnaces and on the brass melting platform which does not flow to and fro seasonably as the Orya labour does, but is inclined to take long leave from time to time of periods ranging up to two years.

(ii) For Oryas as above. For the other exception mentioned above—distance. Neither of the hot metal trades are recruitable within 300 miles of Calcutta. Local men have not the stamina or physique for the work and never remain at the job.

(iii) No appreciable change in recent years.

2. (i) Oryas as above. Hot and heavy metal workers from the districts—Patna, Benares, etc., usually return to their villages at much longer intervals but then for much longer periods.

(ii) The extent of the permanent labour force in this factory may be taken as a minimum of about 1,600 men and maximum of 2,800. This would rise in war time to about 8,000.

3. (i) The existing method is to recruit for all labour, except that for the hot and heavy trades, at the gate of the factory. The recruitment is not carried out through Sirdars as in the surrounding jute mills but a foreman who wants men must actually be present at the gate and make his choice at a quarter to eight in the morning. In the case of the hot and heavy trades, and of skilled men, reliable men or mistries in particular, section employees are advised that so many men will be wanted and they in turn advise their friends who present themselves and are entertained on a Suitability voucher (in use for all labour).

(ii) Possible improvement might be brought about by

(iii) Public employment agencies acting as receivers of particular kinds of labour to whom enquiries could be sent for men, of a particular type of skill, willing and able to work in the district from which the enquiry emanates. Such an employment agency if controlled by Government, might be highly beneficial, but the control would have to be strict and definite or a great many fee snatching and irresponsible agencies would arise to ship unhappy and unsuitable labour in unsuitable directions.

7. (i) The extent and character of unemployment is almost entirely governed by the demands of the Army Department.

(ii) (a) As in preceding paragraph.

(b) Voluntary retirement among manual workers is uncommon in the case of men of long service except owing to advanced age or ill-health.

(c) A good deal of unemployment is due to men seeking employment for which they are not really fitted in the first case and in this district recurrent seasonal diseases such as malaria, small-pox, etc.

(iii) No obvious practical methods are apparent. An increase in the standard of education and a tendency to be less improvident in the matter of propagation, etc., flowing from an improved education would cause a gradual remedy.

(iv) Unemployment insurance would present far greater difficulties in this country than it does in England owing to the stringency with which all medical certificates and pleas of urgent affairs will have to be examined, and I doubt whether India is ripe for such systems as obtain in highly industrially developed countries in the West. The only suggestion I can offer would be the compulsory deduction from all pay up to or above a given "district rate" to be held not by the employer but accounted for in a central fund controlled by the State. This in fact would be an extension of the provident fund rather than an insurance.

(v) India is not ripe for the extended application of international conventions relating to unemployment for the reasons which appear above, and also for the reason very intelligible in certain parts of India for whole families to work together in a particular industry.

8. (iii) The extent of absenteeism in this factory in any month apart from sickness and seasonal character of some of the work, e.g., intermittent steel campaign, that is to say genuine unaccountable absenteeism, is of the order of 4.5 per cent.

9. A copy of the Apprentices Act, 1850, is not in existence in this factory, but incidentally it may be remarked that for the hot and heavy trades and for all trades except electrical engineering and the lighter forms of turning and fitting, no great aptitude or desire to learn is shown by the body of the people in the Calcutta area, and in trades such as smithy and in heavy and hot processes generally, it is practically impossible to obtain men who have both an aptitude for the trade and any

capacity to improve and enlarge this aptitude by technical study. Those who have the capacity for technical study are, mainly by temperament or cast, unwilling to learn the work from the practical standpoint owing to its arduous and severe nature, and, therefore apprenticeship in these trades, common in Europe, is almost impossible to organize here if by apprenticeship something more is meant than a willingness descending from father to son to work manually in such trades.

13. Relations between staff and rank and file.

(iii) A Welfare Committee was formed in this works about three years ago. It renders valuable assistance from time to time in regulating social questions and disputes between individuals and bodies of workmen.

14. (i) Timekeeping is done by the gate office of the factory and checked by officers in the employment of the Controller of Army Factory Accounts. The men pick up and drop tickets, and their actual presence is afterwards checked against these by members of the audit staff as just described. Attendance registers are maintained by the Factory Accounts Branch and checked by the Controller's audit staff. Piece work is general throughout the factory for practically every operation performed in the factory including practically all maintenance operations and most of the store operations except the loading and unloading of new or unusual materials, e.g., machinery.

(ii) Wages are actually paid by the clerks of the cashiers section, the foreman and assistant foreman of the group being present supported by the Gazetted Officer in charge of the groups to which belongs the particular foreman standing by the pay-window.

### III.—Housing.

16. Housing is provided by the department for this factory in the workmen's lines between the Ishapore Gate and Ishapore railway station for 53 families and 572 single individuals. The total population housed in that area, man, woman and child, is approximately 4,000.\* Houses to the number of about 215 will be erected on the land north of the factory and south of the Majherpara village. At present 84 are in existence. This village will be for clerks, superior artisans, gatekeepers, shift engineers and others. The quarters will all be married quarters, and the village will eventually house about 1,000 people, man, woman and child. Further quarters to the number of 516 as a peace requirement are contemplated on 360 bighas of land south of the Ishapore Khal and east of the E.B. railway as funds permit.

(iii) The two factories in Ishapore at present jointly employ about 5,000 men, most of whom are privately housed within a radius of approximately four miles.

17. The ordinary land acquisition facilities have been availed of as appears under 16.

18. (i) In the case of the houses going up on the north land previously mentioned, these were constructed in conjunction with the Commanding Royal Engineer and the clerks and workmen themselves and are, as far as Government scale permits, in accordance with the workers' demands except that they have recently petitioned for electric lights and fans.

(ii) They are of a good type and in accordance with custom and demand.

(iii) Water is provided. Filtered Hoogly water in the Ishapore lines. Deep well water is laid on in the houses in the north land. Good road lighting exists. Conservancy now by hand service in the Ishapore lines, will shortly be by water service there, and water service is laid down for the north land.

19. Workers and clerks avail themselves of Government quarters in so far as they are available, for these are definitely better and very much cheaper than can be hired locally.

20. Without going into details, rent is set to be approximately to one-tenth or under of the occupants' pay.

21. Sub-letting is not consciously allowed. Anybody not a Government employee who occupied a quarter, would have to be evicted under financial regulations.

22. It is hard to estimate moral effect, but in view of what has been said above about better and cheaper condition, it appears certain to the writer that the moral effect is beneficial to the factory and estate. The only improvement possible appears to be erection of further quarters as funds become available.

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\* Of which 1,500 belong to this factory.

## IV.—Health.

23. (i) The mortality during the last three years against an average employment roll of 2,685 for the same period has been 12 men or 0.45 per cent., 33 in families of men housed in the lines or 8 per cent. approximately. These deaths are chiefly children.

24. (i) A European medical officer is in charge of all health matters and is assisted by an assistant surgeon and a sub-assistant surgeon at both factory gates, and a sub-assistant surgeon in charge of the 6-bed Indian Central Casualty Ward. Medicines and surgical instruments are as provided by Government scale and have been largely supplemented by private contributions by the Europeans in the station. A proposal is on foot for the provision of a woman sub-assistant surgeon in the lines. At present there is a midwife stationed here (supported by fine fund).

25. (i) Very fully utilized.

(ii) To a large extent which would be greatly increased if a woman sub-assistant surgeon and a small maternity ward were arranged in the lines.

26. (i) Latrines in the factory and in the estate are water-borne. Each house in the north land will have its own water-borne sewage and for the lines at Ishapore, sanitation is hand service and will shortly be water-borne.

(ii) *Drinking Water.*—Deep wells or Calcutta supply in factories. Deep well in the north land, filtered river water in the Ishapore lines which together with all the other supplies will shortly be replaced by central deep wells to be situated in the rifle factory.

(iii) Bathing and washing facilities in the factories are good and being further improved, and with regard to the lines, the proximity of the Hooghly and several large tanks render this good also. The largest tank is supplied with Hooghly water by pumping.

27. The supervision is in the hands of the medical officer who is assisted, and matters in the lines and elsewhere brought to his notice, by the orderly officer of this factory and a conservancy board. A mosquito brigade organized by the late superintendent has enormously reduced mosquitoes in the immediate neighbourhood.

28. (i) All the shops where machine operations occur are fanned. The steel and brass melting platforms are well-louvered and ventilated for the prevention of fumes. For cooling purposes, fans would be useless, but might cause oxidation of the metal.

29. (i) No industrial diseases in this factory.

(ii) Cholera is more or less endemic and statistics available in Calcutta may be taken as a guide. Malaria is the cause of a great deal of absenteeism at the change of season about November. Hookworm, etc., as per Calcutta statistics.

30. (i) and (ii). Very rigid supervision would be required in order to prevent fraud in any type of sickness insurance scheme in this district. In Europe when people are sick, it is usually possible for the works' doctor or the insurance company's doctor to visit them owing to their nearness to the works and the ease of transport. With regard to the factory in Ishapore, even a great many of those who occupy and appreciate houses in the lines, immediately disappear to their own country if they are ill, and a great many who are not ill announce illness after having been given or having taken leave to visit their native place. Owing to difficulties of identification, etc., I do not think that sick reports from outlying districts, however carefully attested by the best-intentioned and the most responsible doctors, would effectively meet the situation as it is met in Europe.

(iii) There appears to be no great objection in this district to the acceptance of western medicine and medical treatment.

31. (i) There is no maternity benefit scheme in existence here.

(iii) It would be perfectly possible to frame legislation to deal with maternity benefits for births registered in our lines, but, in the interests of India generally and specially of the Indian working population itself, the greatest benefit that could occur would be a vast reduction in the number of births.

## V.—Welfare.

32. (i) An Indian sports club for tennis, etc., with an excellent club house has been provided for the workers of both factories, mainly through the instrumentality of the rifle factory.

(ii) Various sports associations in the district, partly composed of factory employees and partly of other Indians, are assisted financially and advised by officers of the two factories in Ishapore taking office on their committees.

33. There is no welfare officer as such. The welfare committee of this factory already deals with disputes, etc., as described in a previous paragraph, and the orderly officer if this factory together with the estate foreman is responsible for various suggestions and improvements, mainly with regard to tidiness and cleanliness that occur from time to time.

36. This factory runs a school for infants in the lines. Excellent provision has been made by the rifle factory for continuation schools and higher classes, ages 12 to 22, for the workers of both factories. All these facilities are used to the full extent available.

37. It would always be desirable to provide for old age and premature retirement, and my views on this have been given under the heading of "insurance," and elsewhere.

38. The rifle factory have organized and run an excellent co-operative stores and loan society which is taken considerable advantage of by employees of this factory whose only disability is that they may not sit on its committees or boards.

### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (iii) There was a considerable rise in small accidents of the type produced by sticking the top of one's finger into a press when the compensation first came to be generally realized, but this appears to be dying down.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories.

55. (i) The working hours of this factory are : 7.45 a.m. to 11.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., five days a week ; 7.45 a.m. to 1.45 p.m. on Saturdays.

(ii) The actual hours in peace time are as above. In war time, the three shift system would be in force.

(iii) The spreadover is one hour longer than the normal hours except on Saturdays, as the men are not allowed to leave the factory at the midday break but eat their food in the factory provided by food contractors and canteens.

56. The normal working week consists of five full days of 7½ hours, and one short day on Saturday of six hours.

60. (iii) A certain number of the office workers and a few of the workmen come by train. Were all stationed in this immediate neighbourhood, from a factory point of view at any rate, it would be highly desirable if the day could begin and end about 1½ hours earlier.

(iv) The holidays are those prescribed on the official calendar, and are more numerous than those usually taken by local commercial firms.

62. *Exempting provisions and the use made of them.*—Provisions for continuous processes do not seem to have been properly understood by the framers of Acts in India, and, in consequence, in peace time, at any rate, an excessive staff is required to carry on the work of a process like an open hearth furnace.

### XII.—Wages.

96. *Prevailing rates of wages (time and piece) and average earnings.*—The prevailing rates of wages are attached.\*

101. *Method of fixing wages.*—The rates in the attached schedule of standard wages\* have grown up in the process of 30 or 40 years, and may be taken in normal times to be somewhat higher, where the job is comparable, than those paid in the surrounding mills and factories unless one of the surrounding mills or factories becomes busy, in which case, for urgency of delivery or in order to secure the market, their wages are immediately raised above ours, and skilled men attracted away.

102. *Basis of payment for overtime.*—Ordinary time rate for day work and time and a half rate for night work for each hour worked in excess of the daily normal working hours.

105. Minimum wages could only be established by districts in India, the cost of living from district to district and the state of industry in the district being so variable.

\* Not printed. The classification of rates for daily rated men is shown in the appendix.

106. (i) Fining is only resorted to in this factory for definite breaches of discipline or instructions. Fining for bad work does not exist.

(ii) Other deductions are made by consent for the payment of bills to the rifle factory co-operative society, for provident funds where a workman voluntarily joins one, and similar reasons.

(iii) Fines are utilized for the benefit of those who are subjected to them, e.g., men who have unbroken service for a period of upwards of 5 years, may, on death or old age, receive a gratuity from the fine fund of varying amount according to length of service. The fine fund also is used by partly financing for the lines and infant schools, and for providing such amenities as the funds will permit for workmen. (See 24 (i).)

(iv) No serious contravention of what would be the rulings of the Truck Act in England takes place in this factory. Legislation would be desirable to prevent anything of the sort, were it certain that such legislation would be carefully and rigidly enforced.

107. (i) The unit period for payment of wages, where not piece work, in this factory is per day, and men are rated at so much per day (see Schedule of Standard Wages).

(ii) Wages are paid monthly about 8 to 10 days after the close of the month for which they are drawn.

(iii) If they were paid any slower than this, I should consider legislation desirable. In view of the number and cost of the Controller of Army Factory Accounts staff, it appears to me doubtful whether the matter could be speeded up to any great extent except by prohibitively increasing the numbers employed and therewith the cost of their labour.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are paid to the rightful owner up to a period of 3 years after the first failure of the claim, provided identity is established.

111. *Desirability of Fair Wages Clause in Public Contracts.*—Probably very desirable, but in the present state of organization in India, probably exceedingly hard to legislate for and enforce.

*Schedule of Standard Wages.—Metal and Steel Factory, Ishapore.*

1st July, 1926.

APPENDIX.

(a) General.

No departure from the rates laid down will on any account be made, unless the same has been fully discussed by the three principal executive officers and approved by the superintendent. Such amendments or alterations will be published in factory orders.

Promotion to a higher grade, in the case of skilled men, will only be sanctioned after a test trial; unskilled and semi-skilled on recommendation.

No promotion or increment will be permitted, on any grounds whatsoever, to any person whose absence from all causes exceeds 10 days during the year, unless such absence has been duly covered by a medical certificate. This is exclusive of long leave or permissible privilege leave.

As a general rule not more than 25 per cent. of the men under any one foreman will be considered for increment in any one year.

The classification of rates is as follows :—

| Skilled.<br>Division I. |      |        | Semi-skilled.<br>Division II. |        |        | Unskilled.<br>Division III. |        |        |      |
|-------------------------|------|--------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Rs. a.                  | Rs.  | Rs. a. | Rs. a.                        | Rs. a. | Rs. a. | Rs. a.                      | Rs. a. | Rs. a. |      |
| A                       | 0 8  | 0 2    | 3 0                           | A0     | 14 0 1 | 1 4                         | A0     | 14 0 1 | 1 2  |
| B                       | 1 8  | 0 2    | 2 0                           | B0     | 12 0 1 | 1 0                         | B0     | 12 0 1 | 1 0  |
| C                       | 1 0  | 0 2    | 1 0                           | C0     | 6 0 1  | 0 10                        | C0     | 9 0 1  | 0 14 |
| D                       | 0 12 | 0 2    | 1 0                           | —      | —      | —                           | D0     | 6 0 1  | 0 8  |
| E                       | 0 6  | 0 1    | 0 12                          | —      | —      | —                           | —      | —      | —    |

**(b) Procedure of Entertainment.**

1. Foremen, or Assistant Foremen deputed by them, must entertain in person.
2. Workmen will be entertained only between opening time and 8·40 a.m.
3. An Entertainment Form (No. 105) will be used for each applicant admitted to the factory. Subsequent procedure will be as laid down on the form, which is self-explanatory.

This procedure must be pushed through as rapidly as possible as it is essential for the ticket to be given to the man the same day. Should it not be possible to issue the brass and tin tickets to the men on the day of their entertainment, they will be supplied with a temporary cardboard ticket on which their names and section will be written. These tickets will be used for mustering purposes and will, on receipt of the brass and tin tickets, be returned to the gate section.

4. The man's record of service (M. & S. Fy. F. No. 106) will be completed by the labour bureau after he returns from medical examination.

5. The policy to be adopted in selecting applicants for entertainment is that, in cases where other qualifications are equal, preference is to be given to men who have been employed before, provided they are recommended for re-employment. Such men will be required to produce their discharge certificates. A certificate of good character given prior to the date of this instruction may be taken to include recommendation.

6. Applicants reported by the assistant surgeon as permanently unfit will be discharged forthwith by the labour bureau. Those temporarily unfit will be instructed to apply again when recovered.

7. The forms will be filed by the labour bureau in order of index Nos.

8. All entertainments will be entered in the register of entertainments (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 107) by the labour bureau immediately after the man has passed medical inspection. As soon as all the entries for the day are complete, the labour bureau will pass the register by hand to the divisional officers concerned for signature, then to the D.A.C.A.F.A. to note and allot new numbers, and finally to the gate section to note and issue new tickets. It is essential that this procedure be completed on the day on which the men are entertained, and all concerned are requested to perform their part with a minimum of delay. If the divisional officer is not present the register must be signed provisionally, to prevent delay, by the senior representative of the department concerned and confirmed by the officer on his return.

9. Men will not be entertained during the last 3 days of the month unless urgently required.

**(c) Discharges, Procedure for.**

1. Once a man has been entertained, it is desirable to retain his services in the factory as long as he can give useful and profitable service, and to find by trial the job for which he is best fitted. For this reason the following procedure will be carried out in all cases.

2. Except in cases of serious breaches of discipline it is desirable that discharges be made only at the end of a day and that they should take effect from the last working day of the month. Normally at least a week's notice of discharge should be given.

3. Men will not be sent on leave for want of work until this has been approved by the divisional officer. Such men will be automatically discharged at the end of the calendar month following grant of leave unless previously re-employed. If subsequently re-employed within two months of the grant of leave the discharge will be cancelled and leave to cover period of absence will be granted. The labour bureau is responsible for putting all such cases forward for sanction in factory orders. Leave for want of work should be given only in cases where there is some prospect of re-employment in a short time.

4. Men who are absent for 7 consecutive days without notice will be discharged on the seventh day and such men may not subsequently be reinstated without break of service unless their divisional officers are satisfied that they were unable to notify the cause of their absence. On the seventh day of a man's absence the gate section will notify the labour bureau which will apply to the section concerned for his discharge recommendation unless notice of reasons for absence has been received.

5. When it is desired to recommend a man for discharge or for leave for want of work the section concerned will complete minute I of the form (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 112) and forward it to the labour bureau. Except in exceptional cases this must reach the labour bureau not later than 11 a.m. on the day the man is due to leave the factory.

6. In cases where the man is recommended for re-employment the labour bureau will endeavour to find employment for him and if there are vacancies will complete minute II of the form accordingly. To enable the necessary enquiries to be made it is essential that the form be sent to the labour bureau as many days ahead as possible and sections are requested to co-operate to this end. If the man is accepted for transfer the discharge form will be destroyed. If he is rejected the section rejecting him will complete minute III.

7. If no suitable vacancy can be found, the labour bureau will make an entry in the register of discharges (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 113) or register of leave for want of work and will submit it by hand with the record of service (M. & S. Fy. Form No. 106) and the discharge form (No. 112) to the divisional officer for sanction. This will be done once a day. When all the entries are complete the labour bureau will then pass the register by hand to the D.A.C.A.F.A. and gate section to note. In the absence of the divisional officer procedure will be as detailed in paragraph 9 of standard instruction No. 20.

8. After sanction has been obtained the labour bureau will return the form to the section as authority for discharge or leave. In no case is the man to be considered as discharged or on leave until this authority has been received. The forms will be returned to the labour bureau for filing.

9. When finally discharging men, sections will provide them with the old pass out form (O.F. 1932) on which must be stated the man's section, number, the word "discharged" and reason for discharge.

The gate pass (O.F. 1932) will be made out in triplicate. One copy to L.B., one to gate for passing the man out and one retained in the book. On receipt of the pass L.B. will enter the man's name and reason for discharge in history sheet or record of service and submit to the divisional officer for note.

10. The discharge certificate (Form No. O.F. 1660) will be handed to the man by the labour bureau when he is finally paid up, unless previous application has been made for it, to enable the applicant to obtain work elsewhere.

11. Discharged men recommended for re-employment will be registered by the labour bureau in the list of applicants, and, other things being equal, will be given priority over other applicants.

12. If a discharged man is not recommended for re-employment it will be understood that he is not a desirable workman and steps will be taken by the labour bureau to ensure that he is not re-employed in the factory.

13. At the end of each month the names of men who are due for discharge under paragraph 3 above will be entered in the register of discharges and submitted for sanction.

14. Heads of sections are permitted to discharge men whose services are not more than 1 year. If the service is over 1 year but less than 2 years the group officer's sanction is required.

If the service is over 2 years superintendent's sanction must be obtained, and a concise statement submitted stating reason for suggested discharge.

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## THE SUPERINTENDENT, RIFLE FACTORY, ISHAPORE.

The Rifle Factory, Ishapore, deals with the production of rifles and their components, and of sword bayonets, and repair of machine guns and manufacture of machine gun components required for the purpose.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) *Extent of Migration*.—From local villages, 45 per cent. ; from other districts of Bengal, 14 per cent. ; from other districts of Behar, 7 per cent. ; from other districts of U.P., 24 per cent. ; from other districts of Punjab, 3 per cent. ; from other districts of Orissa, 6 per cent. ; from other remaining provinces, 1 per cent.

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of Migration*.—Heavy cooly work, particularly from Punjab ; Khalasi cooly work, particularly from District Dacca.

2. *Contact with Villages*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return*.—Ninety per cent. of labour from Orissa and Behar are agriculturalists and go home once a year during the harvest time.

(ii) *Extent of permanent labour force*.—About 40 per cent. live in local villages.

3. (i) Since the introduction of labour bureau in the factory in 1920, recruitment has been highly satisfactory. Maintenance of a register of employment and grading according to trade tests prescribed for each class of work and open to all, have put a stop to promotion of the undeserving, have given chance for promotion of the deserving and abuses in recruitment have ceased.

(iii) (a) Some sort of public labour bureau would no doubt be of great use.

(b) Introduction of a labour bureau in each mill or factory with a man of good education and personality at its head, responsible to the supreme head of the mill or factory, may solve the problem of recruitment as well as that of efficiency and welfare.

4. *Extent and Effects of Disturbance of Family Life.*—Causes an increase of the percentage of absence and consequent decrease in earning and efficiency (of local labourers only) by 5 per cent.

8. Since 1920, efforts have been made to reduce turnover of labour with the results that turnover has been reduced to 550 in 1927 on an establishment of 3,095, and 729 in 1928 on an establishment of 3,624, from 3,900 in 1919 when the factory strength was 4,000.

(i) *Average Duration of Employment.*—Five years and two months.

(ii) *Extent of Casual Employment.*—Practically nil.

(iii) *Absenteeism*—(a) *Extent, character and causes.*—Average percentage absence from all causes, 14 per cent. ; on account of long leave to go home generally once a year, 5 per cent. ; on account of sickness, 5 per cent. ; causal absence for family troubles, etc., 2 per cent. ; absent without leave, 2 per cent.

(b) *Seasonal or otherwise.*—One month a year during harvest time generally in case of men recruited from Behar and Orissa, who are mostly agriculturists.

(c) *Time and wages lost.*—Average per month, 14 per cent.

## II.—Staff Organisation.

13. (iii) The workmen's welfare committee consists of 25 members, all of whom are representatives of different classes of employees. The extent of their work is mainly limited to settlement of disputes, questions of holidays, recreation and such other welfare activities. The committee has gradually been growing to be of great value to the employees as well as to the management.

(iv) There is a factory Whitley council, consisting of two representatives from the official and two from the staff side. This only deals with the affairs of the European staff.

14. *Time-keeping, Piece-work, Contract and Attendance Registers.*—Men on productive sections, mostly on gang or individual piece-work. Men on non-productive sections, mostly on day-work.

(i) *How and by whom kept and checked.*—Attendance kept by labour bureau and checked by the accounts branch. Piece-work cards kept by the section staff and checked by the accounts branch.

(ii) *How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.*—Cashier of the factory in the presence of a gazetted officer.

## III.—Housing.

16. By Army Department: At present occupied, 700 quarters for accommodation of 20 per cent. of the establishment. Recently built and now ready for occupation: 84 better type quarters for clerks and supervisor artificers.

17. Land already acquired by Government on the other side of the railway station for providing more quarters for workmen.

18. (i) The scheme already accepted by the Army Department provided for accommodation for more than 50 per cent. of the total establishment.

(ii) The design of the new type quarters has been prepared from a sanitary point of view and they are being fitted with water-borne sewage. A scheme is in hand to provide the same for the old quarters.

(iii) Provision has been made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.

19. All quarters are occupied—the existing quarters being less than half the actual requirements.

20. *Rent Rates in various classes.*—Half the rate at which charged in the locality.

22. There is a marked increase in the percentage attendance and efficiency of those living in the workmen's quarters in comparison with those living in adjacent



villages. It has been seen in several cases that when a skilled worker suffering from sickness and other family encumbrances causing bad attendance and consequent inability to earn profit, and otherwise good, has been provided with family quarters in the factory lines, it immediately improves his attendance and health.

#### IV.—Health.

23. *General Health Conditions of Workers.*—(i) *Figures of mortality.*—Ten per thousand per annum. The real figure is perhaps more—amongst employees discharged every month for long absence and failure to reply when written to, there may be some cases of death not reported to us.

(iv) *Dietary.*—Chiefly rice.

(v) *Physique.*—Bad, except in cases of heavy coolies from Punjab.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities provided.*—(ii) By Army Department: (a) One first aid dispensary at the factory gate; (b) one central casualty ward with six beds; (c) one central dispensary with a medical officer of the Military Department in charge, one assistant surgeon and two sub-assistant surgeons.

(iv) *Provision for women doctors trained midwives or dais.*—At present a midwife. Attempts are being made to get sanction for the provision of a woman sub-assistant surgeon.

25. *Extent to which Medical Facilities are utilised*—(i) *Generally.*—Very fully.

(ii) *By women.*—To a great extent.

26. *Sanitary Arrangements*—(i) *Latrines.*—Installation of a water-borne sewage scheme of latrines is in hand.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—Tube wells in the new quarters and filtered water in the factory and existing factory quarters.

(iii) *Bathing and washing.*—Arrangement satisfactory and still being improved.

30. (ii) No sickness insurance exists at present, but in deserving cases grants are made from the fine fund. A scheme for introducing a provident fund for the workmen is under consideration of Government.

(iii) Very little difficulty here. The men are quite ready to accept western medicine. The medical staff appears sufficient.

#### V. Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

32. *Extent of Welfare Work*—(i) *By employers.*—The statement (A) shows all the welfare activities undertaken by the labour bureau.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—By the workmen's welfare committee.

33. The employment manager is in charge of the labour bureau and his staff under the direct control of the superintendent (for duties of employment manager see Enclosure B).

34. (i) Approval of the Army Department has been obtained for a well-designed canteen inside the factory for feeding 1,000 workers at a time in the tiffin period at a cost of Rs. 45,000. Building will be completed in a year's time.

(ii) A playground has been provided. A club building with tennis and badminton grounds and a library have been established at a cost of Rs. 18,000 by the Army Department.

(iii) A theatrical stage at a cost of Rs. 2,700 from the factory. Projectors and other accessories for a cinema show at a cost of approximately Rs. 2,000.

35. The employees appear to appreciate these.

36. (i) There is a night school for learning English and arithmetic and an evening class for learning a mechanical trade to qualify for better jobs in the factory.

(iv) The tendency to utilize all the educational facilities had been increasing, the number of students has also increased.

37. *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*—Gratuities are sanctioned from the fine fund of the factory in accordance with Section 481 of C.S.R. There is a proposal for the introduction of a provident fund for all workers.

38. The Rifle Factory Co-operative Society was started in 1921.

## VI.—Education.

## 40. (i) The Rifle Factory Primary School—

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Financial aspect—Bengal Government grant .. | Rs. 2,300 per annum. |
| Army Department grant ..                    | Rs. 2,800 per annum. |
|   | Rs. 5,100 per annum. |

(ii) Boy Artisan School for boy artisans in which a special curriculum is followed and the factory night school, where attendance of all boys is compulsory.

41. A statement showing the scheme of vocational training undertaken by the factory is attached (Enclosure D).

42. *Effect of Education on Standard of Living and Industrial Efficiency of Workers.*—The standard of living and efficiency are ever on the increase.

## VII.—Safety.

44. Average number of accidents including all slight accidents—fifty occurring a year—factory strength being 3,600. Most of these accidents are merely cuts or bruises, but they have to be reported in accordance with the Factory Act.

45. *Causes.*—Usually carelessness.

46. As soon as an accident occurs a board of enquiry is held to find out the cause and to suggest remedial steps and action is taken on that recommendation.

48. The factory first-aid dispensary takes preliminary action and when necessary sends to the medical officer for further action.

## VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

53. (i) In ordinary cases a workman of the Ordnance Department gets full pay for one month and half pay for three months in accordance with Section 291 of the C.S.R., whereas according to Compensation Act no pay is allowed for first ten days and half pay from the eleventh day. In the Ordnance Department the C.S.R. or the Compensation Act, whichever is more advantageous to the workmen is applied.

## IX.—Hours.

55. *Hours Worked per Week and per Day*—(i) *Normal*, i.e., as determined by custom or agreement.—43½ hours per week; 7½ hours per day.

(ii) *Actual*, i.e., including Overtime.—57½ hours per week; 9½ hours per day.

(iii) *Spreadover*, i.e., relation between Hours Worked and hours during which worker is on call.—7.45 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.; total 8½ hours, including one hour for interval, and up to 6.30 p.m. when on overtime, i.e., 10½ hours for 9½ hours' work.

56. Six days per week; holiday on Sunday.

## XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average daily rate, Re. 1-1 anna 4 pies per diem. Average earnings, including profits on piece-work, per month, Rs. 33 per month.

97. Day and piece-work rates increased in 1920—approximately 50 per cent.

98. *Amounts sent to Villages.*—Through Labour Bureau, Rs. 51,000 per annum, i.e., 4 per cent. of total payment. Direct—not known.

101. *Methods of Fixing Wages*—(ii) *Other means.*—The schedule of standard wages prepared after comparison of all classes of labour rates in 1920 has been followed. Men on employment have to pass prescribed trade tests and are rated according to test.

102. *Basis of Payment for Overtime and Sunday Work.*—At the ordinary rate.

106. *Deductions*—(i) *Extent of Fixing.*—½ day's pay for each day's absence without leave, up to 3 days' pay for misconduct or bad work—average Rs. 800 per month out of the total factory strength 3,600.

(ii) *Other Deductions.*—House-rent and co-operative society's recoveries.

(iii) *Utilization of Fines.*—Only for the benefit of the employees and their children.

(iv) *Desirability of Legislation.*—Not necessary as far as factories under the Army Department are concerned.

107. *Periods of Wage Payment*—(i) *Periods for which Wages paid.*—For each calendar month.

(ii) *Periods elapsing before payment.*—Varying from ten to fourteen days.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation.*—Not necessary as far as factories under the Army Department are concerned.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed wages.*—Credited to Government, but paid to the employee if claimed subsequently and satisfactory explanation given.

108. (ii) A census was taken in 1920 and the total debt of all the employees amounted to six lakhs of rupees. The Co-operative Society started in 1921 has much freed the workmen from the money-lending *Kabulis*, who charge interest at the rate of 2 annas per rupee per month. Previously these *Kabulis* were found waiting at the factory gates, and specially on pay days, in order to extort money from the employees. This has now completely ceased.

110. (i) Long leave taken one month per annum generally. Percentage absence, including casual absence or leave taken, 14 per cent.

(ii) Leave is granted when applied for.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Efficiency increased since 1920 by 27 per cent.

113. Expressed in work efficiency, Indian labour, skilled or unskilled, is definitely inferior to European western labour.

Expressed in cost efficiency, Indian skilled labour is in general slightly more efficient than European western labour, while unskilled labour similarly expressed is definitely more efficient.

115. (ii) As a result of increased rest period from half an hour to one hour, although working hours have been reduced from 46 hours to 44½ hours, outturn has increased considerably.

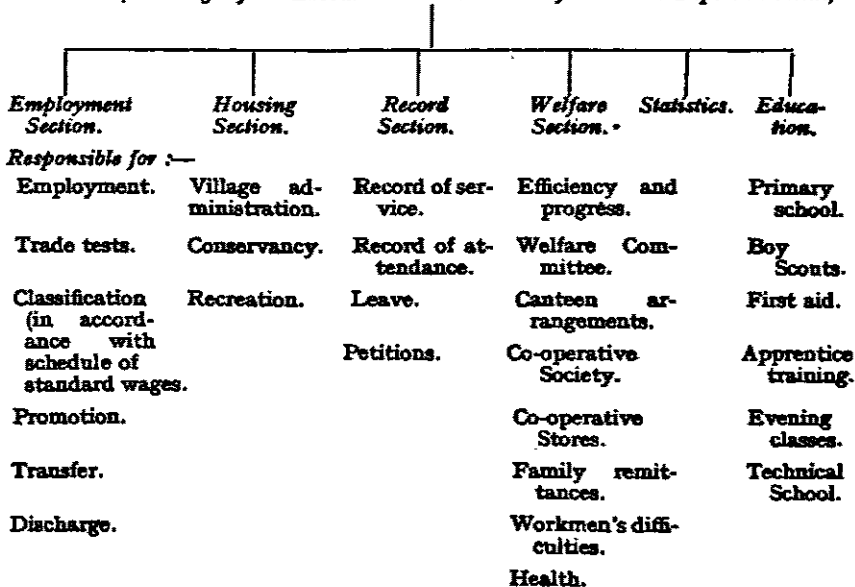
116. *Possible methods of securing increased efficiency.*—A canteen arrangement inside the factory in accordance with requirements of the workers is essentially necessary.

#### ENCLOSURE A.

#### LABOUR BUREAU.

Employment Manager.

(In charge of the Labour Bureau and directly under the Superintendent.)



ENCLOSURE B.

Factory Standing Order, Part II.

*(Duties of Labour Employment Manager.)*

1. He is in charge of the Labour Bureau and responsible for its efficiency.
  2. He is personally responsible that men on entertainment are rated in accordance with the Schedule of Standard Wages.
  3. He is personally responsible for accuracy of all increment forms in accordance with the Schedule of Standard Wages and special orders.
  4. He initials all entries affecting pay in Records of Services.
  5. He is personally responsible that strict impartiality is observed in transfers and discharges of men on reduction of establishment.
  6. He is personally responsible that men are promptly paid up on discharge and when proceeding on long leave.
  7. He sanctions all leave (without pay) of temporary and extra establishments.
  8. He investigates promptly all petitions and brings to the immediate notice of the superintendent all requiring executive action.
  9. He is personally responsible that the Factory Act and Rules are complied with, so far as employment of labour is concerned.
  10. He is President of the Management Committee of the Factory Schools.
  11. He studies welfare measures and economic conditions.
  12. He is responsible for the employment and technical training of apprentices.
  13. He watches fluctuation in the load of sections on both productive and non-productive labour and takes action for keeping the load exactly in accordance with outturn.
  14. He investigates into the causes of excessive waste in sections and takes necessary action if due to inefficient labour.
  15. He studies labour causes and suggests measures for increasing efficiency of labour.
  16. He is responsible for taking action under Workmen's Compensation Act.
- . . . . .

ENCLOSURE D.

Rifle Factory, Ishapore.

(Vocational Training—Mechanical Engineering.)

| —                      | Workshop Training.  | Technical Training.   | Maximum age at entry.                              | Minimum educational standard on entry.    | Fees charged.                             | Subsistence allowance given.   |
|------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| I. Student Apprentice. | General training in Mechanical Engineering. 5 years course.   | In factory class rooms and laboratories, to Engineering Degree standard.  | 19 years unless specially qualified educationally. | Intermediate Science examination.         | Examination fee of Rs. 3 only.            | Rs. 20 for those who are residents of places within 30 miles of Ishapore. Rs. 30 for others. Annual increment Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 according to proficiency attained. |
| II. Trade Apprentice.  | Special training in one Engineering trade combined with reduced amount of general training. 5 years course.       | In factory class rooms and laboratories; to standard below that for Student Apprentices.                            | 18 years unless specially qualified educationally. | Matriculation with additional Mathematics | Examination fee of Rs. 3 only.            |  |
| III. Boy Artisan       | Special training in one trade only.   | In the Primary School, special classes are held in English, Drawing, Mathematics, Elementary Physics and Chemistry. | 17 years minimum age 15 years.                     | 6th class of High English Schools.        | Nil.                                      | 1st year—6 as. p.d.<br>2nd year—8 as. p.d.<br>3rd year—10 as. p.d.<br>4th year—12 as. p.d.<br>5th year—14 as. p.d.   |
| IV. Technical School.  | (a) A thorough knowledge of metal and woodworking tools.<br>(b) Elementary metal and woodworking. 3 years course. | In the Primary School in English reading, writing, speaking and arithmetic.   | 15 years minimum age 12 years                      | 5th class of High English Schools.        | Admission fee Re. 1<br>Monthly fee Re. 1. | Nil.   |
| V. Primary School.     | Nil.  | Elementary knowledge of English, Arithmetic and Drawing.  | 12 years minimum age 8 years.                      | Knowledge of Alphabets.                   | Admission fee Re. 1 only.                 | Nil.   |

Mr. G. R. DAIN, AGENT, THE CALCUTTA TRAMWAYS CO., LTD.,  
CALCUTTA.

I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Our labour is actually recruited in Calcutta, but considerably less than half are inhabitants of Bengal and to the best of our knowledge only about 25 per cent. are persons who really belong to Calcutta and its immediate vicinity.

A detailed statement of the provinces to which our workers belong is attached as Appendix A. The statement does not include head office clerical staff and the like, which would bring our numbers up to rather over 6,000, but taking our three main heads of employment, viz., traffic working (drivers and conductors), engineering (maintenance), and miscellaneous, the following table is an approximate summary of the situation :—

|                       | Numbers employed. | Bengal.   | Calcutta and immediate vicinity. |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
|                       |                   | Per cent. | Per cent.                        |
| Traffic working .. .. | 3,000             | 35        | 25                               |
| Engineering .. ..     | 2,000             | 50        | 35                               |
| Miscellaneous .. ..   | 1,000             | 5         | Negligible                       |
| Total .. ..           | 6,000             | 35        | 25                               |

The above figures must be regarded as approximate since I have rounded them off so as to prevent the detail, given in Appendix A, clouding the main results.

The men coming from Bengal come from the agricultural districts in the eastern portions of the Province, and those from outside Bengal from Behar and the United Provinces, again from agricultural areas.

(ii) Presumably it is the inability of the land to maintain comfortably the numbers living on it which causes the Beharis and the men from Eastern Bengal to migrate to Calcutta to seek work. It is the construction of railways which has made this migration to large cities possible, and I do know of areas where the advent of means of transport has had the effect of depopulating the area instead of increasing its population. I feel that in such areas living must have been hard, and that the provision of means of transport for those who could obtain work elsewhere and remit money to their homes, quickly led to a considerable proportion of the male population leaving such areas. In many parts of this country the land has been overloaded as much as everything else.

(iii) In recent years there appears to have been a considerable rise in the number of men coming to Calcutta from Orissa. They are thrifty people and send a very large proportion of their earnings to their homes. There has also been a large influx of Sikhs. I am inclined to think they are mechanically minded people. Although we have not many ourselves, I have also come in contact with a good many Sikhs who have an aptitude for electrical work.

2. (i) Men employed in traffic working of good behaviour and regular in attendance are granted 14 days' leave on full pay per annum. A very large proportion go to their homes. Many prefer to take 28 days on half pay which we allow. Again quite a considerable proportion prefer to wait two years and take 28 days on full pay or 56 days on half pay which we also allow. The latter are mainly Beharis who have farther to travel to their homes. Further details are given in connection with sub-head 94.

(ii) Broadly speaking it may be taken that the whole of the 6,000 posts comprising our establishment are permanent. Casual labour is employed for special work, but only to a small extent. The staff employed on traffic working can stay in the service until they have to be superannuated. The same applies to the engineering work save that it may occasionally be necessary to employ a few extra coolies at certain seasons. Further details occur in connection with sub-head 8.

3. (i) In the main our recruitment concerns drivers and conductors. Our staff employed in our works and sub-stations are very stable and vacancies are largely provided for by apprentices and men trained by ourselves. So far as drivers and conductors are concerned, when recruits are required a notification is made at our depots situated at various points in the city. The number of men applying for work is infinitely greater than the vacancies offering. It is not unusual to have several hundreds applying for some three or four dozen vacancies. Preference is given to men introduced by servants of the company of some service and good behaviour. There is no question of the applicants being in possession of qualifications as in the main they are to all intents and purposes illiterate although we try

to obtain conductors who can read a little. They are medically examined, and then spend from six weeks to two months in our training school, an institution which will bear inspection. During training they are given clothing and free transport to the school.

(ii) I cannot at the present time see any means of improvement, although I recognize that this is not a reasonable attitude to take up. Dealing as we do with so many illiterate men who have not previously been employed (other than in agriculture at their own homes) I cannot see an alternative to our present method of trying to obtain the connections and relatives of good men. I do not like it because the appointments should really be open to all and selection made on the basis of qualifications, but I cannot see any alternative until we have some form of primary education. Even when primary education becomes more or less widespread, years must intervene before the certificates carry any value in the matter of integrity.

(iii) While educational qualifications do not exist among the labouring classes, and credentials are not produceable among any but the better craftsmen (who are rarely out of work) I cannot see the slightest use in establishing employment agencies.

4. It is true that the majority of the labourers coming from villages upcountry to Calcutta, do not bring their families with them. This must of necessity lead to disturbance of family life, but from such experience as I have had of Indian social conditions in agricultural areas, I do not think that this has quite the same effect as the removal of a considerable proportion of the male population might have under European conditions. I have formed the opinion that in the small villages one sees almost continuously from the train, the standard of morality is high, possibly as the result of the publicity in which all live, and possibly also to a greater extent as the outcome of the fact that the sex impulses among these people are likely to be guided by physiological factors far nearer to nature (abundance of food, dietary generally, etc.), than by the external influences. Certainly our own observations show that the upcountry men behave better than those who actually belong to Calcutta. For these reasons I am inclined to think that the disturbance of family life in the villages is having no very serious effect, and further, that the men who migrate to us do not suffer morally to any considerable extent by their absence from their families. The majority of our upcountry men come from the ordinary small hutted villages. Their postal addresses indicate that this is so.

8. (i) Of the engineering staff of two thousand, *three-quarters* who are craftsmen of one sort or another have served as shown in the following table :—

|                                      | Per cent. |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Over 15 years' service .. .. .       | 15        |
| Over 10 years' service .. .. .       | 20        |
| Over 5 years' service .. .. .        | 30        |
| Five years' service and less .. .. . | 35        |

Of the remaining *quarter* of the engineering staff who are coolies, khalasies, etc. :—

About 25 per cent. have more than 5 years' service.  
Between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. have about 2 years' service.  
The remainder come and go on short terms.

Turning to the traffic working staff of about 3,000 men, the following are the figures :—

|                                       | Per cent. |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Over 15 years' service .. .. .        | 3         |
| Over 10 years' service .. .. .        | 4         |
| Over 5 years' service .. .. .         | 17        |
| Five years' service and under .. .. . | 76        |

Of the remaining 1,000 hands employed in miscellaneous departments, about *one-third* have service as follows :—

|                                | Per cent. |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Over 20 years' service .. .. . | 12        |
| Over 10 years' service .. .. . | 40        |
| Over 5 years' service .. .. .  | 30        |
| Under 5 years' service .. .. . | 18        |

Of the remaining *two-thirds*, 60 per cent. (being mainly coolies and khalasies employed on the permanent way) leave within a year. Only 8 per cent. serve over 10 years, only 17 per cent. over 5 years, and 15 per cent. over a year.

(ii) As already stated under detailed head 2 (ii), there is very little casual employment in the true sense. In the busy season the permanent way department sometimes take on as many as 150 coolies which represents about 2 per cent. of our total workers.

9. Apprentices are only employed in our workshop which engages some 1,000 hands. The best generally remain with us. I have so far been unable to trace the Act of 1859 referred to, but we have our own rules governing a course of five years which, if completed, will turn out a good craftsman capable of obtaining employment almost at any time. The real difficulty occurs as the result of the man who has learnt something desiring to obtain more than his subsistence wage as an apprentice, and setting up for himself with inadequate skill and a still more inadequate plant which he is never able to maintain properly. Chowringhee itself provides striking examples of this. The number of small men who have set up tyre vulcanizing plants in Calcutta of a poor order is remarkable. A technical person can see that the tools and machinery are incapable of dealing with the work offering in any but an unsatisfactory and slipshod manner. A somewhat similar state of affairs came to pass in England in the early days of the bicycle, and again in the early days of the motor. It is a natural state of affairs, but not, I think, a very desirable one.

## II.—Staff Organization.

11. The managing and senior technical staff have normally been selected from electrical or transport undertakings at home. The same remark applies to some of the most senior foremen. We have two Indian heads of departments, namely, the cash and investigation departments.

12. (i) In the earlier days of the undertaking the subordinate supervising staff were partly recruited from home. This obviously had to be the case as persons with the requisite technical knowledge were not available in India. A considerable proportion of the subordinate supervising posts are now however, filled by Anglo-Indians and Indians who have obtained them on promotion. It is still, however, necessary to obtain men for these posts from home from time to time, partly for the reason that it is far the easiest method of keeping pace with modern practice.

(ii) I will not deal with our workshop and engineering hands. Their training follows the lines obtaining in all similar works in India. I will only deal with our drivers, conductors and traffic working staff generally. The training of the drivers and conductors is carried out at our training school at Tollygunge. From among the drivers and conductors our inspectors are selected by promotion after courses of instruction, and again there is further promotion to district inspector and through intermediate grades to traffic assistant, the highest outdoor subordinate supervising post. At the moment we have one Indian traffic assistant, the remaining six being Europeans or Anglo-Indians who have been trained out here having started in a special class of inspectors. Illiteracy is the real bar to promotion in the lower grades and lack of knowledge of English a difficulty in the higher grades. Our real trouble out here is the production of the foreman class who in England constitutes the framework of every undertaking. Just as the N.C.O.'s are the backbone of a regiment so any organization must depend entirely for its proper functioning on the foreman class, the more senior supervising class being solely concerned with the duty of seeing that all parts of the machine are working properly and in unison with each other. So far we have not succeeded in producing the foreman class in India to any extent. The root cause of the failure to evolve Indian foreman is the lack of primary education. During the years a craftsman is attaining skill at his work, the lack of education renders him unable to improve his general knowledge of his subject. His illiteracy will leave him a workman always. Generally speaking it is necessary that foremen should speak and write English because they are concerned with written orders, reports, etc., but it appears to me that it is the lack of the start which some primary education would give, which has militated against good craftsmen going higher. Sirdars cannot, so far as we are concerned, be regarded as foremen. They are simply the producers of various classes of workmen, and as a rule, have no technical skill. They can see that the worker is present and works, but beyond this they do not supervise the working. It has been said that India does not produce men capable of exercising the necessary control over others. I do not think this is true because of the very existence of the Sirdar class. The trouble is that this class cannot be recruited, as it should be, by selection on merit from below. Sirdars are normally merely convenient intermediaries between the workmen and European or Anglo-Indian foremen.

13. (i) Taking it all round I consider the relations good. There is really extraordinarily little insubordination which seems to me to point to reasonable relations. It is of course very difficult for there to be very close relations between the European subordinate supervising staff and the workmen, but there is between the former and the inspectors and consequently through them with the men. I find that the European subordinate supervising staff know the capacities and characters of their men pretty well and for this to be so there must exist avenues of contact.



**IV.—Health.**

23. Many of the attendances are for minor injuries and ailments and as everything is free the facilities provided are likely to be used to the full. I do not consider the figures unreasonable, in fact I think they are good. All things considered and taking into account that the work of both drivers and conductors in particular is hard, especially in the hot weather, and further that I know the conditions under which many of the men live are bad, I feel that the general health is reasonably good.

24. (i) The company employs two qualified medical men, one European and one Indian. Both are men under whom I would place myself for treatment. There are two fully equipped dispensaries on the system and all medicines are free. Certain emergency remedies are kept at depots together with first aid equipment. We also subscribe to certain hospitals. We vaccinate and give cholera injections free.

25. (i) Out of our total labour force of 6,000 men the average attendances at our dispensaries are 94.3 per day or 1.6 per cent. of the staff.

**V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education.)**

32. (i) The welfare work which I undertook on joining the company fell under two heads, namely: (a) the relief of debt by the formation of a co-operative credit bank, and (b) organized games and amusements.

Taking head (a) our little bank has helped the staff to a considerable extent. The religious and social customs of the country demand from Indians from time to time expenditure out of all proportion to their incomes. I refer particularly to marriage, shrad and like ceremonies. There are also frequent demands on account of house repair particularly during the rains. Members of the Anglo-Indian community are always in debt, with brilliant exceptions. This effort has done much to bring myself and the heads of departments (assisted by competent Indian members of the managing committee) into closer contact with the workers and their difficulties.

Taking head (b) I found that the men among themselves were unable to run games clubs even although assisted financially. The matter was therefore taken in hand by a committee appointed by the company, and with the aid of grants from the fine fund we have been able to run inter-depot football, and compete successfully with outside teams. We have also been able to provide games such as volley ball, etc. at certain depots, and in the off-season run Indian concerts and entertainments. Physical drill is being introduced as part of the curriculum at our training school. We are unable to carry out more intimate welfare work among our staff because living as they do so entirely outside the company's jurisdiction when they are off duty, there are no means of taking any part in the improvement of their domestic conditions.

The only educational work done by the company is the training of the men in first aid.

33. We employ a whole-time sports and amusements official who works under the games committee, and who was in fact an athlete of some repute in Calcutta.

**IX.—Hours.**

55. (i) Details are given in Appendix C.\*

In our workshops, employing over 1,000 men, we work to a 48-hour week and 8½-hour day, with 5½ hours on Saturdays. Sunday is a rest day.

Our traffic working staff, involving some 3,000 men, are based on a 48-hour week and 8-hour day, with one rest day with pay for every six worked days. Our time tables are worked out so that every tour of duty is eight hours from "roll call to pay in." Although a man is entitled to be paid for a rest day after every six days worked, a very large number (particularly the up-country men) present themselves for work on the seventh day, and if work is available they obtain, in effect, eight days' pay for seven days' work. The up-country men have come here to work, and save to remit home, and for leave.

There is a group of men comprising some 200 who appear to work extraordinary hours. In reality, these men have a comparatively slack time. They are breakdown gangs and the like who simply live in their quarters at certain points on the system waiting for calls.

(ii) Among the engineering staff mainly employed in our workshop, the overtime required rarely involves more than 20 per cent. of the staff for more than two hours. In effect, the hours worked are 3 per cent. greater than normal.

\* Not printed.

Although our traffic working staff are based on an 8-hour day, yet the actual hours worked come to between 9 and 10 hours. This is mainly the result of delays on the road throwing out time tables, but also to a very large extent to absentees making it necessary for men to work extra trips.

### XII.—Wages.

96. Full details are given in Appendix D.\* I will attempt to give a summary.

Among our 2,000 engineering staff the wages range from Rs. 14 for the lowest paid coolie to Rs. 73 for expert machine hands. The earnings correspond very closely, the amounts actually drawn being on the average Re. 1 greater and Rs. 3 greater than the wage rates respectively. Overtime is only worked occasionally, and among the engineering staff the attendance is regular on the average, so that taking a period of a year, the occasions on which the earnings are less than the wages are rare.

Among our 3,000 traffic working employees I will only deal with the drivers and conductors, because among the inspectors and subordinate supervising staff there is almost exact correspondence between the wages and earnings.

The figures for the conductors and drivers are as follows :—

|                    | Wages.   |          | Earnings. |          |
|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
|                    | Minimum. | Maximum. | Minimum.  | Maximum. |
| Conductors .. .. . | 24       | 35       | 25        | 50       |
| Drivers .. .. .    | 24       | 35       | 25        | 50       |

In effect the wages scales are slightly better than they appear, owing to the fact that the amounts given are treated as being the pay applying to a 26-day month.

The scales of pay above the post of driver and conductor, that is to say, for inspectors and other subordinate supervising staff range from Rs. 45 to Rs. 125, with traffic assistants on an average of Rs. 250 to the more senior with free quarters.

97. Details are also given in Appendix D\* and the following is a summary. Among our 2,000 engineering workers the following increases are in operation to-day over the figures for the year 1919-20 :—

| Pay in 1919-20. | Increase per cent. involved<br>by current rate of pay. |
|-----------------|--|
| Up to 10        | 60   |
| .. 15           | 47   |
| .. 20           | 40   |
| .. 25           | 38   |
| .. 30           | 33   |
| .. 35           | 26   |
| .. 40           | 25   |
| .. 50           | 22   |
| Over 50         | 20   |

As regards the drivers and conductors who form the great majority of our traffic working staff, the increases have involved the scale of 1920, which was from Rs. 16 to Rs. 20 by biennial increments of Re. 1, being increased to the following scale :—

|                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1st year of service .. .. .        | Rs. 24 |
| 2nd .. .. .                        | .. 25  |
| 3rd to 5th year of service .. .. . | .. 26  |
| 6th to 7th .. .. .                 | .. 27  |
| 8th to 10th .. .. .                | .. 28  |
| 11th to 15th .. .. .               | .. 30  |
| 16th upwards .. .. .               | .. 35  |

The increases among the other traffic staff correspond closely to the increases among the engineering staff given on the previous page.

\* Not printed.

99. The men working outside are provided with uniform free on a scale which is sufficient. The uniform includes an overcoat and waterproof. Washing is also free.

101. (i) Our wages have in the main been fixed by an agreement come to in 1921. In that year there was serious labour trouble, and a committee appointed by the Government of Bengal suggested scales which were accepted by the company and have been in operation ever since, with minor improvements made from time to time as occasion required, chiefly in the middle grades.

104. We have not for some years experienced any labour shortage. The reverse is the case.

105. *Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.*—With the extraordinary difference in working conditions which exist all over India I cannot see any possibility of the statutory fixation of minimum wages, which would be fair to anybody.

106. (i) The great majority of our men are on a pay of about Rs. 30 per month, and the fines range from 4 annas for minor delinquencies to Rs. 5 for serious offences. A fine of Rs. 5 would in most cases be deducted in two instalments. I have on occasions inflicted fines up to about Rs. 20 for very serious offences where the alternative would have been discharge, but in such cases the fine would be deducted at the rate of Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per month, so that it is in effect a reduction of pay for a period. The fines are 47 per cent. of the wages paid.

(ii) In a limited number of posts, men are required to provide a fidelity deposit, and we allow them to build this up by instalments deducted from their pay. Workers may also buy clothing over and above the allowed scale and have the cost debited to them. This also applies to replacing lost articles, but the monthly deductions are always on an easy scale.

(iii) Fines are used mainly for our games, amusements, concerts and the like. Grants are also made to relieve specially deserving cases, and on occasions for the payment of the fares of men discharged or leaving the service and proceeding to their homes. In fact, the fund is a means of dealing with any deserving case for which we cannot otherwise provide. We are most careful that the incidence of the help given is among the grades which contribute most largely to it.

(iv) If this head refers to the possibility of abolishing fines or bringing them under close control, I am against it. Apart from political agitators and the like, and the usual crowds of criminals which collect in large cities, I consider the Indians, especially the country folk, law-abiding people. The real difficulty with them is their appalling proneness to petty delinquencies, individually of little account but collectively sufficient to break the heart of the stoutest persons engaged in the working of an undertaking employing any considerable labour force. The Calcutta roads are not made dangerous by the acts of drivers capable of forming cause for criminal prosecution, but by an accumulation of petty infringements which in the aggregate constitute a real danger. In my own concern it is again petty divergencies from known rules and instructions which involve the company in loss, either by way of rendering a less efficient service to the public, or greater expenditure to make up for them.

If we are deprived of the right to fine I can foresee a far greater labour "turnover" as the result of the necessity to discharge, and a corresponding loss of contact between employer and employed.

107. (i) All wages (with the exception of about 15 persons who are employed at a daily rate and liable to discharge at a day's notice) are paid monthly.

(ii) *Periods lapsing before payment.*—Ten to fifteen days. At the very worst, eighteen days.

(iii) *Desirability of legislation (a) to regulate periods, (b) to prevent delay in payment.*—So far as we are concerned it is immaterial whether we pay on the first of the month or the fifteenth. I would sooner pay on the first than later, but there are conditions against us in regard to which I would prefer to give oral evidence, and consider the Commission would do well to obtain visual evidence.

(iv) *Treatment of unclaimed wages.*—We make a serious effort to find the men or their relatives entitled to them, and otherwise carry them in suspense indefinitely.

108. I should imagine the conditions we work under are much the same as those which appertain all over India, namely, that the workers are always a month behind to the *bansis*. It is a special arrangement with which we cannot enter into competition.

109. Beyond rewards for good work, particularly in the matter of avoiding accidents, we have no profit-sharing arrangements. I do not consider that the country is ready for them.

110. Appendix E\* is attached detailing the leave given to all classifications of staff. Taking our traffic working staff which amounts to rather over half our total employees, they are granted 14 days' leave on full-pay or 28 days on half-pay after working 288 days in the preceding 12 months. This leave may be accumulated over two years to give 28 days full-pay or 56 days half-pay, a facility which is taken advantage of by the men living farther away.

The more settled employees, namely, the engineering staff, who have their homes in or near Calcutta are granted leave up to one month per annum without pay.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. They have kept pace with improved machinery and methods but are probably a little hard on the machinery in the matter of maintenance and liable to be slipshod in the improvement of methods.

113. This is the hardest question in the whole series. I can only make a comparison with the British workman. I have no other experience.

On the more skilled side I am comparing in my mind the machine hand and fitter on about £5 to £6 a week with his equivalent out here. The British workman is quicker by 20 per cent. He is more self-reliant by 40 per cent. By this I mean he requires less supervision and help by his foreman to this extent. The work he turns out in the end is better from the financial point of view by some 33½ per cent.

In regard to the purely labouring classes. As one grows older in the country one becomes amazed at the amount of work the ordinary Indian worker can do on the food one knows he lives on and the conditions under which he exists. There is extraordinary strength in most of the miserable specimens one sees doing manual labour, but the limit of physical performance (say weight lifted at a single effort) is less by some 30 per cent. than the pre-war British working man, and his speed of effort is certainly less by the same amount. I would put him down at about half or less the worth of the corresponding European labourer of the more virile countries.

114. (ii) My own view is that the better Indian craftsmen are able to keep pace with developments in machine tool making.

(iii) So far as we are concerned our plant is British or constructed out here on British lines.

(v) and (vi) The Indian worker is a bad timekeeper, a fact which for myself, I put down largely to overloading a poor physique.

(vii) I would refer to detailed head 11 (ii) where I have put down our inability to create a really good foreman class to lack of education.

115 (i) *Effect on production of changes in working hours.*—If one divides the 24 hours into 8 hours' rest, 8 hours' work and 8 hours' relaxation, it would appear that the last named period can be encroached upon considerably without much effect on efficiency.

(iv) *Housing.*—Undoubtedly there would be advantages in housing our staff. The first result would be better attendance and consequent reduction of the number of spare men which must be maintained. There would be many difficulties attached to the running of large blocks of quarters and I do not consider Bombay have made much of a success of their chawls. I am in a difficult position in regard to this question because on the one hand the provision of quarters would reduce my immediate troubles although I feel convinced that ultimately the provision of free (or nominally free) quarters is a bad principle. It reduces the sense of responsibility of the worker under any franchise he may become entitled to and tends to retain him a worker always.

(v) *Alterations in methods of remuneration.*—I am against piecework, at any rate on any considerable scale.

(vi) *Movements in Wage levels.*—The effect so far has been negligible.

(vii) *Legislative Enactments.*—The effect so far has been so small as to be hardly perceptible.

(viii) *Dietary.*—A thing which always amazes me is that the Indian worker can live on what he does. Presumably it must be the lack of necessity to make up body heat, and to some extent the source of mental energy, which accounts for the small quantity of nourishing food he can work upon without apparent change in his efficiency.

\* Not printed.

(ix) *Alcohol and Drugs*.—An effect is existent and perceptible among certain classes of workers but not so far a difficulty in any sense among our people.

(x) *Industrial Fatigue*.—I should consider that among our people industrial fatigue does not exist to an extent which affects their efficiency. Their outlook is so different from European peoples.

116. For myself I steadfastly believe that the solution of the problem of improving the labour situation in large industrial centres is cheap and efficient means of transport to far outlying suburbs and villages. It is the only solution of the ghastly conditions of overcrowding which exist in many parts of Calcutta. We must get our workers away to where they can live their own lives their own way, more nearly to that they live in their own villages. I admit even in their villages the standard is not particularly high, but it must be positively wonderful compared with the conditions of living in parts of Calcutta.

APPENDIX A. (Abridged).

General Census of Workers.

| Department.  | Bengal. | Bihar and Orissa. | United Provinces. | Others. | Total. |
|--|---------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|--------|
| Engineering, including stores ..                   | 1,209   | 446               | 306               | 93      | 2,054  |
| Traffic .. .. .                                    | 1,079   | 1,227             | 420               | 61      | 2,837  |
| Omnibus garages .. .. .                            | 82      | 31                | 47                | 11      | 171    |
| Permanent way department ..                        | 14      | 475               | 50                | 23      | 562    |
| Overhead and cable department                      | 19      | 109               | 13                | 7       | 148    |
| Head office department including traffic and cash. | 17      | 23                | 4                 | 7       | 51     |
| Grand Total .. .. .                                |         |                   |                   |         | 5,823  |

APPENDIX C.

| Grades of Labour.   | Hours of work of the various grades of labour.   |  |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|
|   | (a) Hours worked per week per day.   |  |   | (b) Days worked per week.  | (c) Intervals. Existing practice.   | (d) Days of rest. Existing practice.  |   |
|   | Normal.  | Actual including overtime.   | Spread over i.e. the relation between hours worked and hours during which the worker is on call.                          |  |   |   |   |
| <p>Engineering :—<br/>Mistries including Turners, Riveters, Fitters, etc.<br/>Coolies and Khalasis, Durwans, Peons, etc.</p>  | <p>Nonapuker and Howrah Works :—<br/>8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on week days and 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. on Saturdays or 48 hours a week.<br/>*Out Depots :—<br/>7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on week days and 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays or 54 hours a week.</p> | <p>Only about 20 per cent. are allowed to work a maximum of 2 hours' overtime daily.</p> | <p>Nonapuker and Howrah Works :—<br/>8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 9 hours.<br/>*Out Depots :—<br/>7 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 9 hours.</p> | <p>Nonapuker and Howrah Works :<br/>6 days.<br/>*Out Depots :—<br/>7 days.</p> | <p>Nonapuker and Howrah Works :<br/>1 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.<br/>*Out Depots :—<br/>10 a.m. to 11 a.m. for meal.</p> | <p>Nonapuker and Howrah Works :<br/>Sundays, Saturdays after 1.30 p.m. and 28 holidays during the year.<br/>Out Depots :—<br/>Saturdays and Sundays after 3 p.m. and on holidays after 2 p.m. (with pay.)</p> | <p>Working on Sundays and these holidays is optional for which an extra day's pay is granted.</p> |
| <p>Traffic :—<br/>Conductors (Trams and Bus) .. .. }<br/>Drivers (Tram) .. .. }<br/>Inspectors, Starters, Timekeepers, Head Starters and District Inspectors, *Bus Drivers, Cash Durwans, Peons, Pointsmen, Flagmen, etc.</p> | <p>8 hours a day or 48 hours a week.<br/>8 hours a day or 50 hours a week.</p>   | <p>9 to 10 hours a day or 54 to 60 hours a week.<br/>No overtime.</p>                    | <p>Nil. Only actual period work.</p>  | <p>6 days.<br/>7 days.</p>   | <p>Nil.</p>   | <p>One day for every six working days.<br/>Nil.</p>   | <p>Working on the seventh day optional for which an extra day's pay is granted.</p>               |

\* Out Depots at Belgatchia, Rajabazar, Park Circus, Kalighat, Tollygunge and Kiddyerpore.

| Grades of Labour.   | Hours of work of the various grades of labour.  |   |  |                           |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|
|   | (a) Hours worked per week per day.  |   |  | (b) Days worked per week. | (c) Intervals. Existing practice.                                | (d) Days of rest. Existing practice.                   |  |
|   | Normal.   | Actual including overtime.                    | Spread over i.e. the relation between hours worked and hours during which the worker is on call. |                           |  |  |  |
| Garages :—<br>Mistries including Fitters, etc., and Coolies and Khalasis.                       | 8 hours a day or 48 hours a week in two shifts, viz. :<br>I. 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 12 noon to 4 p.m.<br>II. 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. to 12 midnight. | No overtime.                                  | 48 hours against 60 hours, viz. :<br>6 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 2 p.m. to 12 midnight.                  | 6 days.                   | I. 10 a.m. to 12 noon or<br>II. 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. for meal. | One day off in a week after 6 days working (with pay). |  |
| Durwans and Sweepers .. .. .  | 8 hours a day or 56 hours a week.   | Do.   | Nil.   | 7 days.                   | Nil.   | Nil.   |  |
| Permanent Way Department :—<br>Mistries, Coolies, Lorry and Steam Roller Drivers, Durwans, etc. | 9 hours a day or 54 hours a week  | Ordinarily no overtime.                       | Nil. Only actual period of work.   | 6 days.                   | Nil.   | Sundays and 7 holidays during the year (with pay).     | Working on Sundays and these holidays is optional and for 7 hours work on such days an extra day's pay is granted. |
| Overhead and Cable Department :—<br>Mistries (Lhemen, etc.), Khalasis and Tower Wagon Drivers.  | 8 hours a day or 48 hours a week.   | 12 to 14 hours a day or 72 to 84 hours a week | Nil. Only actual period of work.   | 6 days.                   | Nil.   | Sundays and all Bank holidays (with pay).              | Working on Sundays and these holidays earns an extra day's pay.  |
| Durwans .. .. .   | Do.   | 10 hours a day or 60 hours a week.            | Do.  | 6 days.                   | Nil.   | Nil.   | Do.  |
| Coolies .. .. .   | 8 hours a day or 56 hours a week.   | 12 hours a day or 84 hours a week             | Do.  | 7 days.                   | Nil.   | Nil.   |  |
| Sweeper .. .. .   | Do.   | Nil.  | Do.  | 7 days.                   | Nil.   | Nil.   |  |
| Head Office including Traffic and Cash Offices :—<br>Durwans, Duffries and Poon.                | 8 hours a day on week days and 4 hours on Saturdays or 44 hours a week.   | Nil.  | Nil.   | 6 days.                   | Nil.   | Sundays, Saturdays after 2 p.m. and all Bank holidays. |  |

## THE PRESS EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, CALCUTTA.

## GENERAL.

## I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) About 95 per cent. of the workers hail from villages situate at a distance from Calcutta, ranging from 40 to 300 miles. In some cases the distance is even greater than that.

(ii) One of the chief causes of this large migration is, as elsewhere, due to the gradual deterioration of the village and the comforts which city life offers.

(iii) In recent years the proportion of the migration has increased overwhelmingly and is definitely on the increase.

2. Though migration proceeds apace, contact with the villages has not been lost. On the contrary, it appears that with the growing inflow of migration the contact with villages has rather increased than when one or two adventurous spirits chanced to come into the industry and made home of his place of work.

(i) With greater numbers of villagers joining the industry, the contact with villages have undoubtedly increased and greater numbers of workers now visit their village homes. The instinct which draws one to one's native place with the dear hearts and the familiar faces is no doubt strong, but it may well be doubted how far that instinct is stimulated by the growing cost of living in a city. It has been seen that if a worker can scrape a living in the city he will seldom, if ever, care to visit his native village. And though workers would seldom miss an opportunity to visit their homes, it is rare that they get that opportunity due to the nature of their work and even when they have an opportunity, the period is so short that many have to abandon the idea considering the expenses involved. Not till the worker is finally disabled, either through age or accident, that he can enjoy his village life to any extent.

(ii) No definite number can be given of the numerous pressworkers. Approximately, it is said, that in Calcutta alone there are more than 40,000 workers in the various presses. Outside of Calcutta, the number of presses can be counted on the fingers and the number of workers employed in them would not, perhaps, come up to more than 3,000.

3. There seems to be no recognized method for recruiting press-workers. If a recruiting agency is established which would keep the employers and the prospective workers in touch with each other, an effective step will be taken towards the improvement of the existing state of things which is advantageous neither to the employer nor to the employed. Some such thing as a press-workers' bureau may be established where both the prospective worker and the employer shall apply—the one will enter in the bureau-register his name, and the particular work he is fitted for, and the other will enter his name, or the name of the firm, and the particular kind of worker he is in request.

4. From the large percentage of migration it is easily seen to what extent family life has been disturbed. A worker who leaves his home and comes to the city and joins a press, has, as already hinted, very little chance of visiting his family during the period he is in employ. To bring down his whole family, which sometimes consists of more than six or seven persons, and live in the city is simply out of the question, considering the pittance which he gets. Consequently, a press-worker in nine cases out of ten does not know what family life is till he is old and done with his press.

The effect of this has been degrading on the average press-worker, who, deprived of the amenities of family life, naturally seeks his palliatives elsewhere. And a noticeable feature in this connection is, at least so far as can be ascertained, that the higher the pay or earnings of a worker is, the less likely is he to lead a degrading life and, conversely, the half-starved, ill-paid worker is more generally the moral and material wreck.

7. Unemployment as a problem has not arisen in the press industry. Few workers sit idle for any considerable length of time. But no accurate information on this point is available, due to the yet unorganized nature of the industry. So far as voluntary retirement is concerned, it may perhaps be said that few in the press industry have the good luck to enjoy that luxury, and if anyone is so fortunate, it is for a very brief period. A press-worker seldom retires unless he dies, or is dismissed or disabled, the reason being that he does not get any pension or bonus, nor is he so paid as to enable him to put by something for the future. When a press-worker retires, he must have somebody else to depend upon or he must be prepared for death by starvation.

Retrenchment in the Government presses often causes temporary unemployment, but they are soon absorbed either by the low-paying private presses or by other industries.



#### IV.—Health.

23. There is no method for registering the birth-rate and infant mortality, or the figures of mortality among the press-workers particularly. But so far as can be judged from the appearance of the workers of the press it can be safely predicted that figures of mortality are not low. The average press-worker lives on a most poor diet and his physique is typical. When a man has gone about two or three presses he can invariably say the press-worker from his appearance.

26. The Factories Act provide that there " shall be sufficient and suitable latrine accommodation and, if the local government so requires, with separate urinal accommodation for the persons employed ". Similarly the Act provides for the maintenance of sufficient and suitable supply of water fit for drinking, for the use of the workers. In the Government presses the provisions of the Act are no doubt fulfilled, but in the private presses the same amount of consideration is not given to these things as required by the Act. And it is a painful reality that there are private presses where there is no provision for drinking water for the use of the workers and only inadequate provision for latrines. Lack of adequate supervision by the Inspector of Factories must be accounted for as the reason for the existence of such conditions in a number of presses.

29. The most common disease to which the press-workers are victims is what is known as lead-poisoning. This is an endemic disease in the industry which makes a worker an imbecile for the rest of his life. There is provision for compensating a worker when he is found to be a victim of lead-poisoning. But it is very difficult for a poor worker with his inadequate means to get this compensation at the hand of the unwilling employer who would leave no stone unturned to put obstacles in the way of the worker's getting his recompense. Only one case is told where a worker of the Bengal Government Press after fighting for about three years got his compensation. Tuberculosis is also a most common disease among press-workers.

30. There is no system for providing for the worker in case of his illness. A kind of sickness insurance is greatly in demand. In the press industry, workers do not, as a rule, refuse to accept western medicine, but the difficulty is that, except perhaps in the case of one or two Government presses, there is no arrangement for giving medical aid to the workers, even in case of accidents. This paucity of medical aid may be to a great extent remedied if it is provided that every press must provide for a doctor for every 50 employees employed in the press. Of course this would mean a burden on the industry, and it may be said that the capacity of the industry to pay must be taken into consideration. But the point is, that the capacity must be considered, not with reference to a particular establishment, but with reference to the capacity of the industry in general to pay. And if any particular establishment is unable to pay, it had better be forced out of business rather than bring about sweated labour and industrial unrest.

#### V.—Welfare.

34 and 35. Such things as employers making provision for physical culture, recreation and amusements, refreshment, etc., of the workers in their presses are simply unheard of. The Press Employees' Association, conscious of the necessity for such facilities to the workers, tries in its way to help them, but its activities have been hitherto confined to providing books to the members of the association and arranging occasional social parties, evidently due to the paucity of funds. But even in these, its success has been very meagre owing to the same reason, viz., shortness of funds. At one time the Press Employees' Association attempted to start a sort of Sunday school to educate the workers, but it was not successful. First, there was the general and the greatest handicap of money. Secondly, the conditions under which the press-workers work also proved a great obstacle in the way.

The system of overtime work proved the greatest handicap. A worker who works for the full overtime period over and above his regular work in the week is physically unable to do anything but take complete rest on Sunday. Even on Sundays, sometimes the workers work overtime. So the attempt of the association was not successful.

36. The employers make no provision for the educational facilities of the workers in their presses. Private employers, except the very big ones, may not be able to do it, but the Government can, if they wish, provide for schools to educate the different kinds of workers, including their children. And in this they may ask for the co-operation of the private firms who may be requested to give a quota proportionate to their income towards the upkeep of such schools.

37. Provisions for old age and premature retirement are a much-needed and much-desired reform in the press industry. Workers in the press, specially those who work in the Lino Department, or have to do with the leads, become prematurely disabled and are forced to retire. In the Government presses a system of pension is in existence, but owing to the rules and sub-rules guarding its ways it is seldom that the workers get its benefit. Then the system excludes the greater number of employees. If a worker is found to have contracted lead-poisoning, he is entitled to compensation and retires from the business. But so many obstacles are put in the way of the worker getting this benefit, that very rarely is it that a worker would have the heart to fight for his compensation. In the private presses there is neither any system of pension nor any arrangement in case of premature retirement of the worker due to accident. The Press Employees' Association has got a benefit fund which purport to help the workers when they retire or are forced to retire.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

51. Workmen's Compensation Act is not widely in use. So far as the private presses are concerned there are to be found workers who probably do not know of the existence of the Act. In Government establishments, the employees generally know of it but the difficulties which have to be met, the fight that has to be waged in order to get the requisite compensation, make the employees fight shy of the Act, and if the injury be not very great, they would invariably keep silent. Unless the employers be more humane and conscientious, and the employees more alert and educated, it is difficult to see how this can be remedied.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

120. The Press Employees' Association was first established by a few ardent enthusiasts in 1906. It is one of the oldest unions in India. It lived its moribund life for a few years when in 1919 it was re-organized and resuscitated by late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who became its President. Since then it has had a chequered career. The great strike in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, in the year 1920, which continued for two and a half months brought the association prominently before the public. It was the efforts of the association guided by its illustrious President which, it must be said, was mainly instrumental in bringing the strike to a successful end. The circular dated the 15th July, 1920, of Sir A. C. Chatterjee, the then member-in-charge of the Board of Industries and Munitions Department, put an end to many of the evil practices prevailing in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, and granted substantial concessions to the workers. The Government of Bengal also followed the circular in certain respects, and the employees in the Government of Bengal Press also reaped the benefits of this circular order.

The Association was carrying on bravely against odds, thanks to the untiring energy and devotion of its Secretary, S<sub>j</sub>. Nalinkumar Bose. After Nalin Babu had resigned for unavoidable personal reasons Prof. Sanjib Chowdhury became Secretary in December, 1926. Sanjib Babu aided by the organizing secretary, S<sub>j</sub>. Indu Bhusan Sircar worked hard to put vigour into the association and bring together the scattered forces. It was on the suggestion of the present President S<sub>j</sub>. Mrinal Kanti Bose that the first All-India Press Employees' Conference was held and the enthusiasm which marked the proceedings of the conference and the fact that delegates came from Bombay, Nagpore, Lucknow, Patna, Delhi and Dacca proved that the association could yet develop into one of the most powerful unions in this land of essentially weak unions. Shortly after the conference, Prof. Sanjib Chowdhury had to leave Calcutta as he was appointed vice-principal of P. K. College, Contai, and S<sub>j</sub>. Kishori Lal Ghosh was elected secretary, at an extraordinary general meeting held on 31st July, 1926. Since then S<sub>j</sub>. Ghosh had been an untiring worker in the cause of the association, and during his incumbency the annual All-India Conference of the Press Employees had been regularly held. The present position of the association, it may be said without fear of exaggeration, is mainly, if not wholly, due to the untiring zeal and selfless devotion of S<sub>j</sub>. Ghosh. S<sub>j</sub>. Ghosh was arrested in March last in connection with the Meerut conspiracy case, and at a meeting of the Executive committee held a few weeks after the arrest of S<sub>j</sub>. Ghosh, the undersigned was elected as acting secretary during the absence of S<sub>j</sub>. Ghosh.

The association is practically run by the press employees themselves. According to the rules of the association, the association may have only four members in its executive who may not belong to the category of press-workers, and these four are the president, the secretary, the organizing secretary, and one out of the nine vice-presidents. The workers look upon the association as a body which looks after their wants and grievances and demands and their satisfaction. In all their difficulties they look to the association for help and guidance.

But the attitude of the employers is not so happy. They look upon the association as a body of "agitators" who have no business to meddle with their "domestic concern." They try all they can to prevent the workers from joining the association. The employers are, more often than not, found to intimidate the workers with dismissal if they join the association. Even the authorities in the Government presses, though they do not openly say anything, try all they can to discourage the workers from joining the association. And this fact is to a great extent responsible for the slow progress in the development and organization of the association.

121. The Trade Unions Act, 1926, is as yet new. But as days roll on it is being more and more utilized. As far as is known, some four or five influential unions have registered themselves under the Act. The Press Employees' Association has also applied for it, time for judging its effects, etc., has not yet come.

#### XVII.—Administration.

133. Both in the Central and the Provincial Legislatures the representatives of the people appear to be keen and interested in labour questions. At least the Press Employees' Association has been always fortunate to get the support and often the guidance of individual members of the legislatures whenever it has had occasion to approach them which, by the way, it has perhaps done more than any other union in India. Unfortunately, however, the attitude of the official benches has not been inspiring who invariably side with the Government simply as a matter of course. But in spite of the interest taken by the legislatures which have up till now, passed nearly all the resolutions placed on behalf of the workers, effect has not been given to those resolutions in the greater number of cases and even when the benefit has come, it has not been prompt and spontaneous but has proceeded unwillingly at a snail's pace.

138. The great majority of press-workers do not know what factory legislation is. Some of them have no doubt heard that there is such a thing as factory inspection, but they appear to be completely ignorant of its ways and activities. The association attempts to inform the workers about it as often and as systematically as it can, and the efforts of the association has been successful to a great extent, so that now nearly all members of the association have a general idea and knowledge about it. One reason for this ignorance, it appears to be, is the attitude and conduct of the factory inspectors, who generally do their business with the employers and seldom would condescend to enquire among the employees themselves.

#### II.—Staff Organization.

13. The relation between the staff and the rank and file is not as it should be. The conduct of the supervising staff, as has frequently been brought to light in council speeches and debates, is haughty, inconsiderate and careless. And, as might be expected, the staff are very unpopular with the rank and file. Mutual good relations which engenders co-operation and a healthy corporate life is conspicuous by its absence, to quote the very words of an employee in the Government of India Press, Calcutta.

There is a works committee in the Government of India Press at Hastings Street, Calcutta, but the rules prescribed by the Government of India for its guidance are not always followed by the management who generally run it according to their whims and caprices. The result has been a growing misunderstanding between the employers and the employed. But, in spite of repeated requests and even when the Piece Enquiry Committee of 1925, recommended, the authorities of the Government of Bengal Press have not yet seen their way to settling up a works committee.

In the Government of India Press there is also a compassionate fund maintained by fines levied from the employees for late attendance and other kinds of defaults. Its object is to help the employees in time of distress. The workers in the Government of Bengal Press also demand for a similar fund to be set up out of the very large amount of money yearly collected out of fines, but up to now theirs has been a cry in the wilderness.

14. There are time-keepers and checkers to check the work as well as the time taken by the worker to accomplish the work. These checkers have no definite standard by which they can judge as to whether a given piece of work can be done in a specified time by a man of average efficiency. Nor is there any hard and fast standard laying down the minimum or maximum time required by a man of minimum efficiency to do a given piece of work.

In the absence of any fixed standard, checking is done more or less on an arbitrary basis and it creates discontent in the minds of the workers who labour under a sense of wrong.

The wages of the workers are paid direct from the accounts department to the worker directly.

15. "Outside printing" or giving contracts to outside presses obtains in the Government of India Press.

One effect of this contracting system which has reduced the former 35 sections into the existing 7 sections in the Government of India Press, has been reduction of staff, which has indirectly helped to bring about sweated condition in the industry. Employees thrown out of employment as a result of such reductions naturally swell the private presses which gradually absorb them and pay them unduly low wages.

Now, what has been said with regard to the staff organization of the Government of India Press, applies with slight modifications to the other Government presses. The contracting system perhaps does not exist in the other presses, at least to any great extent. Workers for the presses of the Private Secretary and the Police Commissioner are generally recruited from the Bengal Government Press.

#### IX.—Hours of Work, Wages, Leave, Interval, etc.

Coming to the question of hours of work, wages, leave, interval, etc., obtaining in the different presses, the numbering of the schedule is abandoned for convenience sake. These matters will be taken up in connection with the different presses, each of which will be dealt with separately.

##### *Government of India Press.*

Roughly there are about 800 industrial employees at present employed in the Government of India Press, Calcutta. They are divided into two main groups:—(1) Salaried hands, and (2) Piece hands, the majority of whom are on the permanent establishment, and the remainder on the temporary establishment, with the chance of being made permanent when opportunities arise.

The salaried hands are on fixed or progressive pay, and the piece hands are paid at piece rates, i.e., according to the scale prescribed by Government for different classes of work, and when employed on hours, they are paid at their respective class rates, ranging from 1 anna to 7 annas 10 pies per hour. There are very few men in the higher classes. The average earnings of the employees do not exceed Rs. 40 per head per mensem.

The average number of members of a press employee's family is approximately six, including children, wife, self and other dependants.

Superior permanent servants on the salaried establishment are entitled to leave, etc., according to the Civil Service Regulations, but often the privilege is withheld from them almost whimsically.

Leave to piece hands (superior service)—one month's average pay leave (at class rate) and 15 day's casual leave on medical certificate is allowed to each permanent piece-hand in a year, but the average pay leave cannot be accumulated. Temporary men, both salaried and piece-hands, who have been employed after 6th September, 1928, are not allowed casual or average pay leave other than 16 days' full pay leave in a year, according to the discretion of the manager. Certain temporary men employed prior to that date are entitled to 15 days' casual leave in a year. Form-carriers and labourers are allowed 15 days' casual leave in a year and compensation leave in lieu of holiday attendance, which are not in all cases allowed by the authorities.

Hours of attendance.—Nine hours—from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. with half an hour's interval, from 1.30 p.m. to 2 p.m. Certain employees, such as three senior readers, case foreman, ten section holders, binding foreman, have to work on 10 hours basis from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with two intervals from 10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 2 p.m.

The wages earned by the employees are inadequate and cannot be said to be "a living wage" in view of the phenomenal rise in the prices of the different food-stuffs, as well as the exorbitant house-rent prevailing in Calcutta.

Pensions.—According to the Civil Service Regulations the pensions of permanent piece-hands are calculated on their average earnings during the last six years of service. Twenty-five years' continuous service entitles a man to pension according to the pension rules.

Though Lino operators are placed on a graded pay yet a reduction of Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 is made every month from the pay of the operators for shortage of their out-turn. Formerly there was no fixed out-turn.

The pay of the Mono casters is Rs. 30 to Rs. 35, and that of the labourers Rs. 16 to Rs. 19, which is quite inadequate considering the nature of their work, which is very hard.

*Classification.*—In his speech in reply to the Honorable Mr. G. S. Khaparde on the debate in the Imperial Council on the 14th September, 1920, in connection with the latter's resolution for a committee to investigate and report on the cause of the troubles in the Government Presses in Simla, Delhi and Calcutta, the Honorable Sir Thomas Holland in pointing out the advantages of the piece system said :—

"One advantage of the piece-rate system is that we obtain, automatically, an annual classification of the workers for the purpose of establishing their hour rates, the rates at which they are paid when correcting proof or when, for any chance, under the new system they are accidentally kept idle during factory hours. This system of checking a man's piece-work every year puts him in his proper place automatically, and not by favouritism."

Since after 1922 there has been no classification, which is in direct violation of the principle referred to by Sir Thomas Holland, and in 1928 there has been promotion by two classes instead of by six to which the workers are entitled under the principle enunciated by Sir Thomas Holland and on which action used to have been taken (though in a way which did not always completely bar out possibilities of favouritism) before 1922.

One of the greatest arguments urged in defence of the piece-system is that under it earning is regulated by efficiency. But in actual practice for the last six years classification was not revised and thus the men were deprived of the opportunities for reaping the benefits of their increased efficiency.

This failure on the part of the authorities to give the benefit of a principle which forms the main, if not the only, redeeming feature of the piece-system, has been a source of great dissatisfaction to the industrial workers, especially in view of the fact that the clerical staff gets automatic increments almost every year under the Grade or Time-Scale system.

*Interval for Meal, Tiffin and Prayer.*—In the recent orders dated 21st June, 1928, it has been said :—"In view of the various concessions which are now being granted to piece workers the Government of India have decided that with effect from 1st July, 1928, the present system under which piece workers were employed in their presses before the 1st November, 1922, are paid at class rates for the refreshment interval when they happen to be working on time should be abolished. They have also decided that payment for prayer interval allowed to the Mahomedan piece workers in their presses in similar circumstances should also cease from that day. The prayer interval would be allowed but no payment should be made."

In the course of continuous employment during hours which do not enable the men to have their meals in time, it is very unfair to the men if the time allowed them for their meals or tiffin be a source of loss to them.

This, apart from the other glaring discriminations made in favour of the clerical staff, makes an invidious distinction between the piece workers and the clerical staff as no deductions are made in the case of the latter though the hours of work of the clerical staff are such as to leave them time to take their meals at home and leave them free to have tiffin without deduction. The stoppage of payment for the prayer interval granted to Mahomedan workers has the effect of penalizing the workers for performing their religious duties.

*Leave with Full Pay.*—The piece workers used to be paid at their respective class-rates for 16 days (including the King Emperor's Birthday) each year, to cover absences on account of holidays, sickness or leave, provided they had been in "regular employment." Before the order of 21st June came into operation "regular employment" was interpreted as attendance on 90 per cent. of the working days. In the order dated the 21st June "regular employment" has been interpreted as "not less than 90 per cent. of the required working hours." According to this calculation on the basis of working hours a piece worker to entitle him to the benefit of this rule will have to attend 70 days. Now, the total working days in the year are 270 days. According to the rule, as interpreted before the order of 21st June, the minimum attendance required of workers was 243 days, while the recent interpretation requires his attendance on all the working days in the year before he can be allowed to have sixteen days' leave with his class-rates the following year.

*Rates.*—The rates as fixed in the Hand-Book have not been revised since 1875 when the cost of living was at least *three hundred per cent. cheaper* than at the present time. The Board of Industries and Munitions recognized the inadequacy of the rates when they ordered a general increment of 40 per cent. in July, 1920, on the then existing earnings, though that did not benefit the men to the full extent, inasmuch as the hours of work were at the same time reduced. The rates, unless increased, would not enable the workers placed on the lowest classes to maintain body and soul together and that the revision of rates should be undertaken in the light of the present cost of living.

The promotion by class benefits the workers as far and to the extent as they are engaged in hour work, but as every worker gets work which is so divided as to be paid

both on hour and piece rates, it is but just that there should be some substantial consideration about the rates fixed for piece work. A very slight concession has been made by the recent order of 21st June, 1928, of the Government of India, only in the case of the compositors as regards fresh work in increasing the rate from As. 3-8½ pies per 1,000 ems to As. 3-9 pies, while the case of the others, as for example, the Lino correctors, mono correctors, impositors, distributors, etc., has not been considered at all.

In this connection it is to be pointed out that the piece rates have not been considered at all in the light of the changed cost of living though the workers were assured by the Honorable Sir B. N. Mitter, Member-in-charge of the Department of Industries and Labour when he visited the press and was graciously pleased to receive a memorial from the employees dated the 18th December, 1926, in reply to the submissions of the representative of the employees Babu Prohlad Chandra Roy supported by the manager, Mr. C. T. Letton, that before the war the workers were getting two-fifths of the London rate and that after the war the difference has been still more glaring in that the workers get only one-fifth of the London rate.

*Provident Fund.*—The resolution No. A.31 of the Government of India, dated the 15th July, 1920, provides that the employees in the Government of India Press should have a provident fund similar to that in the state railways. Unfortunately, however, nothing has yet been done to carry out that provision though we are close upon 1930.

#### *Government of Bengal Press.*

In the Government of Bengal Press the conditions are nearly similar to that of the Government of India Press with a few minor differences. Here the working hours are ordinarily from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., but in case of necessity the workers have to work beyond 5.30 p.m. but they do not get any extra for the over-hours, whereas in the Government of India Press the day commences at 7 a.m. and ends at 6 p.m. with one hour interval in the interim. But before 1920 the working hours in the Bengal Government Press were seven only, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Medical leave was not granted to the piece-workers before 1928 but since 1928 they are allowed one month's medical leave in a year on half-pay but in the Government of India Press an employee is entitled to medical leave on half-pay for so many months as the number of years he has been in service.

Binders, linotype operators, distributors, and the hand-compositors in the Bengal Government Press are having their earnings diminished day by day. They are harassed and oppressed with unnecessary fines, and their transfer and promotion depend on the sweet will of the higher officers and naturally enough favouritism counts more than qualification and seniority. But the supervising staff, the clerical staff, and the monotype operators are having their earnings increasing day by day (*vide* starred question No. 75, Bengal Legislative Council, dated 14th December, 1927, and the speech of Mr. K. C. Roy Choudhury dated 10th February, 1928, and that of Mr. Radha Govinda Roy dated 18th August, 1928, in the Bengal Legislative Council). The linotype operators in the Bengal Government Press also are very hard hit by the system of deduction at the rate of Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 per month which has been introduced since January last. In the Government of India Press, linotype operators are salaried while in the Government of Bengal Press they are on piece. In this connection it will be noted that resolutions recommending the abolition of the piece-system in the linotype department of the Bengal Government Press were passed in the Bengal Legislative Council twice in 1927 and twice again in 1928, but the authorities have not yet seen their way to take any action on the resolutions which were carried in the council on each occasion by overwhelming majorities.

(The Memorandum goes on to deal with a number of minor Government Presses).

#### *Bengal Government Litho Press, Reproduction Section of the Bengal Drawing Office.*

Without entering into the other grievances under which the press employees of all departments suffer it will not be out of place here to lay stress on the gradations and increments of salaries allowed to the employees of the reproduction section of the Bengal drawing office. The initial pay and the system to increment allowed to these employees are much lower than those allowed of their brother employees in the other Government presses. Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury, M.L.C., submitted some questions to the secretary of the Bengal Legislative Council during the last August session to elicit information from the Government regarding the grievances of the Bengal drawing office. But it is curious that no reply was vouchsafed to any of his questions.

The employees of the reproduction section of the Bengal drawing office want that retrospective effect be given to the Resolution No. A.31, dated 15th July, 1920,

of the Government of India without delay so that they may at least enjoy, with their fellow workers in the other Government presses, the small privileges which were granted by the Government.

#### *Private Presses.*

But if this is the condition of the presses which are owned and managed by the Government, the private presses have to tell a tale which is simply horrible. In a press at Barisal, it is told, the pay of the compositors commences at the unbelievably low figure of Rs. 3 only. But let us not take a mufassil press as model. Let us take one of the premier private presses in Calcutta, namely, Lal Chand and Sons. There is no system of bonus or similar things to help the employees. Ordinarily the day commences at 8 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. But this ordinary rule is usually the extraordinary thing. The employees are worked overtime from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. usually, and sometimes even up to 2 a.m. in the night. The ordinary working hours per day are eight, but overtime day is counted as a nine hours' day. Fines and deductions are levied in the most arbitrary fashion and the employees are summarily dismissed without notice on the slightest pretext. If an employee is absent on a day previous to a holiday the employee is deprived of his pay even for the holiday no matter whether he took leave from the office or not. Again, if an employee is absent on Friday, he is not allowed to join work on the Saturday following. Suspension is a most common punishment meted out to these employees. Besides, a sum of one anna on every ten rupees of the earning of an employee is deducted on the pretext of charity and amusement but the employees say that they do not benefit by this levy in the smallest way. On the pay day the employees have to remain in office from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the night. The main gate is closed and a back door is kept open. The payment for the previous month is made on the 20th of the next month.

There is an advance wages fund opened by the proprietors of this press which professes to help the employees in need by giving them loan of their wages in advance. The interest demanded from the employees is one anna per rupee per month, and that too, to be paid in advance; and the amount that can be taken loan of from this fund must not exceed more than half of the wages of the employee. And on the pay-day this amount of loan is deducted from the wages of the employees. A relative of the proprietors has also got a loan giving fund the rate of whose interest is two annas per rupee per month in advance. The wages of the employees range from Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 per month. In the private presses, as a rule, there is no piece system and in Lalchand, too, piece system does not obtain.

But it would be doing an injustice to Messrs. Lal Chand and Sons to think that they are the worst employers in the press industry. That is far from our intention. Messrs. Lal Chand and Sons by no means plough a lonely furrow. The Calcutta Fine Art Cottage, The Indian Press, Messrs. S. C. Banerji and Company, and a host of Lal Chands may be mentioned at random. But perhaps worse than them all is the printing establishment of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers, who now receive the Government contracts. The condition of the workers in this press is, to say the least, staggering. A binder says that they have received only five months' pay during the last year. To tell the story of all the iniquities and tyrannous oppressions, ranging from physical force, that run rampant in this press which is the recipient of government benevolence would make a memorandum by itself. The condition of the workers in the printing establishment of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers is perhaps the most rotten that has come to our knowledge. Seeing that a number of their employees have joined the Press Employees' Association, the authorities of this press are said to have shifted the timing of the period of work of those employees in such a way that they may not be able to join in any union activities.

This action of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers reminds us of the authorities of another press—the Calcutta University Press—which, by the way, is a semi-government establishment and professes to deal with the workers according to the Government handbook, but the profession is, the workers say, fulfilled more in the breach than in the performance. Formerly, some 50 to 60 workers of the Calcutta University Press were active members of the association. But the authorities of this press have been so successful in their methods of crushing the spirit of the workers that now only three of them remain on the register of the association. Abusive and ridiculous languages, intimidation, threat of dismissal, etc., were the daily and casual treatment accorded to the members of the association. But the most effective of all the weapons seems to have been the stopping of promotion of the workers who joined the association.

#### *Conclusion.*

*Minimum Wages—Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.*—Let us conclude this statement—incomplete as it is—with a few words on minimum wages and the advisability and possibility of statutory establishment. At the outset it must be said that fixing of a minimum wage is not only advisable and possible but an urgent and immediate necessity in the press industry.

It will be observed from the foregoing pages where the different kinds of presses have been dealt with separately with regard to hours of work, wages, etc., that though in the Government presses there are some rules which are followed in determining wages, deductions, etc., in the private presses they do not even pretend to follow any method whatsoever in regulating and fixing the wages of the workers, and deductions and dismissals are most arbitrary. Now this is exploitation pure and simple, exploitation of the inferior bargaining power of the workers. In recent years this exploitation has increased and tends to increase more and more.

This growing exploitation of the workers is due to the existence of sweated labour in the industry. This sweating is caused by many factors of which the following two are important in this particular case of the press industry :—(1) Increasing import of efficient machines ; and (2) the periodic reductions of the employees in the Government establishments. These periodic reductions throw out of employment a large number of workers who either unable or unfit to enter into other industries are gradually absorbed in private concerns which finding that it is possible to get workers at low wages are naturally careless in their use of labour.

Then the workers are not efficiently organized, not only in the press industry but perhaps it is true of almost all industries in India. And with the workers ill-organized it is but natural that exploitation is rampant in the industry. It has been found in the case of individual establishments that if the union of the workers is well organized and strong, the workers are able to get the highest rates which the industry is capable of.

A minimum wage means a greater equality in the bargaining power of the workers, and would thus prevent exploitation and ensure the payment of wages closely corresponding to the productive capacity of the workers. Again, the fixing of a minimum wage will also indirectly tend to develop organization among the workers. In New Zealand, for example, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894, and its amending Acts, have provided a stimulus to the growth of organizations. Lastly, industrial peace is best promoted by a regulation of the minimum wage. In Australia and New Zealand we find that one of the chief objects of minimum wage regulations is the prevention of industrial disputes. On the side of the employers it may be said that those fair-minded employers who are willing to pay a fair wage will be advantaged by a minimum wage, as they will not have to meet the competition of employers who exploit their workers.

It is clearly seen from what has been said of the different presses before that there is no standardization of wages—even in the various Government presses, the rates of wages of workers performing the same kind of work under similar conditions often vary to a great extent. This, it must be admitted, is most unsatisfactory. From this point of view also it is necessary to have a minimum wage below which no employer would be allowed to fall.

The possible objection to a minimum wage may be that it will cause unemployment in the present state of the industry as the productive capacity of the workers have been impaired by continued exploitation. Of course, to raise wages considerably would endanger the employment of the workers. But a policy of gradual improvement, particularly when trade is prosperous, would obviate that danger. The increase in the wages will be likely to result in an increase in the efficiency of the workers, and also in that of the workers of the future through improvement in the health and welfare of the children. It will thus have a beneficial effect on production, which will be, within limits, cumulative.

On the employers' side it may also be contended that a minimum wage will affect many of them adversely who may in consequence be forced to retire from the industry. To this the answer would be : " If a man be unable to maintain his enterprise without cutting down the wages essential for his workers it would be better that he should abandon the enterprise." For what is it that a minimum wage seeks, or ought to seek, to establish ? The basic principle in determining a minimum wage ought to be that of " living wage." And this is the basis which has been adopted in practice in the various countries where minimum wages have been fixed. In New Zealand, for instance, though there is no specified basis and though in making awards the Arbitration Court takes into account the economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry and all other relevant circumstances, in no case will it reduce wages below a fair standard of living wage.

The Australian Commonwealth Arbitration Court also in practice has adopted the living wage basis. The court makes its award " in accordance with the requirements, in a civilized community, of a man with wife and three children." In South Australia, the Provinces of Canada, and the various States of the United States, and many other countries where minimum wage laws have been passed, the living wage principle is in practice followed. And, as Mr. Justice Higgins, President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court says, it is necessary to keep this living wage a thing sacrosanct, beyond the reach of bargaining.



*Representation on the Legislatures.*—A word on the question of representation on the legislatures. It has been observed that the Press Employees' Association has been unusually fortunate to get the support and occasionally the guidance of individual members of the legislatures, both central as well as provincial (*vide* page 228, paragraph 133). It is all true and the association is right grateful for it. But it certainly does not obviate the necessity of having their elected representatives on the legislature. Labour's right to be in the legislature as a distinct interest has been recognized by the admission of nominated members to represent labour. But apart from the question that the representation given to labour has not been commensurate with either the numerical strength of the working classes or to the importance of the interest represented, there is the question of principle. Nomination as a principle is untenable. With the lapse of time it is being growingly realized that the system of nomination to represent the interest of labour in the legislature is incompatible with the spirit for which it is to be represented for the purpose of doing good to it. It certainly cannot be gainsaid that elected representatives even in the present condition of labour organizations will command greater confidence of the working classes than what is enjoyed by the nominated representatives. We certainly are not for special constituencies. But so long as the classes continue and they continue to be represented separately in the legislature, labour certainly cannot forego its right. As at present constituted, labour has got only two representatives nominated by Government to represent its interest in the Bengal Legislative Council, whereas the employees of labour are represented in it by fifteen members elected from special employers' constituencies representing the interest of only a few hundreds of merchants and tradesmen. It is, therefore, necessary that labour should also be similarly represented by the creation of special labour electorates, and the workers in the press should be one such special constituency having the right to send two elected representatives—one for the Government Presses and the other to represent the Private Presses—in the Provincial Legislature. The press workers' constituency should also be entitled to send one representative to the Central Legislature to represent specially the interest of the workers in the Government of India Presses situate at Calcutta, Simla, Delhi and Aligarh.

To summarise, the condition of the workers in the press will be considerably improved and their organization greatly stimulated by:—(1) Abolition of the piece system where it exists; (2) establishment of a minimum wage with the unreserved right of the workers to strike for greater wages when necessity arises; (3) efficient supervision of the private presses by the inspector of factories; (4) the spread of economic and industrial education amongst the workers; (5) suitable provision in the Factories Act to afford adequate protection to union men against unjust oppression, intimidation, threats of dismissal, dismissal, filthy and abusive language, etc., or otherwise punishing them (e.g., by stopping promotion, etc.) for joining the association; (6) suitable provision by the employers to afford adequate facilities to the workers in case of illness and accidents while engaged in work; (7) abolition of the fine system and regular payment of the dues of the workers not later than the 7th of the next month; and (8) representation in the Legislature in the light of suggestions made above.

*The following extracts from subsidiary memoranda submitted by members of the Press Employees' Association were referred to in oral examination.*

**PROHLAD CHANDRA ROY, SECTION-HOLDER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, CALCUTTA.**

*Introduction.*—I have a fair knowledge regarding the conditions of the service and pecuniary circumstances of the employees of the Government of India Press, Calcutta, as I have been serving in this press for more than 25 years. I was appointed as a compositor on the 9th May, 1904. In 1918, I was promoted to the post of a section-holder, but owing to the retrenchment of the staff, I was reverted to the post of a compositor on the 15th September, 1922. After my reversion I acted as a section-holder over all the sections in the composing branch, and as well as in the lino and mono branches when required. In 1926, when the post of a section-holder had fallen vacant, I was given my substantive appointment as a section-holder. I represented the piece-workers of this press to the Honourable Sir B. N. Mitra, Member-in-charge, Department of Industries and Labour in December, 1926, when he visited this press. And I have also been elected this time to represent the industrial workers of the Government of India Press in the enquiry to be made by the Royal Commission on Labour. I am one of the vice-presidents of the Press Employees' Association, Calcutta, which is registered under the Trade Union Act.

*Disadvantages of the Piece-workers—Compositors.*—They are recruited from the educated Indian gentlemen and most of them are Hindus. Printing is an art and the compositors are the backbone of the printing industries, and if they do not work,

all the other branches of the printing should have to remain idle. It is needful that they should be educated, otherwise they will not be able to understand the printing jobs, to read the original manuscript and to carry out the correction marks. Good workmanship is essentially needed in composing, which takes a long time to learn, and I must say that the civilized world will accept that the compositors are the first class workers in the industrial section, but they are paid as 3rd class labourers and their average earnings in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, are only Rs. 56-8 annas per month. (In 1927-28 Rs. 54 and in 1928-29 Rs. 59). In the labour markets in Calcutta, the motor car, bus and lorry drivers, fitters, moulders, riveters and carpenters, etc., are getting Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 or more per day, some of whose jobs can be learnt within a month or two and in some cases a fortnight only. I hope that it will be supported by Mr. C. T. Letton, Manager, Government of India Press, Calcutta, that even some of the coolies working on piece rate in several private firms earn Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per day. Prior to war, the compositors in the Government of India Presses were getting two-fifths of the London rate, and after the war they are getting one-fifth of that rate, and this was brought to the notice of the Honourable Sir B. N. Mitra, Member-in-charge, Department of Industries and Labour, by a memorial in December, 1926. The matter was also pointed out to the Honourable Member when he had visited the Press, and had received the representations from several branches. At the time, Mr. C. T. Letton, manager of the press, also supported it, but in the last revision in July, 1928, no general increment on piece-rates was granted.

Further, I beg to point out that in Resolution No. A-31, dated 15th July, 1920 (*vide* para. 25 on p. 277 of Appendix of the Hand Book), the Government of India shows that the average earnings of the compositors in the Government of India Presses now ranges from Rs. 35 to Rs. 90 per mensem according to class. According to this statement, the average earning of the compositors was Rs. 62-8 annas per head and although the piece-rate has been increased by 40 per cent. the average earnings of the compositors is now Rs. 56-8 annas per head only. From the above it will be observed that their average earnings are on the decrease.

*Standard of Living.*—None of the employees with the exception of a very few is getting his proper living wages, and in support of this, I may cite my own case as an example.—I am living in Calcutta with my family in a rented house.

My present pay is Rs. 135 per month. My family consists of six members : self, wife, three children, and widow of my deceased younger brother.

| Actual needs of my family per month are as follows :—  | Rs. |
|--|-----|
| 1. Food charges of six members including tiffin, etc., at Rs. 16 per head ..   | 96  |
| 2. Monthly rent of two rooms and a portion .. .. .   | 26  |
| 3. School fees, etc., for three children .. .. .   | 16  |
| 4. Milk .. .. .  | 10  |
| 5. Clothing (including winter clothes, bedding and footwear, at Rs. 40 per head per year, i.e., Rs. 240 for the whole family, on an average per month. | 20  |
| 6. Water carrier .. .. .   | 4   |
| 7. Washerman .. .. .   | 3   |
| 8. Barber .. .. .  | 1   |
| 9. Lighting expenses .. .. .   | 4   |
| Total .. .. .  | 180 |

N.B.—There are extraordinary expenses, such as wedding expenses of daughter, house repairing expenses in native village, gharyhire and sradh expenses, etc.

The above account shows that nothing is spent on luxury, save and except bare necessities. I have therefore to borrow Rs. 45 every month to meet the expenses and I have no other means to clear my debt than to dispose of the landed and other property inherited from my fore-fathers. Besides, medical expenses are to be met and not included in the above list. Such is the position of middle class men of my earnings in Bengal.

*Pecuniary Circumstances of the Press Employees.*—Generally the press employees do not receive their living wages properly, and so they are compelled to borrow money at a very high rate of interest. They do not get sufficient diet, proper clothing and medical aid. They are unable to provide their children with milk, clothing and proper education so they are frequently attacked with illness and they cannot provide them with medical treatment and proper diet.

*Provident Fund.*—It was announced that employees appointed after 15th July, 1920, will not be entitled to the benefit of pension after retirement, but will be required to join a fund called the Provident Fund, equivalent to State Railways Provident Fund (*vide*, Appendix 12, para 21, p. 276 of the Handbook). But, unfortunately for the employees concerned, though more than nine years have elapsed, no provident fund has yet been introduced. For this extreme dilatoriness of the authorities concerned the poor employees are suffering pecuniary loss for no fault of their own.

**Housing.**—Owing to their poor earnings they are compelled to live in unhealthy places and in dark and damp rooms, without sufficient water supply, fresh air, and light, as the house rent in Calcutta is very high and for want of those they are susceptible to every kind of disease. I earnestly request the Honourable Members of the Commission to kindly visit some of the presses here through which they will acquaint themselves as to the condition of the health of the press employees.

**Lead Poison.**—There is every possible chance of those press employees, who have to work with lead, e.g., compositors, distributors, lino-operators and mono-casters, etc., are liable to be attacked with lead poison. But never any employee of the Government of India Press was declared to be attacked with the same. It is not because that none of them has been attacked by lead poison, but because there is no arrangement that they may be well examined now and then. I can assert emphatically, if those employees are examined by experienced doctor, then at least 10 per cent. of them will be found to be attacked with the above poison. Though our gracious Government has set up a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, but has done little for the benefit of the employees who have every possible chance to be attacked with lead poison. In my opinion, an institution, with the object of examining these employees at least once a year by experienced doctors and to take necessary steps, should be established.

**Conclusion.**—From the above mentioned grievances, complaints and disadvantages, it is proved that there is no end of misery of the press employees. Our Benign Government is ideal employer. If such is the condition of the Government employees it is needless to mention about the private employees, for it can easily be imagined that their conditions are still more worse. Indian labourers are oppressed by poverty and cannot get sufficient food, and also cannot enjoy the sun, free air and light, etc., which are the free gifts of the Almighty. They have to live in worst possible rooms, also they have to labour for long hours, and in this way their health is day by day going to be ruined. If our kind Government fail to take immediate steps, then gradually the labouring capacity of the labourers will vanish. If this sort of utter disregard for the welfare of labouring class continues, a time will come, of course at no distant date, when the capitalist, to their dismay, will find themselves driven to a position where they will have no other alternative than to work for their own existence, and their dear invested capital, in the absence of healthy operatives.

#### APPENDIX A.

*Comparative Statement showing the prices of food grains, etc.*

| Name of article.     | Original price |            | Present price |           |  |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--|
|                      | per maund.     | per maund. | per pair.     | per pair. |  |
|                      | Rs. a. p.      | Rs. a. p.  | Rs. a. p.     | Rs. a. p. |  |
| Rice .. ..           | 3 5 0          | 9 5 0      | —             | —         | <i>Vide Page 609 of Statistical Abstract of British India from 1917-18 to 1926-27.</i> |
| Wheat .. ..          | 3 8 0          | 8 0 0      | —             | —         |  |
| Potatoes ..          | 1 4 0          | 8 0 0      | —             | —         |  |
| Mustard oil ..       | 10 0 0         | 28 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Ghee .. ..           | 38 0 0         | 95 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Cocoonut oil ..      | 12 0 0         | 28 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Meat .. ..           | 10 0 0         | 40 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Fish .. ..           | 10 0 0         | 35 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Kerosine oil per tin | 1 12 0         | 3 9 0      | —             | —         |  |
| Coal .. ..           | 0 6 0          | 0 12 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Milk .. ..           | 5 0 0          | 16 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Dal .. ..            | 2 12 0         | 10 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Tamarind ..          | 1 4 0          | 5 0 0      | —             | —         |  |
| Red pepper ..        | 5 0 0          | 20 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Black .. ..          | 20 0 0         | 64 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Sugar .. ..          | 5 0 0          | 12 8 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Turmeric ..          | 5 0 0          | 14 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Mustard seed ..      | 5 0 0          | 11 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Coriander seed..     | 5 0 0          | 44 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Molasses ..          | 4 0 0          | 12 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Sweetmeat ..         | 15 0 0         | 50 0 0     | —             | —         |  |
| Cloth .. ..          | —              | —          | 1 8 0         | 3 0 0     |  |
| Shoes .. ..          | —              | —          | 2 4 0         | 6 0 0     |  |
| Shirts .. ..         | —              | —          | 1 12 0        | 5 0 0     |  |
| Umbrella ..          | —              | —          | 2 0 0         | 5 0 0     |  |

House rent has risen on an average by 100 per cent.

N.B.—Please see Table No. 296 Index Numbers of retail prices of food grains of India on page 628 of Statistical Abstract for British India from 1917-18 to 1926-27.

## APPENDIX B.

*Disadvantages of the Lino-operators in the Government of India Press, Calcutta.*

(Pay Rs. 80-4—100-5-125 on 8-hour basis.)

1. The linotype operators are to work under the greatest possible hardships with mechanical, mental and physical labour, practically combating with fire, and breathing all the time in a poisonous atmosphere, but having no sufficient remuneration to compensate with.
2. They expected a better scale of pay when in 1928 a general revision of establishment was made, but it is a great misfortune that the thing turned and the already existing pay was lowered.
3. Again, to add misery to their sorrow a system of deduction of salary at the rate of Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 a month, introduced since January last, which has placed them in a very awful situation.
4. For different kinds of machines, variety of work, old age, ill-health and consequent loss of vigour, and their varying age and physique, naturally the operators fail to do the uniform out-turn of work.
5. The Government salaried servants are not subjected to deduction of salary anywhere.
6. In this press no department or section is a victim of the above.
7. They have no future prospects, which other sections enjoy. Their prospects end up to Rs. 125 if they are fortunate enough to overcome the deduction of Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 from the salary.
8. In consideration of the hours of duty the poor wages which they draw are too inadequate, and further, that in spite of their difficult and dreadful task they are given neither any privileges nor any concession.

*Remedies for the Disadvantages of the Lino Operators.*

Increased scale of pay—Rs. 125-10-175.

Order under which deductions are at present being made every month from the operators' salaries be withdrawn and that the amounts already deducted on this account be restored to them.

## APPENDIX C.

*Disadvantages of the Monotype Operators in the Government of India Press, Calcutta.*

In working a monotype machine one should have a fair education, and while at the machine he has to attend to three things simultaneously, just like a telegraph operator, namely (i) to look after the various parts of the machine, (ii) to calculate mentally as regards spacing, etc., and (iii) to strike the keys with the fingers.

The Government of India have been pleased to sanction for the telegraph operators two scales of pay, viz., (i) Rs. 80-170 and (ii) Rs. 80-250 for the local and general servicemen respectively, along with future prospects of promotions to higher grade appointments in both cases, whereas since 1928, when the revised scale was introduced, the monotype operators in the Government of India Press were graded from Rs. 80 to Rs. 125 without any similar future prospects which even men in other sections of the Press enjoy.

While sanctioning the aforesaid revised scale of pay for the monotype operators, the Government of India rather introduced a complicated system under which the operators have been subjected to deductions of pay ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month from out of their salaries. As most of them at present draw between Rs. 80 and Rs. 90, this deduction naturally tells heavily upon their poor income since it comes up to something like one-sixth of their emoluments. This practice is rather unique, as it is not in vogue in any other office.

As a protest against the above unjustifiable practice, memorials and representations were submitted to the authorities concerned but they were all in vain. At last, owing to the continued apathy and tight-sitting attitude on the part of the authorities, a starred question was raised in the Central Legislature as to whether Government had received the said memorials and why "deductions were made from the operators' salaries." To this Government replied that "deductions are made as the men are given bonus for the output in excess of requirement." In this connection it may be stated that no such deduction is ever made from the salary of the telegraph operator who, apart from enjoying a better time-scale, also receives bonus in the shape of pie-money for scoring.

Over and above this, the operators are under another great disadvantage. In every office seniority of service is always taken into consideration. By putting in a long service and thereby getting regular annual increments one can reach the maximum of one's grade. But, as ill-luck would have it, the senior monotype operators with long service at their credit have actually had to remain satisfied with fixed salaries since 1921. In fact, not a single operator got any increment on his pay during the long period of eight years (from 1921 to 1927), and as a result of this, none has yet come to Rs. 100 even. It may be added here that men in other sections of the Press have been all throughout enjoying seniority and usual increments.

With regard to working hours it may be mentioned that the operators have to undergo solid hard labour of eight hours and a half (excluding tiffin period), and for this they are given a pay which is less than that earned by operators of other presses.

From the above fact it can be fully imagined that the case of the monotype operators in the Government of India Press is not being well considered in respect of their pay and other things relevant thereto.

The following remedies are suggested for favourable consideration :—

1. That the present grade of the operators, viz. (Rs. 80-4-100-5-125) be raised to Rs. 125-10-175 so as to afford a living wage for them.

2. That the order under which deductions are at present being made every month from the operators' salaries be withdrawn, and that the amounts already deducted on this account be restored to them.

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The humble memorial of the compositors, distributors and binders, employed in the E.I. Railway press, Calcutta and Howrah, and also members of the Press Employees' Association.

#### GENERAL GRIEVANCES.

1. That your memorialists are strongly in favour of total abolition of piece and hour systems, because :—(a) Under this system your memorialists are not entitled to any wages during holidays, Sundays and periods of enforced absence owing to illness, etc., because piece-work system, as opposed to salaried system, is based on the principle "no work, no pay"; (b) this system does not prevail in any other state railway presses, e.g., G.I.P. Railway Press, Hyderabad Nizam's State Railway Press and N.W. and Burma State Railways Presses; (c) Though the system is based on the principle of "wages according to out-turn and capacity" it has in practice been so designed as to yield minimum earning for maximum labour.

*Compositors.*—That in the same office three systems, piece, engaged-hour and salary prevail. While your memorialists work under piece system, the employees of other departments, viz., section-holders, readers, foremen, etc., with whose work your memorialists are closely connected, and on whose work, the work of your memorialists sometimes depends, are salaried men. As such they are apt to be slow, while your memorialists, working on piece system, are naturally fast workers. So there is every chance of friction between different classes of employees and sometimes it breaks out to the detriment of the employees and the office. It is needless for your memorialists to dilate on the point to show to your honour the expediency of one system prevailing in an office.

That no increment is granted to those who are compelled to absent themselves even on medical grounds for more than 60 days in a year.

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#### MR. INDU BHUSAN SIRCAR, ORGANIZING SECRETARY OF THE PRESS EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION.

Before I deal with the subject matter of the statement, I deem it necessary to convince the Hon'ble Members of the Commission, that I have gathered a considerable experience so far as the matters regarding the presses in Bengal are concerned.

I joined, for the first time, the press of Messrs. Lall Chand and Sons, as a printer, in 1911. Subsequently, I resigned that post and joined the press of W. Newman, where also I tendered my resignation in the year 1912 and got into the Bengal Government Press. But to my surprise, I found that the employees there were treated

like cats and dogs. Being a man of a different mentality, I could not submit to the insulting treatment of the employers and I tendered my resignation there. Chance did not leave me long. I accepted a job which then had fallen vacant in the Government of India Press. After that, having fallen into the trap of the amusing Reduction Scheme (this is a nice process of getting rid of the undesirable persons) of the authorities in 1923, I was removed therefrom and I had to try my luck in some other quarter. A renowned newspaper under the title "Forward" made its first appearance at that time before the public, being edited by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. I was taken in as a printer of that paper, but unfortunately the atmosphere there was also irritable to me and I resigned, with the intention of trying for the betterment of the lot of these poor press employees.

I enrolled myself as a member of the Press Employees' Association in 1919, and in course of time I became a member of the Working Committee of the said association. In 1924 the executive body favoured me with the post of organising secretary of the association. This office, which was entrusted to me, gave me the opportunity to get acquainted with the affairs concerning the presses in Bengal, and especially with the employees.

This is how I gathered knowledge regarding press affairs.

Now in the course of my statement I shall deal one after another with the presses which have, more or less, any importance.

*Newspaper Press.*—The first thing to mention in this connection is that work is done generally in the night time. One can well appreciate how fatiguing and troublesome it is to work all through the night. The employees have to work eight hours during the daytime or at night. But when the hard labour which the employees of the presses have to undergo at night is taken into consideration, I must say that their wages are much lower than those of their brethren who work during the daytime. I must also mention that the wages of the employees in general are very poor and hardly sufficient for their bare maintenance. So these people take advantage of the overtime duty in order to secure a few pennies more at the cost of anything. They generally work 15 to 16 hours a day. But the employers do not realize the untold miseries of their employees. The pay scale of the employees mentioned below will speak for itself about the low wages of these people.

Compositors, Rs. 20 to Rs. 50 ; lino operators, Rs. 25 to Rs. 100 ; machinemen, Rs. 30 to Rs. 60.

*Semi-Government Press. University Press and Corporation.*—The authorities of these presses take strong objection when an employee wants to be enrolled as a member of this association. When they come to know of such enrolment the chance of the man concerned for any promotion becomes practically nil.

*Bengal Government Press.*—In no department of the Government of India are Indians allowed to have appointments, not even in the C.I.D., and the confidential section of the press has shut the door against them ; only the Anglo-Indians and native Christians have access therein. This is nothing but a deliberate insult to the Indians. Moreover, the rate of payment has been increased in this section, while in the other sections the rate remain fixed. This is calculated by the employees of the other sections as an injustice to them.

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BIRENDRA KUMAR SEN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, PRESS EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, CALCUTTA.

*The Press Employees' Grievance and Government.*—Although the non-official resolutions adopted by the Council are almost all recommendatory and not mandatory, yet I am a great believer of the usefulness of the Legislative Council, which can do a great deal of work of a beneficial nature to the people. We have now two members in the local council, nominated by Government, to champion the cause of labour and speak on behalf of ourselves and other wage-earners. But in my opinion the press employees must have at least one member in the Council elected from among themselves, to raise their grievances and to have them redressed by legislation. That is, our benign Government should create a special constituency of press employees to elect its own member in the Council. I very much regret to say that the resolutions of the Council are not sometimes given effect to by the executive authorities. This may be instanced in the case in which the resolution

of the Council regarding the "Salaried System of Linotype Operators," moved by Mr. K. C. Roy Choudhuri, Labour Member, and adopted by the Council in 1928, in the February session (*vide* Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings of 9th February, 1928, page 84) have not yet been given effect to.

## INDIAN SEAMEN'S UNION.

### PART I.—COVERING LETTER, dated the 3rd February, 1930.

In submitting herewith the memorandum of the Indian Seamen's Union regarding the grievances of the Indian seamen and for their redress, I beg to state that my union desires to draw the attention of the Honourable Members of the Commission to the fact that this memorandum relates to the Seafarers' Section of the Union. The grievances of the members of the other two sections, namely, Waterside Workers' Section and Inland Waterways' Section, are summarized below. As regards the Seafarers' Section it may be mentioned that save and except what is stated in the memorandum I wish to add the following.

*Indian Seamen's Union.*—This union at present consists of three sections, the main section being the Seafarers' Section, the present strength of whose members is 15,981. This number would have been much larger but for the fact that some prominent members of the union were victimized owing to their union activities and even up till now the seamen are threatened by the brokers, Ghat butlers, Ghat serangs and their under-hands, in the name of their employers, not to become members of the union if they want employment on board a ship. It is a patent fact that some seamen, owing to the parts played by them for advancing the cause of the union, have been deliberately kept unemployed for the last 8 or 10 years. And this, no doubt, to a certain extent has proved a deterrent to those seamen who though anxious to become members of the union have not the courage to do so. It also happens that now and then mushroom unions spring up, being engineered and financed by ingenuous persons interested in maintaining the pernicious system of recruitment through licensed brokers. As an instance, one such broker by the name Sisir Kumar Ghosh, by his continued fleecing and extortion of the seamen created such an embittered situation that the seamen refused *in toto* to be recruited through him or any of his paid agents. Baffled in his attempts to supply crews to Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co., Gladstone, Wyllie & Co., Hoare, Miller & Co., Ltd., Lionel Edwards, Ltd., and others, he wanted to break the union by creating a rival one, but without any success. Goaded by this failure he, it is reported, has rushed to the court and instituted a suit against the union and its general secretary, claiming damages to the amount of Rs. 30,000. As the matter is *sub judice* my union refrains to make any comment on it.

In connection with the welfare work relating to Indian seamen, my union desires that the amount which is realized by the fines and forfeiture of their wages should be entirely devoted and spent in such welfare works.

As regards the solution of the problem of unemployment amongst seamen, my union suggests that either new recruitment be stopped for a limited period or old hands be pensioned off till the question of demand and supply be equitably adjusted.

*Waterside Workers' Section.*—The members of this section, whose number is about 2,000 originally belonged to the Ex. Port Trust Mariners' and Workers' Union. That body was formed on 23rd October, 1927, and was involved in a 22 days' strike within a couple of months of its formation. The strike, however, was withdrawn on the assurance by the employers to consider their legitimate grievances. These men are working in the Calcutta Port Commissioners' heave-up boats, hawser boats, anchor vessels, steam launches, Kidderpore docks, dry docks, King George dock, jolly boats, tug boats, rescue vessels, ferries, etc. Their grievances in respect of wages, working hours, leave, holidays, housing accommodation, compensation, etc., are not receiving any consideration at the hands of the authorities in spite of the assurance given to them on the 11th January, 1928, and on which the strike referred to above was withdrawn except in the case of a minor section of workers.

Their minimum demands are the following:—(i) Grant of a general increase in the wages by 25 per cent.; (ii) eight hours' work a day; (iii) overtime pay for extra work at the rate of time and a half for weekdays with double for Sundays and holidays; (iv) one month's privilege for workers of all ratings without any prejudice to fundamental and medical leave; (v) rules allowing workers the option of work in the two "Id" festival days; (vi) Good and adequate uniform with

waterproof for all men excepting the workshop workers; (vii) provident fund for all men; (viii) arrangements for payment of compensation to workers for injuries received by accident in course of their employment as provided in the Workmen's Compensation Act; (ix) amendment of the Calcutta Port Trust Act for taking a representative of the labour employed by the Commissioners of the Calcutta Port Trust; (x) formal recognition of the union by the Port Trust.

The financial position of the Port Trust stands on a very sound basis. Their balance sheets bear testimony to this fact. But it is regrettable that no overtime pay is given to the ill-paid Indian khalasis, manjis, tindals and serangs, etc., working in the Port Commissioners' various boats. They are exploited in all possible ways. The Trust pays Rs. 20 for khalasis of tug boats, launches, hopper barges and dredgers; Rs. 16-8 annas to Rs. 21-8 annas for lock-gate machinery khalasis, coal trimmers and firemen; Rs. 22 to Rs. 23 for jolly boat khalasis, Kidderpore dock khalasis, dry docks' khalasis and hawser boat khalasis; and Rs. 32 for heave-up boat khalasis, who work 30 to 40 feet deep in water for the moving and unmoving the ships. Considering the enormous profits the Port Commissioners have been reaping every year the wages paid to their employees are considerably low. Besides, these men are subjected to more than 12 hours' work and it is time that their hours of work were regulated on the principle of 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week.

*Inland Waterways Section.*—About 50,000 seamen are working in the inland waterways of Bengal, Behar, Orissa and Assam. Messrs. India General Navigation Co., Ltd., Rivers Steam Navigation Co., Ltd., East Bengal River Steam Service, Ltd., Corporation of Calcutta, Hoare, Miller & Co., Turner, Morrison & Co., B.N. Railway, are amongst the chief employers of these seamen. These employers do not recruit the crew direct. The masters (serangs) and drivers (engineers) as a condition of their service have to find crews for the vessels. Abuses exist in this method of recruitment and there is no security of service of the crew under this obnoxious system. These employers sometimes give 10 per cent. dividend to their shareholders, and the wages of their employees are not at all commensurate with the profits of the companies. The crew sometimes get Rs. 8 or Rs. 10 per month as wages and they have no direct connection with the companies. The serangs and mistries who recruit the crew often treat them as chattels. The present standing grievances of the workers of this section are briefly put below:—

(i) Direct recruitment of the crew through the employment bureau with representatives of labour on it; (ii) 50 per cent. general increment of the wages of the crew, excluding the serangs and drivers, who are, in fact, engineers and officers, and thus virtually linked with the employers as labour contractors; (iii) 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week with overtime pay for extra work; (iv) medical facilities to be given in cases of sickness and accidents, including medical examination on board the vessel before being employed; (v) housing accommodation at different centres with recreation facilities; (vi) amendment of Workmen's Compensation Act so as to include native prams under 100 tons for conferring compensation benefits for accidents to crews engaged in small vessels; (vii) necessary training and adequate manning of vessels so that there may not be overstrain; (viii) recognition of the union by the employers; (ix) provision of rations to the crews as obtained in coastal and foreign-going vessels; (x) sufficient accommodation and sanitary arrangements on board the steamers.

In conclusion, I beg to submit that the members of my union expect that the Honourable Members of the Commission will take into their serious consideration the grievances mentioned in the memorandum as well as in this letter, and will devise ways and means for their redress at an early date.

## PART II.

### MEMORANDUM OF THE INDIAN SEAMEN'S UNION.

#### I.—Recruitment.

(1) and (2). From the dim past the greater volume of trade of Upper and Eastern India used to be carried on along the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. It appears that Satgaon, on the Hooghly, was an emporium of trade, and Huen Tsang, the great Chinese pilgrim, mentioned Tamruk as a seaport of Bengal. The Arabs, while plying in the Indian Ocean for trading purposes did not fail to touch the sea-coast towns of Bengal. Soon after the arrival of Vasco de Gama in the Court of Samorin his countrymen established their sway in the Bay of Bengal inasmuch as they had a king of their own in the Island of Sandvip. The people of these sea-coast towns like Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and Sylhet on the Surma river and Dacca on the Buriganga, like the people of Devonshire, naturally took to seafaring life, and these



places have been all along the recruiting ground for supplying crews to the ships. Some of these people for enjoying the amenities of life gravitated to Calcutta which, within a short time of its foundation by Job Charnock, turned into a city of palaces and ultimately Calcutta, now the premier seaport in India, like the aforesaid places, also became a source of supply of seamen. The Portuguese Settlements of Dacca and Calcutta also supply a regular contingent of Goanese seamen for recruitment from the port of Calcutta.

The seamen who hail from Sylhet, Noakhali and Chittagong form the bulk of the engine crew, while the deck crew consists mainly of people coming from Noakhali and Chittagong, and the saloon department is generally swamped by men from Calcutta.

According to the latest information obtained from the Government Shipping Office at Calcutta, it is found that 233,742 seamen have been registered during the period covering from 1867 to November, 1929, and that about 140,000 seamen are now available for work, and about 50,000 plus 3,000 in the coastal steamers are engaged at a time from the port of Calcutta. The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible that a considerable number of seamen always remain unemployed. The rank and file of the seamen while so unemployed invariably go to their respective villages, and after a short stay there again come to the city in the expectation of getting jobs on board the ships. Though there is continuous unemployment on a large scale yet these men who go without employment sometimes for years together do not give up their distinctive character as seamen. The only nexus that connects these seamen to their native villages is nothing but a heart's desire to see those who are dear and near to them.

3. The system of recruitment of Indian seamen at Calcutta is highly prejudicial to their interests. The laws on the subject are contained in Section 18 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act of 1859 corresponding to Section 24 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act of 1923. The said section empowers the local Government to grant a licence to fit persons to engage or supply seamen for merchant ships in British India. This obnoxious system from the very beginning of its inception has become a veritable breeding-ground of all sorts of abuses and corruptions, and the evils of "crimping" are found running rampant under the very nose of the shipping master. The licensed shipping brokers and their under-hands, the Ghat Serangs and the Ghat Butlers, without any scruple, began to fleece the poor seamen in all conceivable ways. The seamen thus relentlessly pursued and bled white by these "land sharks" made piteous appeals to the Government of India to come to their rescue. The Government, while admitting that the system of licensed shipping brokers was theoretically wrong and that grave abuses actually existed, did not ratify the Draft Convention for establishing facilities for finding employment for seamen adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations convened at Genoa on the 15th day of June, 1920. The licensed shipping brokers, finding themselves quite free to act as they pleased, began to fatten on the illegal gratifications squeezed out from the unwilling hands of these poor seamen, and the section of the Act providing punishment for such offence always remained a dead letter. The situation at last became so intolerable that these men through their union carried on a systematic and vigorous agitation for the abolition of this system. The Government of India was at last moved to appoint a small committee to enquire into the present method of recruitment of seamen at the different ports of India in order that it might be definitely ascertained whether abuses existed and whether those abuses are susceptible of remedy. The committee took evidence in Bombay and Calcutta, and their report was published in the *Gazette of India* on 27th May, 1922, where the Government thus admitted :—"The committee have presented a unanimous report in which they find that the present system under which the shipping companies engage seamen through licensed brokers appointed under Section 18 of Act I of 1859, or private brokers (in Calcutta sometimes known as Ghat Serangs) have resulted in grave abuses. After taking legal opinion the Government of India have decided to treat as confidential the first three paragraphs of the report, which describe the existing system and the abuse to which it is liable." Thus denied the privilege of seeing those paragraphs the seamen now wish to avail themselves of the present opportunity of requesting the honourable members of the Commission to look into the same and form their own opinions in the matter. The said committee made certain recommendations, the most important of which was the formation of a "recruitment bureau" along with advisory committees with representatives of shipowners and seamen on the same. No effect is given to these recommendations as yet, save and except the announcement by local Government made in December, 1924, of the appointment of Captain H. F. Darvell as shipping master as well as officer-in-charge, Seamen's Recruitment Bureau. In August of the same year the same Government informed the union that the said bureau would be started in the next October or early in November. But, in fact, the bureau did not come into

existence at all, nor a single seaman was ever heard to have been recruited through the so-called bureau or the officer-in-charge, and consequently the designation is nothing but a "misnomer." The abuses attendant upon the present method of recruitment of seamen are so many and so grave that the Indian Seamen's Union in its various meetings did not fail to impress upon the attention of the authorities the necessity of abolishing this pernicious system of recruiting seamen through licensed shipping brokers and Ghat Serangs. The shipping master has practically no hand in the matter of recruitment, and his assistant similarly does not look after the recruitment of the seamen. The powers and functions of both these officers are limited in their character and scope. They do not and cannot check the grave abuses which exist, nor do they improve the conditions of recruitment. They cannot even stop direct recruitment by some of the shipping companies made through their Ghat Serangs. The problem of unemployment amongst seamen has not yet been effectively handled, and the appalling figures of ever-increasing unemployment, owing to want of regulation of the seamen's engagements by their registered turns according to different ratings, are a standing source of anxiety to the union. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that a State Employment Bureau for Seamen should be established without further delay. The deplorable victimization of seamen by "crimps" and similar social parasites is too well known to require comment. The business of finding employment for seamen shall not be carried on as a commercial enterprise for pecuniary gain, but that free public employment offices should be provided either jointly by representative associations of shipowners and seamen under the control of a central authority, or, in the absence of such joint action, by the State itself. But it is preferable that a State Employment Bureau should consist of a Government officer with a sufficient staff and two representatives of the Indian Seamen's Union and two representatives of the shipping companies. The doors of employment and recruitment of seamen should be flung wide open and it will be a narrow and parochial idea to restrict by legislation the recruitment of seamen to the local limits of the port of engagement. The work of the seamen is by its very nature largely international, and they form to a large extent an international community, and there is, therefore, no reason for confining them to a particular locality for finding avenues of employment. The special discipline to which a seaman is subjected, his life of wandering confinement, his direct and perilous struggle with the elements—all these tend to show that he needs special legal protection for safeguarding his interest and privileges without any distinction of caste, creed and colour. The union for the redress of the seamen's grievances in the matter of recruitment times out of number from different presses and platforms and through the All-India Trade Union Congress passed resolutions and pressed upon the attention of the Government of India the necessity of amending the Indian Merchant Shipping Act so as to do away with the pernicious system of recruitment of seamen through the licensed brokers and Ghat Serangs as per recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee and for the establishment of a State Employment Bureau at all the ports of India. The union also pressed the necessity of getting the Seamen's Articles of Agreement always signed in the shipping office and not on board the ships in accordance with the wishes of the shipowners, which is calculated to be detrimental to the best interests of the seamen. The union also urged the Government of India to delete forthwith from the Seamen's Articles of Agreement the column regarding the report as to the quality of seamen's work (as recommended in the Convention passed in the International Labour Conference held at Geneva, 1926) as this column has been greatly misused by shipping authorities to harass and victimize the seamen. In the Articles of Agreement Indian seamen as a rule sign for a period of one year with an option of three months. But if the company wants it can discharge the men without assigning any reason and at any port during this term without payment of the wages for the unexpired period. But the seamen themselves on their part cannot give up their job till the contract period is over. The seamen want that provision should be made in the Articles of Agreement for payment of wages for such unexpired period, and the absence of such and other kindred matters in the Merchant Shipping Act often leads the Indian seamen to think that the said Act is something like a *Galley Slave Act* of the days of the Roman Empire. My union strongly feels that the time has come for the Government of India to introduce a Bill in the Legislative Assembly for enforcing the recommendations of the Recruitment Committee, and for introducing 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week in the matters of hours of work for seamen and to bring the present Merchant Shipping Act in conformity with the principles underlying the various Conventions and Recommendations passed in the International Labour Conference (Maritime Session) regarding (1) minimum age for admission of children to employment at sea, (2) unemployment indemnity in case of loss or foundering of the ship, (3) facilities for finding employment for seamen, (4) compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea, (5) Seamen's Articles of Agreement, and (6) repatriation of seamen.

Boats of smaller weight than 300 tons should also be included in the Act, as this would materially benefit the seamen on these boats.

(7) *Unemployment.*—The great abuses consequent upon the existing method of recruitment of seamen through Government licensed shipping brokers whereby the seamen have to pay in an indirect form 25 per cent. of their total wages merely for the purpose of being recruited by this obnoxious machinery for work on board ship go *pari passu* with the acute distress and sufferings due to unemployment on a large scale so far as India is concerned. The Indian seamen number 2,50,000, while the number employed by the shipping companies at any one time is only 50,000. This means that practically 2,00,000 men are always unemployed, although they may get chances of employment in rotation. Both for the health of the seamen and for giving equal opportunities to all of them for getting employment it is essentially necessary that the supply of seamen as crews should be regulated by the registered turns of the men, as this system alone will effectively deal with the problem of unemployment among seamen. There are certain ranks of seamen who renew their agreement after every voyage, and in this way they continue their service sometimes for four years without giving any chance to a seaman of the same category to step into his shoes just after a voyage. It is to the interest of seamen in general that at the end of one year's voyage seamen should be discharged and fresh engagements should be effected, and the registered turns should be the determining factor in the matter of selection for such recruitment. The British India Steam Navigation Co. engages seamen direct through their Ghat Serangs, who give preference to such seamen who can best satisfy their greed for money, and thus many deserving seamen are thrown overboard, and thus baffled in their attempts to get employment they are reduced to the verge of starvation with their families. The union finds itself helpless in the matter under the existing law, and even its recommendation of a deserving man for a job on board the ship invariably falls flat upon the ear of the Companies.

### III.—Housing.

There is no housing accommodation provided for seamen either by the employers or the Government. The seamen who come to the city from their distant native places or who after discharge want to stay in the city invariably live in boarding houses called *Lathis*, owned and managed by private individuals. The accommodation each man gets in a *lathi* is very small. The seamen generally live in a *lathi* like herrings in a barrel. These seamen, owing to their very low poor wages, cannot afford to hire a house for living with their families in the city. So to be once in the bosom of a family after a strenuous voyage is looked upon by them rather as an agreeable surprise than a matter of necessity. Seamen, while thus living in the city without any check or control, often fall into temptation and allurements of a big city like Calcutta, and thus contract many vices and diseases. Neither private landlords nor the union have so far been able to provide housing facilities for seamen. We take this opportunity of emphasising the necessity of establishing an Indian Sailors' Home in this city at the expense of the Government, providing all the amenities of life for the poor seamen who have done so much during the Great War.

### IV.—Health.

The health of the Indian seamen greatly suffers, owing to want of proper housing facilities, and they generally wander into paths leading to moral decrepitude and physical breakdown. There are no arrangements for their treatment if attacked with any venereal or other diseases. Neither the Government nor the employer provides medical facilities for these men. When they come from their native villages they come with very good physique, and after living here some days they deteriorate in health. These seamen would gladly avail themselves of proper medical aid if available. The sanitary arrangements regarding latrines, drinking water, bathing and washing in lodging houses, though made according to the requirements of the municipal law, cannot be fully utilized by seamen owing to overcrowding. The protection of the health of the seamen was one of the subjects for discussion in the last Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference 1929. Propaganda amongst seamen concerning the dangers of venereal diseases, the necessity for infected persons to receive attention, the free provision of prophylactic measures for seamen, and the organization of free and accessible treatment for tropical venereal and other diseases, as is provided for by the Brussels Agreement—these are the things essentially necessary for the welfare of the Indian seamen. The institution and development in all Indian ports of a certain size of meeting and recreation rooms (canteens and rooms for games), libraries, sports' organizations and opportunities for exercises—these things are necessary for the health of the Indian seamen. In Indian ports the European seamen enjoy many amenities of life which are denied to Indian seamen.

The authorities of foreign countries have practically done nothing to protect the interests of Indian seamen in various seaports, especially in matters of health and recreation. Lt.-Col. W. L. Harnett, representing the Government of Bengal at the recent Fourth Imperial Social Hygiene Congress which met in London in July last informed the Conference that at the Port of Calcutta the recreational facilities for seamen were being extended, and that in the autumn a very fine new club would be opened which would include a V.D. treatment centre. Such facilities, we are constrained to say, are meant purely for the European seamen, and the doors of this new club would not be flung open to Indian seamen. The dissemination of appropriate information concerning tropical, venereal, and other diseases and their cure and prevention, and the printing in their vernacular and distribution free of cost of such booklets providing seamen with all the necessary information concerning their welfare in port, and the inclusion in publications intended for seamen of the addresses of hostels, houses, clubs, dispensaries, etc., with indications of their advantages—these want immediate attention and necessary action at the hands of the authorities. The Indian Government by piloting a resolution through the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, did not ratify the Draft Conventions nor accepted the recommendations adopted by the 10th International Labour Conference concerning Sickness Insurance. The said Government have not taken steps in the matter of insurance of Indian seamen against incapacity or sickness, old ages insurance, or retiring pensions, insurance against unemployment through shipwreck or other causes. We wish to point out in this connection that Government should take adequate and effective steps for the protection of Indian seamen in cases of sickness and for their treatment while injured on board the ship. Such sick and injured seamen are invariably landed in the nearest port, and they go without pay for months together till they are landed at their home ports. Nothing can be more regrettable than this. They are thus stranded and marooned in many inhospitable places, there to shift for themselves till a passage is arranged to take them to their ports of engagement or nearest port in India.

#### V.—Welfare Work.

There is no welfare work amongst seamen and neither the employers nor the Government have taken any steps in the matter. No provision is made for refreshments, shelters and creches or for physical culture, recreation and amusements. No provision is made for spreading education amongst the children of the seamen and the much talked-of Nautical Institute for the training of seamen and their boys has not yet seen the light of day. All hopes centered on it have now been dashed to the ground. It is greatly desired that provisions for old age and premature retirement and the establishment of Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of seamen and a Statutory Seamen's Welfare Fund be started at an early date. For the welfare of seamen there should be adoption of legislative measures or regulations embodying among others the following measures, account being taken of national and local conditions:—(1) Regulation of the sale of alcohol including measures for the closing of taverns near the dock areas; (2) restriction of the sale and use of narcotics; (3) necessity of instructing seamen in the dangers arising from the use of narcotics; (4) prohibition of employment of attendants of both sexes in public houses or hotels under a certain age; (5) institution of official supervision of taverns, lodging houses, and hotels; (6) supervision of persons visiting ships in order to prevent persons desiring to go on board with the intention of introducing alcoholic drinks or narcotics or for other undesirable purposes from having access thereto; (7) sufficient lighting for docks and the fencing of dock areas, wherever such a measure is possible, by fixed or moveable barriers; (8) supervision of boatmen plying between the ships and the shore; (9) removal from the port areas of loafers and persons of no definite occupation; (10) the admission without difficulty of seamen of all nationalities and all religious beliefs to public hospitals and dispensaries in ports; (11) steps to favour the general adoption of the system under which, as soon as a seaman is enrolled, he may allocate, if he so desires, part of his wages for regular remittance to his family; (12) initiation and contribution by Government to the fund for social insurance institutions; (13) exemption of seamen possessing identity papers with their photographs attached duly issued by the national authorities, e.g., seamen's discharge books, from the requirements of presenting ordinary passports on disembarking in foreign countries.

There at present exist marked inequalities in the treatment of the seamen of Asiatic countries, as compared with other seamen performing the same work, in particular in such matters as wages, hours, the system of recruitment, unemployment, housing, health, the protection afforded by the laws of the country of the shipowners in respect of insurance, Workmen's Compensation, freedom of association, etc. There should be protection of seamen in cases of sickness and injury and there should be application of compulsory sickness insurance to all ships engaged in maritime navigation, including sea fishing boats, but with the exception of ships of war, and

to every person employed on board, and the period of protection to begin with the commencement of service to the expiration of a specified period from termination of service. The benefits to consist of payment of benefit to a seaman who is incapable of work by reason of sickness, is not entitled to his wages, and is present in the country in which the insurance institution is established, and payment of benefit to dependents of a seaman during the period between the termination of his right to wages and his return to the country in which the insurance institution is to be established. It is for the Government to choose between the two systems of rates of benefits, e.g., flat rate and rate varying with service category or wages of the seaman and there should be special provision on behalf of seamen having family responsibilities—medical treatment, supply of proper and sufficient medicines and appliances where necessary, hospital treatment or expenses thereof, and grant of medical benefit as long as the sick person needs it, and fixing of a period during which benefit may be granted, maternity benefit and funeral benefit—to these subjects the union desires the Commission to pay special attention so that necessary action may be taken in the matter without delay.

#### VI.—Education.

The Government or the employers so far have not taken any steps for spreading general or technical or vocational education among the seamen or their children. The appalling illiteracy that prevails among Indian seamen is the root cause of their falling into the traps of many diseases, leading spendthrift lives, and often turning out moral wrecks. It is no fault of theirs but the employers or the Government should see that the horizon of life of an Indian seaman be widened and that as his services have been well-proved during the Great War he may lead a happy, prosperous, and peaceful life and that his children may aspire after things higher and nobler than what their father pursued. The system of beaurocratic government of the country is primarily responsible for the many present evils and woes under which the poor seamen have been suffering. Nothing is more pressing than the immediate institution of the Nautical Institute at Calcutta for the training of the Indian seamen and their children.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the preamble to the Treaty of Versailles raised great hopes in the minds of the workers of the world. It laid down many principles for the benefit of the workers such as social equality, labour legislation, regulation of the labour supply, prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage and the protection of the workers against sickness, disease and injury. These principles, all of which are necessary in order that the workers may live under peaceful conditions, are embodied in the preamble to the Peace Treaty, and every state member, who promised to establish the League of Nations, promised also to establish the International Labour Organization in order to create world peace and annual conferences under the auspices of this organization are held for drafting and passing conventions and recommendations relating to the needs, requirements, and grievances of the workers of the world. The seamen are a special class of workers, their work is of an international character—it is they who practically give life to the shipping industry, it is they who raise by the sweat of their brow the dividends of the shipowners' shares, it is they who keep the trade and commerce of a country intact and advance the cause of national and international trade. Everybody knows that the prosperity of a nation depends on its trade and commerce, and these depend largely on the seamen and the seamen alone. But it is a pity that whatever conventions and recommendations are passed in the different maritime sessions and general sessions of the International Labour Conferences relating to the welfare of the Indian seamen save and except the convention regarding trimmers and stokers they are *in toto* rejected in the Legislative Assembly with the help of the Government. What is achieved at Geneva is invariably wasted at Delhi. Whatever is decided in an international forum for the benefit of the poor seamen is dashed to the ground by an unsympathetic beaurocratic Government of the country to which they belong. Can anything be more deplorable than this? Time has come for the Government of India to change its angle of vision and to ratify the conventions and accept the recommendations that are passed with the consent of its representatives in the various International Labour Conferences.

#### VII.—Safety.

Reliable statistics of industrial accidents as available in the ports of important countries of Europe are not to be found in this country. As no regular official wage statistics are published in India as a whole so in the absence of any definite official data relating to accidents in loading or unloading of ships or accidents that daily occur on board the ship to seamen while engaged in their daily work, it is difficult to give an accurate figure for the accidents that occur every year to Indian seamen in Indian ports or on board the ships. The Indian ports are not even properly equipped.

An idea of the number of accidents that are likely to happen in the port of Calcutta alone, can be gathered if we take into consideration the fact that here during 1927-27 the net tonnage of shipping entering was 4,177,118 and the income was Rs. 312,300,183.

The administration of the affairs of Indian ports is vested by law in bodies specially constituted for the purpose and the European members constitute the majority and they are conspicuous by the absence of any representative of the labour force, particularly Indian seamen. There are not in the ports adequate preventive and precautionary measures in the matter of prevention of accidents. With the enormous heavy packages always hanging over the dockworkers like Damocles' sword they on many occasions are subjected to fatal accidents and without any first-aid given to such victims and without any proper medical treatment accorded to them they die premature deaths. The Government of India recently, by moving a resolution in the Legislative Assembly, did not accept the convention and recommendations relating to minimum wage fixing machinery and did not take into its consideration the preventions of accidents in loading and unloading of ships—matters which were mooted and discussed in the 11th Session of the International Labour Conference at Geneva.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

The Workmen's Compensation Act is not widely in use. Many of the illiterate seamen do not even know of its existence. Those seamen who know of it owing to difficulties which have to be met, the fight that has to be waged in order to get the requisite compensation, fight shy of the Act and if the injury be not of a very serious character they would invariably keep silent. In order to reap the full benefits of the Act, it is essentially necessary for the employers to be humane and the employees to be on the alert and educated so that the latter may know the implications of the Act and the benefits to be derived therefrom. In this connection the union suggests that the Government of India should issue instructions at an early date to all the shipping masters in India to arrange to obtain compensation to injured seamen by representing their cases to the local agents of the companies in India rather than by referring to the shipowners at home so that the inordinate delays caused thereby and the consequent untold miseries to seamen may be avoided. The union urges upon the attention of the Government of India the desirability of giving benefits of the Workmen's Compensation Act to Indian seamen engaged in ships registered in the United Kingdom and in home-trade ships of a registered tonnage of less than 300 tons even.

#### XI.—Hours and Special Questions Relating to Seamen and Workers in Inland Navigation.

The Indian Seamen's Union of Calcutta have been persistently demanding an eight-hour day and forty-eight hour week for the seamen of all categories engaged on board ship. We also desire that in the Articles of Agreement there should be some such provision fixing the maximum hours of work per day or per week each seaman has to do, so that the seaman may not be subjected to considerable strain of overwork without any additional remuneration. This reform in the matter of regulation of hours of work on board ship is long overdue. The principle of the eight-hour day and the forty-eight hour week was approved a decade ago in the First International Labour Conference held at Washington. After the sufferings through which the world had passed, it was felt necessary to achieve unity and harmony everywhere. It is necessary that the position of the workers and of the seamen be improved, with the help of collaboration of the employers and the workers. Every benefit given to seamen is in the interest of the shipowners themselves, since the efficiency of the shipping industry of a country will be dependent on the welfare of the crews employed in the industry. The idea underlying the French Eight-Hour-Day Act is the promotion of progressive improvement in the conditions of seamen as a better guarantee for the prosperity of the industry. Labour is not to be considered simply as a commodity—Labour is collaboration—Labour in the last resort is friendship. Mr. Havelock Wilson said: "What about this 48 hour business? Every point so far advanced against the seamen's 48 hours can be met step by step." The seamen's work is always international, he works in all parts of the world, on all the high seas, and a seaman of one nationality works with seamen of other nationalities on the very same seas. In the Peace Treaty there is the expression "climatic conditions" and this is applicable to all seamen irrespective of caste, creed and colour. There should, therefore, be uniformity of working hours. When the question of working hours for industrial workers on land was discussed in the Washington Conference it was pointed out that owing to climatic conditions of India, the Indian workers could not be given an eight-hour day, but that the hours of work under

existing legislation in this country should be permitted. A 60-hour week was therefore fixed. But the Government of India has very recently informed the International Labour Office that Indian seamen who are engine hands work for eight hours, deck hands work nine hours, and catering staff ten hours. It thus appears that climatic conditions should not stand in the way of an eight-hour day and 48-hour week for Indian seamen.

Sir Geoffrey Corbet (Government Delegate, India, in the last maritime session of the International Labour Conference, 1929) has said that Indian seamen are physically weak and that one white seaman is equal to two Indians. But the wages of an English seaman are £9-10s. whereas an Indian seaman receives only Rs. 23 or £1-15s. If, therefore, two Indian seamen can do the work of one white seaman it would appear that even so they receive only £3-10s. as compared with £9-10s. This is the position so far as Indian seamen are concerned; they are exploited by white shipowners in every possible way.

"No reasonable argument has ever been put forward by the shipowners why the seamen should work longer hours than the shore-workers," writes Mr. J. Henson, of the Marine Section of the Transport and General Workers' Union in the "Daily Herald" of 17th December, 1929, replying to the observations of Lord Inchcape at the annual meeting of the P. & O. Steamship Company. He points out that Lord Inchcape is wrong in suggesting that the seamen are satisfied with the present position. "Shorter hours for sailors will not harm, but will benefit the shipping industry, and in the end it comes to the point that the shipowner must be paid despite himself," so said Mr. Havelock Wilson whom Lord Inchcape repeatedly praised.

Referring to the huge surplus of the P. & O. Company revealed by Lord Inchcape—over £40,000,000 net, Mr. Henson declares that the average wage paid to Indian seamen is 32s. a month, just over 1s. a day, and that their hours of work are from sunrise to sunset. And he suggests that if the P. & O. had led the way in paying them the same rates as paid to Europeans, the accumulated assets and dividends might not have been so large.

It is the duty of the Government to ratify the Washington Convention relating to seamen's hours and the first act of the Labour Government in Britain was to express its consent to such a beneficial measure for the seamen.

## II.—Staff Organization.

The Government of India some time ago started a training school on the *I.M.T.S. Dufferin* for giving facilities for training of seamen or men for sea-service as officers and engineers in the Mercantile Marine Service. But lads from 13 to 16 years of age and with sufficient means are admitted as cadets and that not a single seaman's son is admitted. The reasons for this state of things can better be imagined than described. Seamen look upon the Government to make such adequate provisions that their sons may get training in the *Dufferin* without much hardship and expense on their part, otherwise the very object for which the *Dufferin* stands will be frustrated, much to the regret of the seamen.

### *Special questions relating to Seamen and Workers in Inland Navigation.*

As has been said before the Indian seamen should not be subjected to work for more than eight hours a day. As regards changes to be introduced in the existing Merchant Shipping Act the union suggests that provision should be made therein for abolishing the system of recruitment of the crew through licensed shipping brokers, the establishment of a State Employment Bureau with representatives of the Government, employers and the seamen, the provision in the Articles of Agreement for payment of wages to seamen for the unexpired period in case of sudden dismissal of him by the companies for no fault on the part of the seamen so recruited. Sections 52, 53 and 54 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act lay down the rules for the allotment system and they are never acted upon by the authorities. So instructions should be given to masters and owners of steamers that they should be put into practical operation forthwith. The seamen go on voyage and their families go on borrowing, and the seamen on return find everything mortgaged or pawned and the debts run to a heavy amount which it often becomes very difficult for them to pay. If three-fourths of the wages of the seaman be allotted to his wife or family as the case may be during the period of voyage, then his family would not experience hardship and would not contract debt at an exorbitant rate of interest. European seamen are given overtime allowance and there is no reason why the Indian seamen should not get the same. The system of unemployment insurance like that prevailing in England should be enforced for the Indian seamen.

## XII.—Wages.

Unemployment, of which seafarers are having their share, is once again bringing to the front the question of Indian seamen being engaged in British ships. Before the war it was not uncommon, in a British fore-castle, for as many languages to be heard as the number of the crew, but to-day British predominate in British ships. The wages and other conditions of work are not equal, so far as the Indian seamen are concerned. In June, 1929, the President of the Board of Trade in reply to Mr. E. Shinwell, M.P., stated that out of 200,525 seamen employed on vessels registered in the United Kingdom, 52,062 were Asiatic or East African seamen, who were serving on agreements which opened and terminated in Asia. This means that these seamen signing in Asia, are bound to accept any wage which the shipowners may choose to offer them. The following figures (as quoted by Mr. Henson in the "Daily Herald," dated 29th December, 1928) of monthly rates of wages for various classes of seafarers show that the rates for Asiatics are far below those for British :—

|                                    | £  | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Quarter Masters, British .. .. .   | 9  | 10 | 0  |
| "    Bombay Lascar .. .. .         | 4  | 10 | 0  |
| "    Calcutta .. .. .              | 4  | 2  | 6  |
| Sailor, British .. .. .            | 9  | 0  | 0  |
| "    Bombay Lascar .. .. .         | 2  | 6  | 6  |
| "    Calcutta .. .. .              | 1  | 17 | 6  |
| "    Chinamen .. .. .              | 3  | 5  | 4  |
| Greaser, British .. .. .           | 10 | 0  | 0  |
| "    Bombay Lascar .. .. .         | 2  | 19 | 3  |
| "    Calcutta .. .. .              | 1  | 19 | 0  |
| "    Chinamen .. .. .              | 3  | 19 | 4  |
| Fireman, British .. .. .           | 9  | 10 | 0  |
| "    Bombay Lascar .. .. .         | 2  | 2  | 9  |
| "    Calcutta .. .. .              | 1  | 14 | 6  |
| "    Chinamen .. .. .              | 3  | 16 | 2  |
| Assistant Steward, British .. .. . | 8  | 5  | 0  |
| "    Bombay Lascar .. .. .         | 3  | 3  | 0  |
| "    Calcutta .. .. .              | 2  | 11 | 0  |
| "    Chinamen .. .. .              | 3  | 5  | 4  |

It has been contended in the journal of the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain and Ireland that the employment of Indian seamen is a necessity as they are better able than white men to stand a tropical climate. The time has come for the Indian seamen to receive the same wages and conditions as his British and European brother has obtained. If he is better able to stand the working conditions in a ship's stokehold, or on deck, he should receive equal, or higher wages than the European. But Mr. Henson contends that the cheapness is the reason for such recruitment of Indian seamen. He says, "No, the real reason he is carried is because he can be obtained at a low rate, his living accommodation on board ship is less, and in case of death his compensation, if any, is only a small amount. If claims are made and disputes arise—well, the claimants are in India and the owners are in Great Britain."

The above figures and the passage quoted clearly show the deplorable state of affairs regarding wages and working conditions of the Indian seamen. They do not get a living wage to keep their body and soul together. The figures given below show the existing rates :—

| Ratings.            | Deck Staff.        |                      |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
|                     | Passenger Steamer. | Cargo Line.          |
|                     | (per month).       | (per month).         |
|                     | Rupees.            | Rupees.              |
| Deck Serang .. .. . | 60                 | 50 (coastal vessel). |
| Seacunney .. .. .   | 55                 | 45 (coastal vessel). |
| Tindal .. .. .      | 37                 |                      |
| 2nd Tindal .. .. .  | 30                 |                      |
| Cassab .. .. .      | 30                 |                      |
| Winchman .. .. .    | 28                 |                      |
| Lascars .. .. .     | 18 to 25           |                      |
| Bhandary .. .. .    | 25                 |                      |
| Topas .. .. .       | 22                 |                      |



*Engine Room Staff.*

| Ratings.            | Passenger Steamer.<br>(per month).<br>Rupees. | Cargo Line.<br>(per month).<br>Rupees. |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Engine Serang .. .. | 60  |  |
| 1st Tindal .. ..    | 35  |  |
| 2nd Tindal .. ..    | 30  |  |
| 3rd Tindal .. ..    | 28  |  |
| Cassab .. ..        | 28  |  |
| Donkeyman .. ..     | 28  |  |
| Oilman .. ..        | 26  |  |
| Fireman .. ..       | 23  |  |
| Trimmer .. ..       | 18  |  |
| Bhandary .. ..      | 25  |  |
| Topas .. ..         | 22  |  |

*Saloon Department.*

|                             |             |    |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----|
| Butler-in-charge .. ..      | 80          |    |
| Butler under steward .. ..  | 75          |    |
| 2nd butler .. ..            | 40 to 50    |    |
| Baker mate .. ..            | 30          |    |
| Baker .. ..                 | 70          |    |
| Chief cook .. ..            | 70          |    |
| 2nd cook .. ..              | 40          | 40 |
| 3rd cook .. ..              | 25          |    |
| 4th cook .. ..              | 20          |    |
| Chief cook and butler .. .. | 75          | 75 |
| Saloon boy .. ..            | 32          | 35 |
|                             | B.I. Rs. 33 |    |
| Half saloon boy .. ..       | 15          |    |
| Captain's boy .. ..         | 32          | 35 |
|                             | B.I. Rs. 30 |    |
| Chief Engineer's boy .. ..  | 32          | 35 |
|                             | B.I. Rs. 30 |    |
| Officer's boy .. ..         | 32          | 35 |
|                             | B.I. Rs. 30 |    |
| Marconi boy .. ..           | 30          |    |
| Mess room boy .. ..         | 33          |    |
| Mess room mate .. ..        | 16          |    |
| Butcher .. ..               | 45 to 50    |    |
| Butcher's mate .. ..        | 25          |    |
| Scullion .. ..              | 24          |    |
| Topas .. ..                 | 22          |    |
| Pantryman, 1st class .. ..  | 40          | 37 |
| Pantryman, 2nd class .. ..  | 35          |    |
| Pantry mate .. ..           | 20          |    |

As has been pointed out already, the Indian Government recently passed a resolution in the Legislative Assembly not to give effect to the Convention and Recommendation passed in the Eleventh Session of the International Labour Conference in 1928 regarding Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery. So the woes of the Indian seamen can be better imagined than described.

**XIV.—Individual Trade Unions—The Indian Seamen's Union.**

Early in the year 1908, Mr. S. Moghal Jan, under the patronage of the late Honourable Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur, lately member of the Executive Council of the Government of Bengal, founded the Indian Seamen's Anjuman. The principle objects of the Anjuman were to render help to the distressed seamen and to promote their well-being in all possible ways. The seamen themselves took a keen interest in the organization and development of this Anjuman. But the promoters of the Anjuman having gone to sea it remained for a time in a dormant state. During the Great War the seamen wanted to revive it. The year 1914 which witnessed the Great War brought in its train harrowing tales of woes to the homes of many Indian seamen. The Indian seamen carrying their lives in their hands, bravely stood to their posts and thus rendered incalculable service to the Empire during its gravest moments. Many of these seamen died and wounded owing to submarines and enemy operations on the sea. During these terrible days of the war, news were scanty and the families of those seamen who were out on the

sea could not know even whether their dear ones serving in the ships were then in the land of the living or passed away. To add insult to the injury the relatives of those seamen who lost their lives in the sea for advancing the cause of the Empire were subjected to indignities in getting the balance of wages and other dues of the lost ones from the shipping office. Great was the indignation felt by the Indian seamen and some meetings of the seamen were held for the purpose of reviving their organization which under the name and style of the Indian Seamen's Benevolent Union was brought to the existence under this new garb on March 8th, 1918. Mr. R. Braunfield, Barrister-at-Law, happened to be its President. Then for some reasons some of the prominent workers seceded and started what was known as the Indian National Seamen's Union which again was coalesced with the Indian Seamen's Benevolent Union which both became henceforth known as the Indian Seamen's Union whose president was Mr. R. Braunfield till his death. Then again trouble arose and a rival Union under the name and style National Seamen's Union of India was started. It was on the 7th August, 1927, that both the Indian Seamen's Union and the National Seamen's Union of India was amalgamated under the present name and style of the Indian Seamen's Union whose present president is Mr. Mahbubul Huq, M.A., B.L., and Mr. Aftab Ally as Secretary. This union is registered (Register No. 12) under the Trade Union Act with its head office at 7, Ekbalpur Lane, Calcutta. This is also affiliated with the International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam, and its affiliation with the All-India Trade Union Congress has been recently in a meeting of the seamen withdrawn, owing to the said Congress having gone under the control of persons holding extreme views on labour matters. The representatives of this Union, as the following figures show, attended the International Labour Conferences at Geneva.

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1926 | Mr. M. Daud, M.A., B.L., Delegate.          |
| 1926 | Mr. S. Moghal Jan, Adviser.                 |
| 1928 | Mr. Mahbubul Huq, M.A., B.L., Adviser.      |
| 1929 | Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury, M.L.A., Adviser. |
| 1929 | Mr. M. Daud, M.A., B.L., Delegate.          |
| 1929 | Mr. S. Muzammil Ali, Adviser.               |

Mr. Mahbubul Huq, M.A., B.L., also attended the British Commonwealth Labour Conference held in London in 1928, as a delegate from India. Mr. K. Ahmad, Barrister-at-Law, M.L.A., an ex-President of the union, is a member of this Royal Commission on Indian Labour.

*The Demands of the Union.*—The union has formulated the following demands, which the seamen in their various meetings have been insisting upon for being met by the authorities concerned :—

*Programme of Demands.*—(i) Fifty per cent. increase in the wages of all seafarers.

(ii) Forty-eight hours to constitute a week's work at sea, with a 42 hours week at port.

(iii) Payment for all overtime at the rate of time and a half for week days with double time for Sundays and holidays, whether in sea or in port.

(iv) Wages to commence from the time of signing on, and end the day of paying off.

(v) Free passage to home ports for all seamen left in foreign ports due to sickness, and full wages to be paid up to and including the day of arrival in the home port.

(vi) Monthly allotment notes to be allowed to all dependents up to 75 per cent. of the total wage, and all members of the crew to have the option of drawing the balance at any port.

(vii) Proper accommodation to be made for the Indian seamen in all ships, and also mess-rooms to be established with free eating utensils, with wash-houses equipped with shower baths to be built separate from mess-room; stewards to be employed in all ships for the Indian seamen.

(viii) Abolition of the existing scale of provisions and a "full and plenty" scale to be instituted.

(ix) Beds, pillows and blankets, with weekly changes of clean sheet, pillow slips and soap and towels to be supplied free of charge by the ship-owners.

(x) A pension scheme to be instituted for all seamen with 20 years' adult sea service shown in discharge books; the ship owners collectively to create a National Central Fund to which seamen shall not contribute and from which all pensions shall be paid.

(xi) Full cash compensation to be made to seamen by ship-owners for loss of kit or personal effects due to ship-wreck, fire, accidents, etc.

(xii) Tobacco, cigarettes, working clothes and boots to be supplied to the crew at the cost price aboard ship.

(xiii) Abolition of the present system of recruiting seamen through licensed brokers and ghat serangs, substituting seamen's employment bureau along with advisory committees as recommended by the seamen's recruitment committee of 1922.

(xiv) Recognition of the Indian seamen's union, i.e., the ship-owners are not to employ non-union seamen under any circumstances.

The general grievances of the Indian seamen are mentioned in this memorandum and the above demands by no means form an exhaustive list of their pressing needs. What the union desires is that the Government of India should take into its serious consideration the above demands and devise ways and means for satisfying these very simple but vital needs of the Indian seamen without further delay.

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### MESSRS. BIRD AND CO., CALCUTTA.

Messrs. Bird and Co. have been contractors for the supply of labour for the handling of goods and coal since 1864. Their experience in this business, therefore extends over sixty-five years.

Practically the whole of the work in connection with contracts is done on the "khatta," or piece-work system, i.e., by sirdars employed by the firm, who maintain gangs of from 40 to 100 men each, and who are paid according to the maundage or tonnage of cargo handled by their gangs. Sirdars are responsible for the discipline of their gangs, and as many of the present ones now working are sons of sirdars who formerly worked, they are fully experienced in the proper methods of dealing with the varieties of commodities handled under the different contracts. The firm employs monthly paid labour only for the handling of heavy and awkward cargo at the docks, for the trimming of coal at the coal berths, and for the hand shunting of wagons at the Government salt golahs. Monthly paid labour works in gangs of twenty men, each under a sirdar.

The number of manual workers employed, i.e., those engaged in the actual handling of goods, varies according to the busy or slack traffic seasons of the year, but the maximum may be taken as 12,000, of whom some 10,000 work in Calcutta, and of these 3,000 are at the Kidderpore and King George's Docks, and 4,000 at the Kidderpore coal berths. With the exception of a percentage of women who work with their husbands and families at the coal berths, the entire labour force is male.

#### I.—Recruitment.

Recruiting is not done by the firm direct but through the sirdars. This method has always been employed, as by it sirdars engage men from districts and villages where they are well known, frequently relatives and friends, which enables them to exercise considerable influence and control over the gangs they work, while the coolies themselves work best under sirdars known to them.

The firm assists the sirdars when recruiting with advances for railway fares, and to enable them to leave money with the families of men newly recruited.

Monthly paid labour is recruited locally from suitable applicants. No recruiting is done through public employment agencies.

The principal districts from which labour is recruited are Arrah, Allahabad, Azamghar, Bara-Banki, Benares, Bilaspur, Darbhanga, Fyzabad, Gazipur, Gorakhpur, Gaya, Hazaribagh, Lucki-Serai, Monghyr, Patna, Raipur, etc. etc. Very little labour is recruited in Bengal as the Bengalee appears averse to taking up handling work.

As regards "labour turnover," the majority of the men work under the same sirdars for years, returning regularly to their homes at cultivation or harvest times. Some go as frequently as twice a year.

#### II.—Staff Organisation.

The staff organization is an extensive one, and the supervising members, both superior and subordinate, are men specially trained in their duties.

Agencies which employ a large labour force are in charge of Europeans, the workers themselves being directly under the discipline of the sirdars and the supervision of experienced Indian staff. Small agencies are under Indian supervision but are regularly inspected by a European assistant. Free quarters are provided for staff working up-country, but not for those in Calcutta. The firm's provident fund is open to all salaried servants drawing Rs. 25 monthly and over. Free medical

attention is given. Relations between staff and workers are generally good. Many sirdars are literate, but it is seldom one wishes to relinquish his gang and take up a salaried post of supervisor, leading hand, etc., but coolies having ambition and the necessary knowledge will occasionally turn sirdars and run gangs of their own. This is encouraged.

### III.—Housing.

Housing is provided by the firm for all manual workers employed up-country, and for about 80 per cent. of those employed in Calcutta. Up-country the accommodation consists of the usual type of mat wall and tile roof sheds, 60 ft. long, divided into separate rooms, 12 ft. by 9 ft. ; in Calcutta the houses are mainly single-storied blocks of brick walls and asbestos or corrugated sheeted roofs, each block consisting of twelve rooms measuring 10 ft. by 10 ft., each room having one door and one window. All housing provided by the firm is rent free, except in the case of a few better type quarters at Kidderpore, for which a monthly rental of Rs. 3-6 per room is charged. The housing provided is always fully occupied, and the sub-letting or occupation by outside tenants is strictly prohibited. Workers who find their own accommodation in the bazaars pay rent of Re. 1 to Re. 1-8 per man per month. Water supply is obtained from wells up-country and from municipal sources in Calcutta. Conservancy arrangements are provided and maintained in some cases by the firm, in others, by the authorities on whose land the houses are situated.

### IV.—Health.

Figures of mortality are not known, as men unable to continue work through illness are usually returned to their homes by their sirdars. Monthly paid workers are allowed full pay by the firm during sickness. Free medical attention and medicine is provided at all agencies, while for the large labour force working in the Kidderpore area the firm maintains a small hospital and two dispensaries, one at the coal berths and one at Garden Reach, two medical officers, two compounders and a dresser. Free attention to some fifty patients is given daily at these dispensaries. Accident cases, if serious, are sent to hospital. Maternity cases amongst the women employed at the coal berths are, if request is made, attended to by municipal *daïs*.

### V.—Welfare.

Little is done under this heading, as the class of labour employed does not spend its recreation in amusements, preferring on holidays to visit the bazaars, or in Calcutta the Zoo, Museum, etc. No provision is made for the education of adult workers, and it is unlikely it would be taken advantage of, if made.

### VI.—Education.

Free primary education under the tutelage of a teacher from the M.E. Mission school, to which institution the firm contributes Rs. 25 per month, is provided for the children of workers employed at the coal berths, a small room adjacent to the quarters having been allotted for school purposes. The school register shows an attendance of fifty-eight pupils, but of these only some four or five are girls. Classes are very popular, and arrangements are being made to enlarge the school premises in order to increase the attendance.

### VII.—Safety.

Regulations as laid down for the safety of workers employed in railway yards, docks, jetties and inland steamers are observed, and labour working at the docks is under the constant supervision of "gunners," whose duty it is to see that necessary precautions for safety are taken. Minor accidents are treated at the firm's dispensaries. Serious ones are sent to hospital.

### VIII.—Workman's Compensation.

Workers are covered by the Workman's Compensation Act, and receive compensation according to the Act, if injured. The firm also allows additional compensation to cases admitting of special consideration.

### IX.—Hours.

Working hours are in accordance with those of the port, railway, or other authorities for whom the work is being done, and are usually :—Day, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. ; night, from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., with mid-day intervals for meals of one hour in Calcutta

and two hours up-country. The actual hours worked, however, are regulated by the amount of work offering, and as a rule are not more than eight. Sundays are working days, but the "khatta" labour usually takes half the day off for marketing. Monthly paid labour, if booked for Sunday working, receives overtime at the rate of As. 1-3 per hour. "Khatta" labour freely observes holidays and local festivals; monthly paid labour is given leave on full pay on all recognized closed holidays.

### XII.—Wages.

As the majority of the labourers are piece-workers, paid weekly, earnings are not fixed, the average weekly or monthly earning of any worker depending on the amount and nature of the traffic handled during those periods, and the regularity of the worker's attendance. Earnings also are greater in Calcutta than up-country, as work here is more continuous.

Given a full week's work, a "khatta" sirdar in Calcutta can earn Rs. 10 or more weekly, a coolie from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7, while up-country a sirdar can earn Rs. 7 to Rs. 8, a coolie Rs. 5 to Rs. 6. At the coal berths a certain section of piece-workers work on the "Nagda" system, that is, they are paid in cash for each basket of coal as it is carried on board the vessel, and 14 annas per day can be earned in this way.

Monthly workers employed on the handling of general merchandise are paid at the rate of 9 annas per day, with annas 1-3 per hour overtime, and at these rates their wages average about Rs. 20 monthly. Coal trimming labour is paid at the rate of 9 annas per day and annas 12-6 per night, the average monthly wage being about Rs. 22. Men engaged for hand-shunting wagons receive Rs. 20 per month.

"Khatta" sirdars are paid their accounts weekly, one week elapsing before payment is made for work done. Monthly workers are paid on the 15th of each month for the full previous month.

The above earnings and wages are an increase of approximately 50 per cent. on those prevailing before and during the war period.

It rests entirely with the workers as to what amount of their earnings they send to their villages. Some sirdars mess their men at a fixed sum per month and the balance of earnings is remitted home, in other cases Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 is sent monthly. Fining is only resorted to for gross misdemeanour, but sirdars are responsible for any loss or damage of goods caused through the deliberate carelessness or negligence of their men. Monthly paid labour is allowed one month's leave a year, but men working under sirdars make their leave arrangements with the sirdars, and it may be taken that every worker visits his home at least once a year for one month or more. They do not receive earnings during leave periods, but generally save enough to carry them over until they resume work.

Particulars of indebtedness in villages is not known, but cases of individual indebtedness occur in the industrial area.

### XIII.—Efficiency of Workers.

The coolie is unskilled labour and the level of efficiency does not change. In the actual handling of goods the Indian worker is as efficient as the foreign, but being of lesser physique a greater number of Indian workers are required.

### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

So far as is known none of the workers belong to any labour union or organization, nor are they interested in co-operative credit or loan societies.

### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

There has been no industrial disputes since 1918-19, when certain sections of the workers went on strike for higher rates, which were granted. In each case the strike lasted for a few days only; all disputes are settled directly between the firm and the employees.

## BURMAH-SHELL OIL STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTING CO. OF INDIA, LTD.

We have the honour to enclose the evidence which we wish to place before the Royal Commission on Labour in India, and would ask you to make clear that this evidence is intended to represent the views of the three oil companies operating in

Calcutta, and that Messrs. The Standard Oil Co. of New York and Messrs. Indo-Burma Petroleum Co., Ltd., have seen, and approved of, this evidence and have themselves supplied such information as was necessary for the compilation of a representative reply to the Schedule of Subjects prepared by the Royal Commission.

*Nature of Business.*—To receive and store bulk and packed cargoes of petroleum at Calcutta; to manufacture suitable packages in which to distribute a portion of these products, according to market requirements; to distribute and sell these products, packed or in bulk, in Calcutta and the districts most economically supplied therefrom; to maintain and supervise the organisation required locally and upcountry for these purposes and to maintain stocks at minor depots and stations throughout the mofussil to the extent necessary to guarantee continuous supplies to the public at stable prices.

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) As compared with the jute industry, from which you will probably be receiving detailed evidence concerning recruitment, we are comparatively small employers of labour, but our experience is that none of our skilled labour, and only a small percentage of unskilled, comes direct from upcountry. This is borne out by the small percentage of applications from labour for leave to return to their homes upcountry in order to sow and harvest their crops.

(ii) There are no particular streams of migration, almost all our labour being permanently resident within four miles of our installation.

2. (i) *Contact with villages—Extent and frequency of return.*—This works out at about 17 per cent. of the labour spread over the year, and is chiefly taken in April/May and November/December, when those of the employees who possess, or have an interest in, property upcountry, proceed to sow and reap their crops. A considerable number of these men stay away for indefinite periods and apply for re-employment when their funds are exhausted.

(ii) *Extent of permanent labour force.*—Three thousand one hundred and sixty-five approximately in the three companies, almost entirely adult male labour.

3. Of unskilled labour we have nearly always an excess of supply over demand, and any vacancies are filled, either from applicants at the installation gates, or from candidates brought in by the sirdars of the gangs that are short. Semi-skilled labour is also easy to obtain locally, and skilled labour from Calcutta; applicants for posts in the two latter named grades are only engaged after a practical test of efficiency has been conducted by the departmental engineer, who recommends successful candidates to the installation manager for enrolment.

(i) The present system suits our purpose quite well.

(iii) Public employment agencies would presumably have to be maintained by the State, and as our experience has been that there is an ample supply of labour, we see no need for the provision of such agencies.

7. (i) In the foregoing we have implied that there is a considerable surplus of available labour, but we do not wish to imply that there is a consequent surplus of unemployment, as the word is understood in more developed countries. Most of our unskilled employees are really agriculturalists who can always earn a wage of sorts (sufficient anyhow to keep them in necessities), from the land, and they are on our books in order to earn more pay for several years so as to pay off some of their indebtedness to moneylenders; we make further reference to this in XII (108). When an employee has saved sufficient money to ensure a rest, or when he is out of employment as an industrialist, he returns to the land where he earns a small wage, and frequently lives at the expense of other members of his family.

We admit that there is unemployment to the extent that there is a considerable surplus of labour in irregular employment, but in India this seldom results in destitution.

(ii) *Extent to which unemployment is caused by (a) Retrenchment or dismissals.*—Negligible. Our labour force has been growing slowly for some years in order to cope with the increased output required. Dismissals are extremely low.

(b) *Voluntary retirement.*—There is always a small exodus of workers, as explained in (7) (i), but the majority of them drift back for re-employment when pressed for money. Every year we are compelled to pay off a few old employees who have passed the age of usefulness; such men are provided with gratuities.

(c) *Other causes.*—Negligible.

(iii) *Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.*—See our writings under (i). We maintain that nearly all our employees are primarily agriculturalists, and the best method of relieving unemployment, to whatever extent this is admitted, is to develop agriculture and thereby provide living wages for a greater number of men.

(iv) We do not consider that the State could control unemployment insurance in this country and we very much doubt whether it could be popularised, especially among the employees. Our opinion is that such a scheme is impracticable and unnecessary.

8. *Labour Turnover.* (i) *Average duration of employment.*—About 8 years.

(ii) *Extent of casual employment.*—Negligible—probably not 1 per cent. of our permanent labour, and only employed to fill excessive gaps caused by absenteeism.

(iii) *Absenteeism.*—(a) Taken over the whole year about 5½ per cent. Illness and drunkenness : see below.

(b) Immediately after pay-days, holidays, and particularly Indian festivals, and during the marriage season, absenteeism is very marked, often being above 10 per cent., apart from those on leave.

(c) Time and wages lost. See (a)—about 5½ per cent. of the total.

## II.—Staff Organization.

13. (i) You will have before you the evidence of larger employers of labour than ourselves, and this will probably stress the difficulty in maintaining at all times the close touch necessary for the establishment of cordial relationship. We do our utmost in this respect by insisting that all employees engaged in the United Kingdom shall at once learn the vernacular of the Province in which they are situated, and that so far as possible they shall become personally acquainted with all the labour under them, but dialects are numerous and transfers of departmental assistants to other installations not unknown, with a result that relations can seldom approach that level attained where the supervising staff and the labour are both recruited from the same country, and therefore have more in common from the start.

Even with promoted subordinates the position is not much simpler, except perhaps in the question of knowledge of dialects, for racial prejudice is strong and we meet with instances of unfair treatment from a supervisor to members of another caste or creed.

Generally speaking we consider that the relationship between our staff and the rank and file is cordial but we realise that this question is one of great importance in which patience, tact, and understanding of Eastern conditions play leading roles.

(iii) We have little experience of works committees. The scheme has been tried at one or two installations where, periodically, representatives from each department have met our installation manager to discuss measures for improving the welfare of the workers. Very few constructive proposals were ever put forward and they were abandoned by mutual consent when the agenda merely became filled with demands for increases in wages, which were ruled out as being beyond the scope of the works committee.

The need for properly organized works committees is patent and the subject has recently been engaging our attention once more, but with the multiplicity of castes and creeds it is not easy to modify schemes which have been successful in installations in Burmah so that they will be equally suitable here. We hope, however, that some scheme will shortly be evolved from the experience gained by our friends in Burmah.

14. *Timekeeping, Piecework, Contract and Attendance Registers.* (i) *How and by whom kept and checked.*—Entirely by our own staff. At present we have two systems of timekeeping, one by token and the other by card, but we shall shortly be entirely on the card system. Labour is clocked in and out at the beginning and end of the day's work. The midday interval is not checked by timekeepers.

(ii) *How and by whom are wages actually paid to workers.*—Pay envelopes are made out for each recipient, in the branch office, and these are sent down to the installation where every payment is made by installation cashier in the presence of a covenanted European assistant.

15. *Contractors as Intermediaries.* (i) *Extent and character of work given on contract.*—We are not directly concerned with the number of men employed by our contractors, since we pay them on a percentage basis for the tins and drums handled. The average daily labour supplied by contractors is a little more than half that of our permanent staff, and it is employed chiefly in soldering tins, in stacking full tins, and in loading full tins into wagons or boats.

(iii) *Control exercised over working conditions.*—This varies considerably. Where the contractor's men are working in our tin factory, i.e., on-soldering, they are under the same complete control as our own labour. In loading operations, however, the contractor's men only come under our direct supervision at various points, i.e., when actually loading tins at the wagon or boat and we are not responsible for the speed of their work.

#### IV.—Health.

24. (i) We have three dispensaries at our Installations in Budge-Budge all adequately provided with medicines and first-aid appliances, and with qualified compounders in charge. A fully qualified doctor attends at two of these dispensaries daily for 2 hours.

(ii) There is a Municipal Dispensary in Budge-Budge only a short distance away, with a Government doctor in charge, and also a small hospital attached.

25. Any person reporting sick during working hours has to be treated at our dispensaries first, and many continue to attend after the initial treatment. In most cases of prolonged illness we find that the men prefer to receive homeopathic treatment in their own villages from unqualified Hakims, and it is not possible for us to insist that they shall become in-patients at the local hospital as we would run counter to religions and caste prejudices.

All cases of accident are treated at once at our dispensaries, and any seriously injured are taken to the Budge-Budge hospital to the support of which the Companies subscribe annually.

26. (a) (i) We have three sets of septic tanks, each capable of providing for the needs of 1,000 men, and two ordinary type latrines. The latter are attended to twice daily by the Municipal Conservancy carts.

(ii) Filtered drinking water is provided at all hours. This water is the same as that provided by the Municipality of Budge-Budge for drinking purposes or else is Calcutta filtered drinking water supplied by the Port Commissioners. Attempts have been made by us to obtain from our tube well sufficiently good water for drinking purposes, but this so far has not been of a good enough standard.

(iii) River water is provided through taps and hydrants at various convenient points, helped out by tube well water.

30. We have no sickness insurance, and do not consider that any State scheme is feasible in India under present conditions.

#### V.—Welfare.

33. We are fully alive to the necessity for promoting welfare work and an officer has been borrowed from an associated oil company, and is arriving in January to study the position at our Indian installations. A Labour Department will be formed to put his proposals into force. This officer has many years of experience in Labour Welfare work, and we are confident that with his assistance we shall be able to form a department which will keep us in the closest possible touch with our labour.

#### IX.—Hours—Factories.

55. (i) We work 48½ or 49 hours weekly, made up of five days of 8½ hours each and one half day of 6 hours, or 6½ hours, depending upon the Company concerned.

(ii) When conditions are normal, and our Installation is only manufacturing for the requirements of our own supply area (*i.e.*, when there is no labour trouble in other Installations such as Bombay, Madras, etc.), our overtime is confined to a few individuals, mostly men employed on handling cargo on our oil tank-steamers; fitters and skilled hands are sometimes employed on re-organization, or re-alignment work, the speedy completion of which is obviously necessary if labour is not to be kept out of work; special permission is obtained for such men. The incidence of overtime on our total paysheet is negligible.

60. (i) (a) There is no recognised interval for fatigue, but sufficient men are employed in all departments to permit of short rests for fatigued men.

(b) There used to be a break of one hour from 12.30 to 1.30, but this was reduced at the petition of the workers to half an hour, 12.30 to 1 p.m., so as to enable the Installation to be closed half an hour earlier for the men to get home sooner. On Saturdays labour works from 8 to 2 without a break for meals in one company, and 8 to 1 p.m. and 1.30 to 3 p.m. in another.

(ii) In view of the hours worked, see above paragraph, the law's provisions appear to be quite suitable.

(iv) Companies vary in this respect, but whatever holidays are given are without pay. One company gives 18 Chamber of Commerce holidays, 10 of which are for Indian religious ceremonies. Another guarantees seven, four of which are chosen by Labour, and are always the four important days of Durga Puja festival; in practice the second company observes nearly all the Chamber holidays.



### XII.—Wages.

96. These are as far as possible standardised between the three oil companies. Average earnings are as follows:—

|                  |                     |           |                               |                           |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Unskilled boys   | Rs. 15/- per mensem | ..        | from Rs. 0- 8-0 to Rs. 0-12-0 | per diem                  |
| "   adults       | "   19/-            | "   "   " | "   0-12-0                    | "   1- 2-6                |
| Skilled adults   | "   28/-            | "   "   " | "   0-15-6                    | "   1- 7-0                |
| Mistries/Fitters | "   32/-            | "   "   " | "   0-12-6                    | "   according to          |
| Piece workers    | "   36-8-0          | "   "   " | "   "                         | "   standard of work done |

The above wages conform in the main to those paid for corresponding work in the surrounding industrial area.

102. *Basis of Payment for Overtime and Sunday Work.*—The standard payment is 50 per cent. above the normal rate, and we have stated above that overtime is the exception rather than the rule. Although it is not possible for us to guarantee it, we always endeavour to arrange, and are generally successful, that at least a full day's pay is earned by such men as are called in to work overtime; one of the three companies guarantees this. One day's substitute leave is guaranteed, as demanded by law, and this is generally given within three days of the overtime worked.

103. There is no material difference between the wages paid by the three oil companies, which are at least as good as wages paid in local mills round Budget for work of a corresponding nature.

104. *Effect of Wage changes on labour supply.*—We have not noticed any particular effect locally, but elsewhere in India our experience has been that the greater the increase in a man's wages the less regular is his attendance; in other words his main idea is to earn only enough to keep himself from month to month, and no provision is made for the future.

105. With such steep differences in the value of money in the various industrial areas, cities and upcountry districts, the application of a minimum wage seems to be impracticable without causing extreme hardship either to employer or employed.

106. (i) Extent of fining is negligible, and such fines as are levied have to be sanctioned by the Installation Manager.

(ii) The only other deductions are those for Provident Fund contributions.

(iii) These are confiscated by the Companies, but are sometimes paid out again to defray small expenditures made on behalf of employees; occasionally small grants are made out of accumulated fines to assist any particularly unfortunate case of destitution in our staff.

(iv) No legislation is needed so far as an organised industry, such as our own, is concerned, as the issue is trivial.

107. (i) (ii) All workers are paid monthly, whether engaged on a daily or monthly rate of pay, on the 15th of the following month, or on the most convenient day immediately prior to the 15th.

(iv) With one company unclaimed wages are kept in suspense for a period of three years, after which they are appropriated. One company is prepared to pay upon application without any restriction of a time limit.

109. We have no bonus or profit sharing schemes. There are, however, schemes of payment, varying amongst the companies, for those who do not benefit for part or all of their services in any Provident Fund. There are, for example, a Death Benefit Insurance scheme, a pension scheme and a gratuity scheme in operation, all so framed as to protect the interests of labour which does not participate in any provident fund.

110. Ordinarily leave is not given on pay. If any of our daily paid labour requires leave the usual practice is for the sirdar of the applicant's gang to provide a substitute, unless it is possible to carry on without a substitute, but no pay is given to the applicant whether a substitute is provided or not. We have from time to time been able to grant three weeks' leave on pay to certain of our senior monthly-paid employees, but the instances of such leave are comparatively few.

It is not really possible, when considering the leave taken by daily paid labour, to differentiate clearly between "leave" and "absenteeism," and we must refer you to our replies under I (2) (i) and I (8) (iii).

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency.

116. *Possible methods of securing increased efficiency.*—To educate the labourer to the idea of working in order to put by something for the future; probably the quickest means to this end would be some form of State controlled schools for

vocational training ; boys or young adults taken in to these schools would have to be taught to live in better houses with sanitary facilities, and when through the course would have to be provided with housing similar to the type in which they were trained.

If it were ever possible to comply with the above conditions we would still be faced with the drink and drug problem, which is one of the greatest factors militating against such efficiency as we can hope to get out of the material at present offering. Possibly better housing and a sound technical training might reduce the consumption of drink and drugs, but much of the excesses now indulged in are connected with religious ceremonies.

#### XIV and XV.—Trade Combinations and Industrial Disputes.

In the large localized industries, such as jute and tea, the employers have formed their own associations for the management of general matters relating to their own industries. No association as such has yet been formed by the oil companies who, however, are in touch with each other in all matters connected with labour and wages.

As regards the labour employed by the oil companies there has, up to now, been no general organization of employees, but certain unions have sprung into existence in the various ports during the past few years through the combination of workers for the purpose of ventilating some real or imaginary grievances. Until recently these unions have lasted only so long as the strikes which they organized, but there are now indications that such unions are becoming more permanent ; an example of this is given below concerning the Budge-Budge Oil & Petrol Workers' Union, which has outlived the recent strike, and is now, we understand, applying for registration under the Trade Unions Act.

Up to date these periodical strikes have caused only partial dislocation to the oil industry, but the hardships caused to our workmen have been very real, as they have in most instances returned having gained nothing but have lost their wages, after having been led out on strike by outside leaders who have promised them terms which could not possibly be granted. Time after time political agitators have taken upon themselves the organization of a strike of our workers, and have drawn up demands which have been patently unattainable even if the employers had recognized the authority of the union, and there can be no doubt that the workers themselves have been pawns used by these agitators who have their own gain or political advancement in view.

The activities of these unions have so far been misdirected, and their failure (and that of trade unionism generally in India), has, we think, been due to the fact that the workers themselves have completely failed to produce leaders from their own ranks, men whom the employers would have been glad to meet with the knowledge that they really represented the feelings of their fellow workmen, and who would realize the futility of relying on the promise of outside parties. Had such men been forthcoming there would not have been nearly so many impossible demands put forward, and any real grievances would have been settled with much more ease.

We realize that at the present juncture it is not possible to exclude outside officials from trade unions, but unless genuine Labour leaders can be found we fear that the workers will continue to be exploited by self-interested parties. The Bombay Chamber of Commerce, in its report to you dated 11th October, has addressed you concerning Sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Trade Unions Act, and has given you its views on the present position of trade unionism in India, and we should like to state that we are in complete agreement with their sentiments. We will now proceed to the local history of the recent strike at the works of the oil companies near Calcutta, as we consider that this is the best means of illustrating the observations which we have made already on the subject of "Trade Combinations."

Early in July 1929 a deputation was sent to Budge-Budge from the Tinplate Co.'s labour, which was on strike in Golmuri, to obtain the support of the Budge-Budge labour, and a pamphlet dated 2nd July, 1929 was issued by the Secretary and President of the Tinplate Workers' Union asking for their moral, active and material support. An appeal was issued in "Liberty" of 30th June, 1929, under the heading "Golmuri Strike," calling for the boycott of the products of the Burmah Oil Co., Ltd., and on 2nd July, 1929, a statement, which sets forth a programme of a strike at Tatas and the bringing about of strikes at Budge-Budge, the object being the settlement of the tinplate workers' strike. Meetings were then held on various days, and one of the labour leaders from Golmuri was deputed to Budge-Budge for the purpose of forming a union and presenting grievances. The four officials appointed to run the union were none of them oil workers, two being outside politicians, one a local shopkeeper, and one the owner of a rice mill. No communication was received from this union, but on 21st August the neighbouring jute mills went on strike, and in the evening one section of the oil labour presented a petition as they left work.

setting forth certain grievances and demanding a reply within five hours. It was pointed out that no reply could possibly be given in five hours, which the men admitted, but stated that they would not be allowed to return the next day. On 29th August a communication was received from the union by all the oil companies, purporting to set out the men's demands. The first of these was the settlement of the tinsplate strike and the second the recognition of the union which, from enquiries made, was ascertained to be unregistered. The remainder of the demands were for improved terms of service and wages, the increase asked being 50 per cent. On 1st October a notice was posted by the oil companies advising that an increase of wages was being given of approximately five per cent., which was equivalent to that given by the neighbouring jute mills. No further communication was received from the union, and a very gradual return to work commenced, but it was not until 21st November, three months after the commencement of the strike, that the main body of men returned. In the intervening period we had on more than one occasion interviewed the head men of departments, explained to them that we were prepared to consider and discuss any genuine grievances they put forward in an orthodox manner, and obtained their agreement to bring their men back to work, but this they appeared powerless to do. The reasons given were pickets and intimidation, and it is seriously urged that any form of picketing should be made illegal.

The facts given above make it clear that the trouble at Budge-Budge was organised primarily to enforce the settlement of the tinsplate strike, and was not a dispute within the industry. It was not covered by Clause 16 of the Trade Disputes Act, and no action could be taken to have this strike adjudged illegal. It is understood that the Union has now applied for registration, but that registration has not yet been effected.

The above is a short history of the strike, and the only trade union which has existed at Budge-Budge in so far as the oil companies are concerned, and covers the majority of questions 117 to 126. The strike lasted for three months, although in the latter stages partial working was possible. The number of working days lost was almost exactly 200,000. The loss to the industry has not yet been calculated, but all stations in the sphere usually supplied by Budge-Budge were kept supplied from other points, the additional and very considerable expense being borne by the oil companies who made no endeavour to increase rates to cover the excess freight incurred. Certain amounts were paid by the union to strikers, but the amounts are unknown to us, and were probably small. The union has not, as far as we are aware, any benefit schemes. The Trades Union Act was not operative as the union was not registered. The union was not recognised by the employers, and it is doubtful whether more than a small proportion of the workers had any desire for the union. The control exerted by workers was presumably nil as no workers were on the executive staff.

In regard to the Trades Disputes Act (125) Clause 16 (i) as worded is of little assistance as the conditions laid down have both to be operative before a strike can be termed illegal. The strike can be designed or calculated to inflict severe general and prolonged hardship on the community, but is not illegal if it is in furtherance of a trade dispute within the industry. This condition involves only the forming of grievances imaginary or real, and it is suggested that the word "or" be substituted for the word "and" at the end of clause 16 (i) (a). Under clause 15 certain services are specially protected as being public utility services, and it is our desire to point out to the Commission the services rendered by the oil companies and to request that the protection granted be extended to them. In the event of a strike, or anything in the nature of a general stoppage, it would be extremely difficult, and probably impossible, to carry out for example our contracts for petrol to the military authorities all over India.

The railways which are classified as "Public Utility Services" rely upon us for liquid fuel for the movement of trains over various sections of the G.I.P. Ry. and the N.W. Ry., and they are dependent upon the oil companies for grease and lubricating oils all over India. Electric power stations are increasing steadily in number, and almost all of them are dependent upon us for liquid fuel for the purpose of generation of power. Even in the last strike, which affected only Calcutta, the position was extremely serious at many stations, and we were only able to keep these "Utility Services" running to the detriment of the general consumer, by appropriating tank wagons allotted for the distribution of kerosene, and which were just as urgently needed for their proper use, to carry liquid fuel for the power stations. To a lesser degree we are similarly placed as regards supplies of fuel for the maintenance of irrigation projects in various parts of the country.

So much for the particular services which have been earmarked by the Trade Disputes Act, and we now ask you to consider the major industries, and the reliance they place upon us.

Cessation in the supply of liquid fuel in Bombay would, in a few days, bring about the closure of a large number of the cotton mills, and would throw into unemployment a vast army of disgruntled workers, fertile material for the causing of further trouble when in the hands of agitators. A similar state of affairs would obtain in Calcutta if we were unable to maintain deliveries of batching oil, which are essential to the jute mills and some 3,00,000 men would be idle.

We now come to the part played by petroleum products in the general life of the community: Even in a comparatively undeveloped country such as India, the importance of motor transport is recognized, and it would be of vital consequence to the public and the State if there was a paralysis in motor transport. Even when the railways are functioning there is a large and growing network of road transport services working in with them. The effect of a stoppage of petrol supplies will be realized without enlargement. Lubricating oils must, of course, be available wherever petrol is used, but they must also be stocked wherever machinery is employed, no matter whether the motive power is obtained from petroleum or any other source.

We now come to the uses of kerosene, which, though not primarily employed for industrial purposes, is of almost equal importance. It serves certain public utility services, the railways for example, who rely upon it for signal lighting and for the generation of gas for lighting purposes on trains. It is purchased under contract by the military authorities and also by municipalities for the provision of light for the public. It is also used to run light machinery, particularly tea garden factories, small irrigation plants, ginning and milling machinery, etc., etc. The main consumption of kerosene is, however, in the home of the Indian people to whom it is a necessity, and any change in its availability would result in severe hardship in the whole nation's domestic life.

If, as has been implied by the foregoing, petroleum products are of such vital importance to the country, it must be admitted that steps should be taken to ensure that an organization reaching a very high standard of efficiency should be maintained at all times to ensure regularity of distribution, and to safeguard the principal consumers and the public generally, against any breakdown of supplies. It is for these reasons that we urge that the companies which import cargoes of petroleum and which distribute it throughout India, should be afforded the protection of Section 15 of the Trade Disputes Act by being classified as "Public Utility Services."

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### KANKINARRAH LABOUR UNION.

Established in 1921 with the objects of fostering collective bargaining and safeguarding the interests of over 360,000 jute mill operatives in general, and specially of over 50,000 millhands employed in the 12 jute mills within Bhatpara municipality, about 21 miles from Calcutta. This particular union was visited by Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P. and Mr. Sime, Secretary, Dundee Jute Workers' Union, in 1925; Sir Oswald Mosley, M.P. in 1925, International Textile Labour Delegation, headed by Rt. Hon. Thomas Shaw, M.P. in 1926, Mr. F. W. Pethick Lawrence, M.P. in 1927, Mr. Mardy Jones, M.P., Mr. Arthur Purcell, M.P., Delegate from the British Trade Union Congress in 1927.

India enjoys a practical monopoly of jute, being its sole producer, and the manufacture of jute fabrics in Bengal is the leading industry in India to-day. It has beaten cotton (once the premier industry of India), which is on the decline owing to foreign competition, labour troubles and other economic causes not likely to affect jute for some time yet. Until 1854, only raw jute was exported and little or no effort was made to organize mills in India or to improve the village hand-loom production to meet the new demand of foreign countries for gunny and hessian cloth. In 1855, however, the first power mill in India to spin jute was started at Rishra, near Serampore. Four years later the first weaving mill was started at Baranagore and in 1863-64, the Gourepore jute factory was built. Soon thereafter factories sprang up rapidly in and around Calcutta. In the year 1927, the number of jute mills working in India was 85 with a capital of nearly 16,000 lacs of rupees (about £12.4 million sterling). They had about 50,000 looms and about 1 million spindles working in 1927 and gave employment to 338,000 millhands, including 53,000 women and 31,000 children. The profits in 1928-1929, as per income tax returns, amounted to 7½ crores of rupees (about £6½ million sterling) or about 50 per cent. of the original capital investment. It works out at an average profit of Rs. 1,500 per loom, unparalleled in the history of any Textile industry in any part of the world. Before the war the annual gross value of jute manufactures exported to foreign countries amounted to about

£14 million sterling. During the great European war military demands for sand bags and tarpaulins brought unbounded prosperity to the jute industry. In 1916-17 the value of jute manufactures rose to the unprecedented total of nearly £28 million sterling, 43 per cent. of which went to the United Kingdom, 56 per cent. to U.S.A. and 11 per cent. to Argentine. In 1925-26 export value of jute fabrics rose to £45 million sterling. An analysis of profit between 1914 and 1928 shows that the investors in jute mill shares just before the war, who did not sell their stocks, received ten times the value of their holdings as profits in addition to colossal reserve funds built out of profits.

### I.—Recruitment.

In the 12 jute mills in Kankinarrah with about 8,825 looms (approximately 18 per cent. of the total number of looms), employing about 50,000 (approximately 18 per cent. of the total labour force) operatives within the immediate jurisdiction of the union.

More than 85 per cent. of the operatives in this particular centre are recruited from Bihar (mainly Chapra, Muzaffarpur, Patna and Darbhanga districts) and the rest are either settled locally or belong to the villages. The strength of Bengalee native labour, mostly mechanics and mistries, is below 5 per cent. of the total and they live in their own huts or houses away from the mill area. Hardly any method is adopted to recruit hands who voluntarily find their way to the mill area in search of employment excepting those who are invited by the sirdars, or Indian supervisors, from their own villages in up country. In some mills, if the Burra sirdar (weaving supervisor) happens to be a native of Chapra district, most of his men (weavers) under him are natives of Chapra. For some time past owing to abolition of multiple shifts there has been some surplus labour in Kankinarrah and no necessity is felt for any improvement in recruiting. New hands are generally locally employed by the sirdars who often charge "Dustories" or commission as a matter of tradition of the country or practice in the industry and serious complaints are received of hardships suffered by recruits on this account. It will be a good thing if the recruitment is taken away from the hands of the sirdars and employment agencies are established in well-known mill-centres and labour unions, if they exist, are entrusted with the work of these agencies.

The question of unemployment is not very acute in Kankinarrah but it is reported that about 8 per cent. to 9 per cent. of the total labour strength are idle and in search of employment. One of the main reasons of unemployment in Kankinarrah, is the re-introduction of single shift and another reason is frequent dismissal of hands unable to please their supervisors with payment of money (call it dustories or bribe), voluntary retirement does not seem to exceed more than 2 or 3 out of 100 employees. There is no such thing as unemployment insurance in the country or in the jute industry and its introduction will be a boon to Indian labour when, and if, it settles down in different mill centres.

Mention has been made that 85 out of 100 mill-hands in this particular area are more or less of the floating type and they revisit their village homes once a year or once in 18 months and absent themselves for a couple of months or so. The non-migratory hands work usually 15 to 25 years and even more. The loss of wages of floating labour during their stay at home is not keenly felt as they have plenty of home occupation, including husbandry, which keeps them fit and makes them happy. In fact, one of the reasons why they are not discontented in spite of the somewhat inadequate wages they receive and rather unhealthy and dingy bustees in which they live, is their frequent contact with their village homes and their periodical resort to pastoral occupation.

### II.—Staff Organisation.

In a jute mill there are batching, preparing, spinning, winding, beaming, weaving, finishing and other departments, including power house, and repairing shops in charge of Europeans, recruited mostly from Scotland. Indian supervisors known as sirdars and line sirdars work under them and there is the manager and his administrative staff, besides durwans and watchmen, loading, unloading and warehousing labour. Selection of the managing staff is made by the Mg. agents who practically control the management. Facilities for training and promotion of workmen do not exist in most of the mills. Neither is there any system whatsoever of apprenticeship. The Apprentices Act, 1850, has no application to jute mills. Training is haphazard with the result that efficiency is poor and no one ever thinks of encouraging or cultivating this great factor, by far the most important of all industrial factors, which vitalises an industry. Jute, the raw material of the industry, is cheaply bought because cultivators are too weak to bargain, labour cost is equally cheap because collective bargaining is almost non est and also because supply of labour is plentiful. Illiteracy is the main cause of its helplessness, and its supervising staff is all powerful.

The relation between the staff and the rank and file has grown to be uncordial in spite of all that has been done to improve the material conditions such as housing, sanitation, drinking water and medical facilities. Unless something is done to bridge the gulf, the continuance of disputes and lightning strikes is inevitable, leading to interruption of work, engendering and even increasing bitterness (e.g., frequent assault on European officers), causing serious material loss to the workers (the strikes in July and August, 1929, in more than 40 mills threw idle over 150,000 millhands and loss of wages to the extent of 20 lacs of rupees, one of the main causes being uncordial relation between the staff and the rank and file). Kankinarrah Labour Union was the first in the field to advocate the creation of Joint Works Committee in jute mills as the following extract from its annual report dated December, 1928, will show :—

“The Bengal Committee made another significant recommendation, viz., the creation in Industrial concerns of Joint Works Committee (associated with the name of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, late Speaker of the House of Commons) representative of both employers and employees. The proposal was commended by the Government of Bengal and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and also by labour leaders and seems eminently suitable for adoption in jute and cotton mills. The Committee on Industrial unrest stated in paragraph 9 of the report : ‘The main purpose of Joint Works Committee as defined in the Whitley Report is to establish and maintain harmonious relations between employers and employees and nothing is more urgently required at the present time.’ Experience in England and America has shown that the benefits of Joint Works Committee from the employers’ point of view are closer contact and better understanding with his employees and from the workers’ point of view better representation of their interest. Hitherto the Indian workmen have discussed in their bustees among themselves their grievances and wants and the management have similarly discussed among themselves the action to be taken about the grievances of the workmen when brought to notice, but generally speaking no machinery existed for regular consultation between the management and the workmen on points affecting the latter. Joint Works Committee may vary in form, but one essential is the direct representation of the workers by election by themselves of their own nominees to the Joint Committee. The management will nominate its own representatives. The Committee’s function will be advisory, and the final decision will in all cases rest with the management. The question of carrying proposals by majority of votes is therefore immaterial. There is a Joint Committee of this description functioning satisfactorily at the printing works of the Government of India, Hastings Street, Calcutta, and the superintendent may furnish particulars on application. In view of disasters brought about by recent strikes and lock-outs in Howrah, Bowraah and elsewhere on labour as well as on capital, employers as well as friends of labour interested in industrial peace would do well to consider seriously the urgency of early introduction of Joint Works Committee, especially in jute mills and other large industrial establishments.”

It is the conviction of the organizers of this union, based on several years’ experience of factory labour, that the plant of constructive trade unionism based on European model will not take root for many years to come until, and unless, the soil is weeded out and workers receive primary instruction. Closer contact and better understanding between employers and employees is essential for future industrial peace and this can be achieved by only one method, viz., Joint Committee and working it honestly and earnestly and giving it a fair trial. The Kankinarrah Labour Union was the first to advocate the creation of a Joint Industrial Council as the following extract from the proceedings of the Labour Conference held at Kankinarrah on 11th and 12th May, 1929, and organized by this union will show :—

His Excellency Sir Stanley Jackson sent the following message of sympathy to Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, M.L.C., one of the organizers of this Conference and President of the Kankinarrah Labour Union :—

“Dear Mr. Ray Chowdhury—I am interested to learn that there is to be a Labour Conference at which the question of setting up of an Industrial Council with a view to promoting industrial peace, will be discussed. The establishment of industrial councils of employers and employed has made considerable progress in England. The method of settling industrial disputes by resorting to strikes and lock-outs has proved a failure and disastrous to all concerned. It should be possible for employers and employed to come together in conference and devise means by mutual understanding to secure that harmony in industry which is so vitally necessary in the general interest. I wish your proceedings every success and trust that the result of your discussions will prove profitable.—Yours etc., Stanley Jackson.”

Invitations were posted to all the managers of the local mills in the hope that some of them would join the conference and co-operate with the Kankinarrah Labour Union in forming a Joint Industrial Council or Committee : which is deemed essential for the restoration of industrial peace. It was most unfortunate that none of the managers of the 16 local mills turned up, and the only European present at the conference was Mr. M. M. Stuart, I.C.S., the sub-divisional officer of Barrackpore,

who spoke to the president, deploring the absence of the representatives of the management. However, the conference had two sittings on Saturday and Sunday and passed off smoothly. Important resolutions, including the formation of joint councils, stoppage of bribery, indiscriminate dismissal, imposition of fines, etc., were adopted. And the two most important resolutions which had any bearing on the strike that followed in July were fully discussed in vernacular and finally adopted.

### III.—Housing.

Dr. Brahmachary, Assistant Director of Public Health, in a report on the sanitation of Bhatpara municipality, comprising the 12 jute mills within the jurisdiction of the Kankinarrah Labour Union says—"Bustees are an important feature of the town; while almost 12,000 of the people are residential and a little over 7,000 persons are accommodated in the coolie lines of the mills, the whole of the remaining population (60,000) lives in the huts of the bustees about 30 in number. They are ill-drained, and ill-provided with passages and privies. Last year two bustees were provided with roads and pucca drains at municipal expense. Under the Act, the duty of improving the bustees devolves on the owners. Proceedings for removing huts, opening roads and constructing drains and sewers, are laid down in Section 245." Describing the condition of these huts, Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P. (for Dundee) who visited the bustees at the instance of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, says—"Two-thirds of the workers in this industry, which makes 90 per cent. dividends for the shareholders are housed in vile, filthy, disease-ridden hovels, called bustees. These bustees are one storied blocks of mud plaster on wicker and matting, with thatched roofs; no windows or chimneys or fire places; the smoke simply oozes through the thatch if it can not get out of the doorway, which is so low that one has to go down almost on hands and knees to enter. The bustees have neither light nor water supply; the floors are earthen; sanitary arrangements there are none; and usually access to groups of bustees can only be had along a narrow tunnel of filth where myriads of mosquitoes and flies breed and the stench is such that one fears to strike a match lest the atmosphere being combustible, should explode. Inside the bustee is a space for three or four people to sleep if they are not smoked out by the cooking fire, but we are assured that frequently two families lived in a bustee, though how that is physically possible we could not guess. One old man informed us that half the babies of the bustee died, though we for our part, could not understand how any lived. The Director of Public Health for Bengal in his Annual Report for 1923, declares that half the children die before they reach 10 years of age, but precise estimates are difficult, as there is no compulsory registration of births, and fortunately most women mill workers have the sense to go home to the Mofussil or agricultural village, when they are going to give birth to babies.

"The rents charged for these foul ant-heaps of pestilence are about one shilling to one shilling four pence a month. Often they are owned by the sirdars in the mill; sometimes they are owned by the company.

"The remaining third of the workers are housed in mill-lines or compounds. Some of these cement rows are a vast improvement upon the bustee, but the best of them are nothing to write home about. They are single-room cement houses, without light or water or sanitary arrangements in the houses. The rooms are usually 10 feet by 8 feet by 6 feet high and possess a window. Frequently they are built so closely, facing one another in rows, that there is little privacy, and many men refuse to take their families to live there. The rents vary, but usually run about 4d. a week, no taxes, and water supply is free at the end of the row. We found large numbers of these houses over-crowded with 4 or 5 men.

"The houses of these unfortunate workers (even though they only regard themselves as agriculturists, who are temporarily engaged in the jute industry) is a standing disgrace to the Government, the local authorities, the millowners and everybody who has the slightest responsibility for them." The Labour Union has repeatedly urged the local municipality for acquisition of these plague spots, but without any avail. Housing legislation is absolutely essential to convert these bustees into comfortable dwellings, and provision should be made to compel millowners to finance housing schemes and charge such rents as the workers are able to pay.

The Chairman of the Bhatpara municipality says in the annual administration report for 1927-28:—"When compared with the mill villages, the private bustees or bustee, owned by private individuals for the residence of the labour class, may be described as most insanitary. The chief difficulty in improving the sanitary conditions of the bustees was the Zaminder's claim to most of the bustee roads and drains as his private property and his objection to any improvement that the municipal Commissioners propose to make on them. (The Zaminder above referred to is a leading Congressman, Mr. T. C. Goswami, M.L.A.). The result of the insanitary conditions of the bustee is the frequent relapse of epidemic diseases in private bustees, while such things are rare in mill villages."

#### IV.—Health.

The number of births and deaths registered during 1926-27 was 1,188 and 1,195 against 1,232 and 1,060 respectively in the previous year, the number represented 18.1 and 18.2 per 1,000 of the census population and 14.8 and 15.2 of the present estimated population. Public latrines are few and congested and overcrowded. This will disappear as soon as the sewers already under construction are completed. There is great disproportion between the males and females, viz., 7 to 3 which accounts for low birth rate. The increase in the number of deaths is due to an epidemic of cholera.

##### *Epidemic Disease.*

|                 | 1926-27. |         | 1927-28. |         |
|-----------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
|                 | attacks. | deaths. | attacks. | deaths. |
| Cholera .. ..   | 158      | 115     | 228      | 142     |
| Small Pox .. .. | 45       | 18      | 60       | 12      |

Each of the 12 jute mills provides a dispensary in charge of a doctor, besides Maharaja Tagore's dispensary. The number of patients treated last year was 96,266 with a daily average attendance of 259. It is most unfortunate that there is no in-door hospital in a big labour centre like this and there is none within a radius of several miles full of jute mills. It is essential that a hospital should be established for the treatment of hundreds of patients requiring in-door treatment.

#### V.—Welfare Work.

The only welfare work of any importance is a baby clinic attached to Kankinarrah jute mills. It is essential that facilities should be provided for sports, games, cinema and theatrical shows, exhibitions, etc. The Labour Union has repeatedly urged without avail for a workmen's institute on the lines of the Spalding Institute at Kanchrupara (a railway centre within 10 miles of Kankinarrah) which includes a club, recreation grounds, a stage, a library, etc.

#### VI.—Education.

There are two or three primary schools in the locality run on most unsatisfactory lines. Only recently, the Labour Union has taken up the question of education amongst the children of the working class and a plot of land was accepted as a gift from Mr. Goswami, the local Zaminder and the Government has promised to pay a portion of the cost of the building and recurring expenditure, but sufficient funds could not as yet be raised for the preliminary expenses, and mill authorities are rather reluctant to help the union financially even for this educational purpose.

The Labour Union has urged without avail for an industrial or technical school for the training of half-timers in the technique of jute. It is one of the strange ironies of the jute industry in Bengal that more than 1,500 European supervisors had to be recruited from Dundee and elsewhere, although nearly cent. per cent. of the superior officers employed in cotton mills in Bombay presidency and elsewhere are recruited in India, and adjust themselves as efficiently as any Lancashire staff. This is partly due to the existence of that well known industrial school known as Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute of Bombay where textile students receive first class training. The Government is to be blamed mainly for its indifference to train boys for the jute industry mainly under the control of Britishers and Government apathy is best explained by the fact that up to now no Overseas Scholarships have been granted for the training of Indian scholars in the jute industry although thousands of rupees are annually spent on scholarships for training other industrial scholars abroad.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

Up to now claims for compensation have been regularly paid by the insurance companies with a few exceptions when cases had to be instituted before the Commissioner whose awards have been so far quite equitable and just. The proposed amendment of the Act, now pending before the legislature will materially improve matters.

#### IX.—Hours.

In all single shift jute mills, 60 hours a week have been introduced from the 1st of July, 1929, the maximum working hours permitted under the Act. In double or multiple shift mills which formerly operated four days a week, an extra day was added every alternate week providing 10 hours extra work for all. This arrangement, without providing for proportionate increase in wages specially of weavers caused great discontent and eventually culminated in one of the worst deadlocks ever



experienced in the jute industry affecting more than half the number of the mills and millhands. At a conference held at Bhatpara municipal office on the 5th of August during the strike which was attended by the District Magistrate and the managers of the local mills as well as officers of the Kankinarrah Labour Union the Bengal Jute Workers' Union and a factory inspector and also representatives of strikers, it transpired very clearly that the strikers employed in single shift mills were not so keen about the extra few annas wages as they were about the extra 6 hours they were obliged to work on Saturdays from the 1st of July, 1929. In the opinion of this union, which made a special study of the working hours in jute mills no individual worker should be permitted to work more than 9 hours a day considering the climate, domestic requirements, physique and dietary of the workers. In fact this is one of the main reasons why jute mills operatives are more or less happy in double shifts mills in which individual workers work 9 or 10 hours a day and are content with less wages than paid to single shift workers, and a strike follows when a double shift is replaced by a single shift of 11 hours per day.

The effect of 60 hours on jute millhands is therefore unsatisfactory. On the industry it is equally unsatisfactory as the extra output of jute fabrics would neither discourage opening of new jute mills or enable employers to capture the temporary trade passing to Dundee or the continent. The owners forgot when they decided to increase the working hours that the Sword of Damocles in the shape of the proposed imposition of extra duty on import of jute fabrics into U.S.A. was still hanging.

The number of holidays in mills working six days a week must be increased by statute and brought in line with the employees in railway and other large workshops.

#### X.—Questions relating to Women and Children.

The number of children employed in jute mills is on the decrease as the difficulties arising from the exploitation of child labour by timekeepers and sirdars as well as certification of age of children are more or less forcing employers to dispense with child labour, with the unfortunate result that the unemployed boys without facilities for education are becoming street urchins and several complaints were received about their conduct in the mill area. The position of women is however different as there is a certain class of work most suitable to women who are content with low wages. Consequently their number which stood at 53,000 in 1927 is on the increase and the restrictions placed on their employment under Section 24 of the Indian Factories Act proved quite satisfactory. It is desirable that a maternity benefit section should be included as well as provisions for baby clinic. It will be a good thing indeed if the proposal of the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale to compel all factories employing not less than 20 children to provide for them free education for not less than three hours a day be given effect to.

#### XII.—Wages.

Roughly speaking the difference between the wages of a single shift weaver or a spinner and that of a double shift weaver or a spinner is about Re. 1 and yet they prefer work in double shift mills because of longer leisure and more breaks in work during working days.

Wages in another district, viz., Budge-Budge, about 16 miles south of Calcutta, where most of the mills are on double shifts are rather low, although the cost of living is practically the same as in Kankinarrah, about 22 miles north of Calcutta, as the following statement will show :—

| Warp spinner (4 days' work). |       |     |        | Warp spinner (5 days' work). |       |     |       |
|------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|
|                              |       | Rs. | a. p.  |                              |       | Rs. | a. p. |
| Wages                        | .. .. | 2   | 4 0    | Wages                        | .. .. | 2   | 11 6  |
| Extra                        | .. .. | 0   | 4 0    | Extra                        | .. .. | 0   | 4 0   |
| Khoraki                      | .. .. | 0   | 6 0    | Khoraki                      | .. .. | 0   | 7 6   |
|                              |       |     |        | Add 5 per cent.              | .. .. | 0   | 2 9   |
|                              |       | Rs. | 2 14 0 |                              |       | Rs. | 3 9 9 |

The average of two weeks is Rs. 3-4 annas per week.

| Weavers (4 days' work).     |       |     |       | Weavers (5 days' work).     |       |     |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----|-------|
|                             |       | Rs. | a. p. |                             |       | Rs. | a. p. |
| At As. 10-6 up to 8 cuts    | .. .. | 5   | 4 0   | At As. 10-6 up to 10 cuts   | .. .. | 6   | 9 0   |
| Bonus at As. 1-1½ per cent. | .. .. | 0   | 9 0   | Bonus at As. 1-1½ per cent. | .. .. | 0   | 11 3  |
| Khoraki                     | .. .. | 0   | 10 0  | Khoraki                     | .. .. | 0   | 12 6  |
|                             |       |     |       | Add 5 per cent.             | .. .. | 0   | 6 6   |
|                             |       | Rs. | 6 7 0 |                             |       | Rs. | 8 7 3 |

The average of two weeks is Rs. 7-7 annas per week.

The wages in jute mills have grown as new conditions cropped up with items like lighting money, war bonus, Khoraki (compensation for enforced idleness) grain allowance. Due to enhanced cost of living an extra 5 per cent. for increasing working days from four to five (added in August last) have been included. This complication should be done away with and items which are meaningless at the present day should be abolished.

*Wages.*—In single shift mills working 60 hours of 5½ days a week.

Jute Carriers, receivers and feeder from Rs. 4 to Rs. 4-8 annas per week according to district.

|                                 | Rs. a. p. | to | Rs. a. p. |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----|-----------|
| Troaser women .. .. .           | 3 6 0     |    | 3 12 0    |
| Jute cutter .. .. .             | 5 0 0     |    | 5 8 0     |
| Coolies and root cutter .. .. . | 4 0 0     |    | 4 6 0     |
| Preparing .. .. .               | 3 4 0     |    | 3 10 0    |
| Roving .. .. .                  | 5 4 0     |    | 5 10 0    |
| Roving shifter .. .. .          | 4 6 0     |    | 4 12 0    |
| Spinning hessian .. .. .        | 5 12 0    |    | 6 0 0     |
| Spinning sacking .. .. .        | 6 8 0     |    | 6 14 0    |

Winding, beaming and weaving are under contract, but average earnings are as follows :—

|                          | Rs. a. p. | to | Rs. a. p. |
|--------------------------|-----------|----|-----------|
| Winder .. .. .           | 8 0 0     |    | 8 8 0     |
| Beamer .. .. .           | 7 8 0     |    | 8 2 0     |
| Weaver (hessian) .. .. . | 9 14 0    |    | 10 2 0    |
| Weaver (sacking) .. .. . | 11 8 0    |    | 11 12 0   |

The above wages include progressive bonus for piece-work and varies in different mills according to the quality and dimensions of fabrics.

The following is a typical scale of wages and bonus for weavers :—

| Quality.                  | Rate.     | Number of cuts (100yds.) | Bonus.    | Amount.   | Total.    |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 11 by 12 by 40in. hessian | Rs. a. p. |                          | Rs. a. p. | Rs. a. p. | Rs. a. p. |
|                           | 0 9 0     | 7                        | 0 6 0     | 3 15 0    | 4 5 0     |
|                           | 0 9 0     | 8                        | 0 8 0     | 4 8 0     | 5 0 0     |
|                           | 0 9 0     | 9                        | 0 14 0    | 5 1 0     | 5 15 0    |
|                           | 0 9 0     | 10                       | 1 6 0     | 5 10 0    | 7 0 0     |
|                           | 0 9 0     | 11                       | 1 12 0    | 6 3 0     | 7 15 0    |
|                           | 0 9 0     | 12                       | 2 0 0     | 6 12 0    | 8 12 0    |
| 0 9 0                     | 13        | 3 0 0                    | 7 5 0     | 10 5 0    |           |

In 1927-28 the number of operatives in the 12 jute factories including the two double-shift mills in Kankinarrah was 49,243, and the total wages paid to them per month amounted to Rs. 10,48,929. It works out at Rs. 5-8 annas per week of five days per head, including females and boys above 12 years of age, or about Rs. 1-2 annas per working day.

The agricultural wages in surrounding villages is about 12 annas per working day. The average wages of a skilled worker, viz., a weaver is about Rs. 8-12 annas per week or Rs. 1-12 annas per day. There is approximately one weaver to every 5.5 operatives in a mill.

In double-shift mills in Kankinarrah working four and five days a week, a spinner's wages for a 38 hour work is only Rs. 4, and for 47½ hours work his wages is about Rs. 4-13-6. A weaver in the same mills earns about Rs. 7 for 44 hours in four days and Rs. 7-15 annas for 54 hours in five days or an average of Rs. 7-7-6.

This union urges that the wages for time work should be reduced to a rate per hour and rates for piece-work should be so revised in all the mills in the different districts that no weaver should ever grumble that he is paid so much less than a fellow worker in another mill for an identical piece of work, viz., same number of cuts of the same quality in the same number of hours.

In the suburbs of Calcutta, say outside 10 miles radius, where most of the jute mills on either bank of the river Hooghly are situated and where supplies of such staple foodstuffs as rice, flour, dal, oil and clothing are supplied from the city, the cost of

living, excepting room rents, is more or less the same and rents only vary from 12 annas per month or 3 annas per week to Rs. 1-8 annas per month or 6 annas per week either in the mill quarters or in outside bustees from district to district. It is, therefore a poor excuse on the part of employers to say that wages are based on cost of living in different mill centres as if these centres are hundreds of miles apart. Another lame excuse is put forward in Budge-Budge centre and the mill area across the river, viz., Bowreah, that most of the millhands are villagers living in their own village huts and walking a distance of between three and five miles a day to reach the factories.

Relation of wages to cost of living is indicated by the actual figures quoted below taken partly from records and partly from personal investigation :—

*Moslem Weaver.*

|   | Rs. | a. | p.   |
|---|-----|----|------|
| Rice, 4 seers per week .. .. .            | 0   | 13 | 0    |
| Atta (flour) 3 seers .. .. .              | 0   | 10 | 0    |
| Dal, 1½ seers .. .. .                     | 0   | 6  | 9    |
| Ghee, 6 chittaks .. .. .                  | 0   | 14 | 6    |
| Oil, 6 chittaks .. .. .                   | 0   | 4  | 0    |
| Vegetables, meat, spices and salt .. .. . | 1   | 0  | 0    |
| Fire wood .. .. .                         | 0   | 6  | 0    |
| Kerosene oil .. .. .                      | 0   | 1  | 6    |
| Rent .. .. .                              | 0   | 8  | 0    |
| Dhobi (laundry) .. .. .                   | 0   | 1  | 6    |
| Barber .. .. .                            | 0   | 1  | 0    |
| Soap and perfume .. .. .                  | 0   | 2  | 0    |
| Smoking, pan and drug .. .. .             | 0   | 12 | 0    |
| Tiffin and tea .. .. .                    | 0   | 8  | 0    |
| Match .. .. .                             | 0   | 0  | 6    |
| Cloth, Rs. 25, one year .. .. .           | 0   | 8  | 0    |
|   | Rs. | 6  | 11 9 |

*Hindu Vegetarian Spinner.*

|                                     | Rs. | a. | p.  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| Rice .. .. .                        | 1   | 8  | 0   |
| Flour .. .. .                       | 0   | 8  | 0   |
| Dal .. .. .                         | 0   | 4  | 0   |
| Ghee .. .. .                        | 0   | 9  | 0   |
| Oil .. .. .                         | 0   | 1  | 6   |
| Fire wood .. .. .                   | 0   | 4  | 0   |
| Vegetables, spices and salt .. .. . | 0   | 13 | 0   |
| Biri and match .. .. .              | 0   | 3  | 3   |
| Pan .. .. .                         | 0   | 1  | 6   |
| Tiffin .. .. .                      | 0   | 5  | 6   |
| Milk and Dahi .. .. .               | 0   | 12 | 0   |
| Soap .. .. .                        | 0   | 1  | 6   |
| Rent .. .. .                        | 0   | 4  | 0   |
| Cloth .. .. .                       | 0   | 8  | 0   |
|                                     | Rs. | 6  | 3 3 |

The above items of cost of living of a single worker do not include festival and other ceremonial or religious expenses incurred on some occasions during the year and are by no means exhaustive. All men who leave dependants at home have to send remittances varying from Re. 1 to Rs. 4 per week according to the needs and number of his dependants. Fair average wages should therefore aggregate individual weekly cost of living reduced to a minimum of Rs. 5 (7s. 6d.) plus a minimum remittance of Rs. 2 (3s.) or a total of Rs. 7 (10s. 6d.) per week. This, however, falls short of the present level of average wages by Rs. 2 per week or about Rs. 100 per year per head, which the industry can well afford to pay considering the continuous prosperity it has enjoyed for the last 14 or 15 years. This extra payment to 350,000 operatives will involve an extra expenditure of 3½ crores of Rupees per annum, which will reduce profits from 7½ crores to 4 crores and dividends from 50 per cent. to 26½ per cent.,

assuming that demands for jute fabrics remain steady and normal. It will be still more desirable if at least half a crore is spent annually on labour welfare work and housing, which seem more important than payment of extra wages. Another half a crore should be spent annually for providing cheap credit facilities and co-operative shops or stores for the rescue of over indebted workers from the clutches of Afghan usurers who infest the mill areas and exact 150 to 200 per cent, as interest on small loans; and also for saving them from the hands of profiteering shopkeepers who vend unwholesome or adulterated foodstuffs and use short weights. In fact this union has often advocated for the establishment of co-operative credit societies and co-operative supply of foodstuffs and clothing and even co-operative housing institutions, but neither the Government nor the employers ever paid the slightest heed to resolutions passed year after year urging the adoption of these most pressing measures. Legislation for the creation of wages boards for all important industries like jute, cotton, coal, tea, etc., is essential to provide for the minimum wages each industry can afford to pay and the cost of living warrants in different industrial areas. This union often urged for an enquiry into the family budget of different types of industrial workers in different industrial centres without any response from any responsible quarters. Deductions of wages as fines is not a very serious matter in the jute industry. No change is necessary regarding periods of wage payment which is weekly in all jute mill areas. Some change is however desirable regarding retention of one week's wages by the employers until a worker is discharged. Mention has already been made of the indebtedness of jute mill hands and it is estimated that one out of every ten operatives suffers from chronic indebtedness and pays at least 2 annas per month for the loan of every rupee as interest per month, and this works out at 150 per cent. per annum. Good bonus is actually paid to weavers and piece-workers on production but no reward is paid for good work to spinners and other time workers. It is, therefore, desirable to set apart a share of profits for payment to all time workers, say every six months. This will increase attachment of workers to particular factories and discourage long absence in village homes and materially reduce their indebtedness. Workers as a rule do take leave for a few weeks every 12 or 15 or 18 months, but no guarantee is given to them about re-employment on their return from their village homes. It is desirable that leave with full or even half-pay should be given at least for four days in the year during most important festivals, like Durga Poojah, Maharrum, Ganesh Pujah and Dewali, when expenses have to be incurred by workers as a matter of spiritual necessity.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency.

There has been considerable improvement in the efficiency of Indian weavers in jute mills in recent years partly due to progressive rates of bonus or premium bonus paid to them on production and partly due to supervision of better class of Indian sirdars and other causes. A twill weaver easily produces a little over 18 cuts of 100 yards each of 27 in. width in 5½ days of 60 hours and earn Rs. 10-6-6 a week, including a bonus of Rs. 3-12 annas. It is reported that ten years back a twill weaver could not take more than 15 cuts of this quality in the same period. A weaver of nine porters 40 in. hessian takes a little over 14½ cuts in 60 hours and earns Rs. 9-14-9, including a bonus of Rs. 2-6 annas. It is, however, doubtful if there has been any marked improvement in the efficiency of time workers, e.g., spinner who receives about Rs. 5-12 annas per week of 5½ days and minds, say, 25 spindles, whereas a woman in Germany and U.S.A. looks after 150 spindles comfortably. A Dundee weaver's average wages is about £2 15s. per week, and he minds three looms—an Indian weaver minds only one loom—and his average wage is about Rs. 9. Assuming that hours of work being the same say 54 hours, and the quality and size of the fabrics being the same, and the production per loom per day being the same, the weaving cost of a ton in Dundee is about Rs. 26-8 annas and in Bengal about Rs. 20.

The poor efficiency of an Indian jute operative, viz., one-third of a Dundee man, is primarily due to his illiteracy or want of exercise of his brains. His comparatively poor physique is owing to low standard of living, climatic conditions. But in spite of all these handicaps his efficiency would undoubtedly improve if a proper system of apprenticeship is introduced and regular training is given.

There will be some appreciable effect on production if working hours are reduced and minor changes made in other working conditions. Any improvement of sanitation and on the present type of "vile, filthy, disease-ridden, hovels, called workers' bustees" (as Mr. Tom. Johnston, M.P., described them from his personal inspection of Kankinarrah dwellings, accompanied by the president of the union on the 19th November, 1925) will restore his energy and remove his depression and enable him to put forth his best efforts towards production. Fair wages consistent with the record prosperity of the jute industry will improve the present low standard, reduce his indebtedness and make him more fit to put his heart and soul into production. Dietary will naturally improve with increased wages. What he takes in his village home, viz., good milk, ghee, fresh vegetables and fruits, costs him twice as much in the mill area, but with more money in his pockets he can choose and pick good food-stuff and eat

plenty of it. Unlike a coal miner, a jute mill operative is not very fond of intoxicating liquor, and he does not patronize ganja or opium, which however, cost him almost an anna a day even if he is addicted to either of these drugs.

Steps should be taken to minimize industrial fatigue as experience shows that many accidents do occur during periods of fatigue.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The combination of employers in the jute industry, known as Indian Jute Mills Association is one of the strongest capitalists in India and is in a position by virtue of its financial resources and its membership, including some of the cleverest British brains in the country, to dictate its own terms to labour or suppliers of jute, viz., ryots and even to Government and local bodies as its constituent members, viz., the jute companies pay very large sums as rates to mill municipalities and income and super taxes and customs duties on export of jute fabrics to Government. In fact the aggregate gross profits of all the jute companies within the association is not far short of the revenue of the Government of Bengal and they employ more hands than the Government of Bengal, including very highly paid officers, and their debentures and shares are considered as good securities as Government bonds. There are not more than two unions of the employed including this union.

Labour organization in the jute industry has produced a remarkable effect on the condition of workers notwithstanding the indifference of employers as the following extracts from the annual report of this union will indicate.

"The exaction of the sirdar from the men working under him or from new recruits varies from one to three months' wages paid in advance and often procured by a loan from money lenders, who charge interest at 150 per cent per annum. Some assistant sirdars' jobs are sold by the head sirdar to the highest bidder. The sirdars have to pay very high prices to the superior officers for their jobs."

This was the state of affairs when the union began to function in 1921, and things have materially improved in 1928-29 through the intensive agitation of the union and ceaseless representation to the employers and prosecutions of offenders in open court and dismissal of offenders on the representation of the union.

The union had some hand in the sanction of Rs. 7 lakhs by the Government of Bengal for the sewerage and waterworks in the Kankinarrah area as the following extracts from the last report shows:—"For some time past the president of the union made efforts to bring Lord Lytton, late Governor of Bengal, down to Kankinarrah and show him the wretched condition (housing, drainage, etc.) under which the jute workers eke out their existence, and although the ex-Governor was quite willing he was prevailed upon by some of the jute mill magnates not to have any direct dealing with labour. However, H. E. Sir Stanley Jackson proved himself too strong for the capitalists and accepted the invitation of the president, whose chief object was not only mere personal inspection by the head of the Government of the 'dung heaps' known as mill bustees in which the workers are housed, but also to create a certain amount of consciousness in the workers' mind and to raise them in the estimation of the mill magnates and supervisors as well as the local raiyees, who treat the producers of wealth as mere coolies. His Excellency accompanied by Honourable Lady Jackson and their children and Sir Alexander Murray, of the firm of Mg. agent of the Kankinarrah Jute Company, Limited, and ex-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Collector of Alipore, visited Kankinarrah on the 6th December, 1927, and received a great ovation at the pandal erected in the compound of the Goswami Kutchery, by kind permission of Mr. T. C. Goswami, M.L.A., the owner. His Excellency and Lady Jackson were introduced by the president to the members of the executive committee of the union (mostly millhands) and shook hands with them and other ordinary members of the unions. There was accommodation for 5,000 millhands at the pandal, which was crowded to suffocation. The president read an address of welcome and gave a short history of the union, its connection in the past with Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Dass and other national leaders, who visited Kankinarrah and addressed meetings under the auspices of the union. The address dealt with (a) jute mill strikes between 1922 and 1927, (b) communal disturbances in Kankinarrah and the formation of a local conciliation board at the instance of the union, (c) sanitation and municipality-absence of representatives of taxpaying millhands on the Board of Bhatpara Municipality; insanitary dwellings, (d) absence of co-operative credit societies and oppressions of money-lenders, (e) paucity of provident fund and welfare work, (f) want of educational facilities and the efforts of the union to provide a large school for the education of the workers' children. His Excellency in reply said: "I am pleased to note that your union considers that the best way of furthering the legitimate objects of your union is by avoiding, as far as possible, the mixing up of matters concerning labour with political issues. I note that for some years your union has been interesting itself

in the improvement of sanitation and health condition of the Bhatpara Municipality. I understand that administrative approval has been given to an improvement scheme involving an expenditure of Rs. 21,00,000 to be spent upon sewerage and waterworks in this area. Towards this, Government are contributing 7 lakhs and the mills of the district 12 lakhs. The scheme includes some incidental planning involving the opening of roads which should be facilitated with better housing conditions. I appreciate the request for direct representation of the workers on the Municipal Board. It is most desirable that the industrial interests in this area should have suitable representation on this body, and I hope sincerely that this can be and will be arranged. You express a desire for the institution of provident funds and co-operative credit societies for the working people. Any system for provision against old age is an object most worthy of support, and my experience has been that in England, where there has been establishment of welfare centres connected with works, it adds to the contentment and thereby to the efficiency of the artisans."

Since His Excellency's visit in December, 1927, and his notable pronouncement at Kankinarrah, the Public Health Department of Bengal tackled the project most seriously, and the construction of sewerage and water works have been taken in hand and will perhaps be completed next year. The union was mainly instrumental in stopping frequent dismissal of hands at the instigation of the sirdars, and letters from the secretary of the union to the managers of mills are in great demand by aggrieved workers.

For want of funds all the cherished projects of the union, viz., death and sickness benefit, and cheap loans and co-operative shops, remained unexecuted. The union was obliged to confine its activities to propaganda work and to constant representations to employers whenever workers had bona fide grievances.

Detailed history of the Kankinarrah Labour Union will be found in its report for 1926, copies of which will be circulated to the members of the Commission.

The union was started in Kankinarrah by the Khelafatists in 1920. Mahatma Gandhi was invited in 1921 by the executive and addressed a meeting at an open space, close to the present office of the union, and since called Gandhi Maidan, where most of the meetings of the union are held. Maulvi Latafat Hossein, M.L.C. (Labour), was its first secretary. The late Mr. Abdul Mazid, nicknamed as Karl Marx for his socialistic views, was its president. After his death Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, M.L.C. (Labour), private secretary of the late Mr. James Keir Hardie, M.P., during his Indian visit and workers' delegate to the International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1923, joined as president since 1922 and still continues to be its president (with exception of the year 1926, when Maulvi Wahed Hossein, M.A., B.L., was president). Late Mr. C. R. Dass presided over a mammoth conference organized by the union in 1921 and attended by several thousand jute millhands.

The union since 1922 opened a crusade against corrupt sirdars, who fleeced millhands right and left, antagonized hundreds of sirdars (supervisors) who placed every kind of obstruction and openly dissuaded millhands from joining the union with the connivance of the managers.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

There were several lightning strikes in the district on flimsy excuses, e.g., discontent against sirdars supply of bad yarns, loss of cinder contract by one of the local landowners, abolition of double shifts and reversion to single shifts. The union took every possible step to discourage these strikes and counselled negotiations and achieved some measure of success in this direction.

The area of the local municipality is about 5 square miles and the Board consisted originally of 19 nominated commissioners, including 10 mill managers. The population is about 80,000, including 3,722 ratepayers, who were mostly millhands living in filthy bustees without any sewerage and insufficient number of latrines and water taps. Rates and taxes, including latrine fees, brought in an income of Rs. 1,18,158. Sanitation was, and is still, most unsatisfactory. The union openly agitated against the civic administration, and the constitution of the Board and succeeded in effecting some improvement. The Board was reconstituted in 1928, and three seats were given to labour as a result of a deputation of the union to His Excellency Sir Stanley Jackson. One of the two secretaries, one of the vice-presidents of the union (a mill supervisor) were taken on the Board in 1928 and the sewerage and waterworks schemes were sanctioned and their construction taken in hand in 1928.

On the invitation of the union Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., Mr. Sime, secretary Dundee Workers' Union, Sir Oswald Mosley, M.P., and Lady Mosley, M.P., Mr. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, M.P., the members of the International Textile Delegation,

headed by Rt. Hon. Thomas Shaw, M.P., Mr. Arthur Purcel, M.P., and Mr. J. Hallsworth, deputed by the British Trade Union Congress, Mr. Mardy Jones, M.P., Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, K.C.S.I., Member-in-charge of Industry and Labour, visited the union, and most of them addressed a few words to the members and inspected the bustees in which the workers live.

Kankinarrab was the scene of brutal murders and riots over the question of music before mosques and procession of images, but the union after several unsuccessful attempts eventually constituted a Hindu-Moslem Unity Conference in October, 1927, and elected two of the Hindu leaders, Babu Singeswar Prasad Sha and Babu Ram Prasad Sha, as joint secretaries of the union. Murder, bloodshed and breaking of heads on the immersion day has now ceased as a result of the conference.

Until recently the mere mention of the name of the Labour Union annoyed a certain class of mill managers, who could not tolerate their workmen joining the union, and often threw letters addressed by the union into the waste-paper baskets. In fact even workers were dismissed at the instigation of the sirdars for the heinous offence of joining the union as members. Managers and managing agents of mills, with some exceptions, ignored union letters even after the registration of the union under the Indian Trade Union Act. For this indifference they were not alone to blame, for many mushroom unions were recently created and functioned more or less as strike committees.

The union received a gift of about 6½ cottahs of land last year from Mr. T. C. Goswami, M.L.A., for a school for the workers' children and secured a promise of a building grant of Rs. 2,000, and a recurring grant of Rs. 40 a month from the Government, and proposes as soon as more funds are forthcoming to establish an up-to-date school. The programme of the union includes education of workers' children, co-operative credit societies and co-operative shops, life insurance and provisions for old age, and sanitary dwellings for all workers. The benefit schemes need the help of honest and selfless organizers and funds both of which are slow in coming. Employers' co-operation, municipal assistance, as well as public munificence are essential for the fructification of these schemes. By discouraging strikes and adopting the policy of negotiation with employers when the workers had bona fide grievances, the union has to some extent won the employers' confidence. By inviting the head of Government and public leaders, and by frequent discussion of workers' needs with them, the union has won official as well as public sympathies. By inviting some leading Labour Members of Parliament and International Labour leaders and placing before them facts and figures regarding conditions of work, the union has received great encouragement from overseas trade union leaders, who still maintain contact by correspondence and inspire the union officers with progressive ideas of trade unionism. Thus the foundation is laid for a solid structure of constructive work, for the economic and social uplift of a large section of our countrymen engaged in the best manufacturing industry of India, viz., jute, that employs about 350,000 hands and pays annual wages to the extent of 9 crores of rupees to men, women and children not only natives of Bengal, but also of Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Central Provinces, United Provinces, and even a portion of the Punjab. The union invites young men interested in social service work to come forward and lend their helping hands in building up the nation from its root, viz., the working men—the producers. The union has also aimed at following the example of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union, which occupies a unique position in the trade union movement of India under the fostering care of Mrs. Anusua Bai, a sister of a millionaire millowner of Ahmedabad, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, who has persistently refused to affiliate the union with the All-India Trade Union Congress. The latter is more or less a creation of politicians, and is frequently utilized by politicians as a convenient means for taking trips to Geneva or for seats on Commissions and Committees, and may soon be merged into the Political Congress, notwithstanding the best efforts of Mr. Joshi and others to counteract political exploitation of labour.

Mahatma Gandhi, in refusing to accept the presidentship of the Lahore Congress, has made a most uncomfortable statement some time ago. He has stated that "whilst he wants power for labour and its progressive welfare, he does not believe in its exploitation for mere political purposes." This is perhaps a reply to Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose, the President of the Congress Committee in Bengal. Addressing a meeting of the workers at Lillooah the other day, he said "The labour movement was closely connected with the Swaraj movement, and what was needed at the present moment was a co-ordination of the two in order to force the hands of an unsympathetic Government." Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, and the leader of the Congress Party in the Council, burnt his finger and confessed his mistake, and expressed regret that his activities caused the loss of permanent employment to hundreds of Bhadrilok employees of the Assam-Bengal Railway during the strike in 1921, engineered by himself. Mr. Bose, young and inexperienced as he is in labour matters, will perhaps repent his mistakes for meddling with the workers at

Golmuri and Budge-Budge and prolonging their strike to the point of starvation. The adoption of a resolution in the Legislative Assembly on 25th September, 1929, to withdraw the protection granted to the tinsplate industry in India by a narrow majority as a sort of censure on the Government of Bihar, which refused to refer the strike or dispute at Golmuri to a court of enquiry under the Indian Trade Disputes Act, will be very poor consolation to the several hundred men who lost their jobs through the strike. However, the organization at Ahmedabad, embracing five or six unions of cotton mill operatives, has made wonderful progress. Collective bargaining forms the primary business of the union. The union's procedure in attending to the complaints received from the members is so planned as to prevent undue friction and to make a strike a virtual impossibility. In case of disagreement with an individual mill, the union may refer the matter to the Mill Owners' Association. If within a reasonable time the association is not able to bring about a satisfactory settlement of the dispute, it is open to the union to make a demand for arbitration, which the association is in honour bound to accept. The arbitration award is binding on both parties. In the year 1924, 743 complaints were received; 30 per cent. of these related to dismissals, victimizations, fines, forfeiture and other unjust penalties; 24 per cent. to bad treatment, bribe taking, improper rules, and obstruction to the union; 15 per cent. to latrine and water and matters of sanitation; 15 per cent. to mode of payment of wages and other economic allowances; 14 per cent. to hours and holidays; 6 per cent. to bad and insufficient materials, stoppages, etc. Of these 471 were concluded successfully, 27 were compromised, 46 were rejected as being unreasonable, false or trifling, 64 were unsuccessful, the rest were either closed or pending.

The union has organized the following benefits :—(a) Free medical aid, expenditure Rs. 12,607; (b) Cheap loan, Rs. 10,668 were advanced at 6 to 9 per cent. interest; (c) Free education through 11 night schools with 529 students and 8 day schools with 580 students, expenditure Rs. 22,584 (of this Rs. 15,000 is paid by the Mill Owners' Association); (d) Free libraries and a weekly organ; (e) Free legal aid; (f) Compensation for accidents; (g) Municipal facilities; (h) Cheap stores; (i) Research; (j) Housing; a chawl has been taken on lease by the union and the rent charged is Re. 1 less than the former rent.

The attitude of jute millhands towards the Labour Union is more or less indefinite. Membership grows very rapidly, during strikes or temporary excitements, and falls equally rapidly after the termination of disputes. To some of them, especially those who struck work through the instigation of officials of a particular union and had to resume without any satisfaction, the name of Anjuman or union has got into a bad odour. Their attitude, however, towards the union is fully recognized by employers who listen to the grievances placed by the union. This union is more or less under the control of the working-class representatives of the workers. The general secretary is a mill babu, the vice-presidents are either supervisors or assistant supervisors. The difficulty is to get these honorary workers to attend the union office regularly and enrol new members. Paid officers and collectors of membership subscriptions are absolutely essential.

The constitutional aspect of the union is unknown to them. Benefit schemes and successful negotiations with employers for removal of grievances are the only ties to bind members to the union.

All bona fide unions in Bengal have been registered under the Act. The rights conferred on the members of the registered trade unions, viz., immunity from prosecution for criminal conspiracy in trade disputes and from civil suits for breach of contract of employment or interference with trade or business are indeed substantial. The proportion fixed by the Act of officers, viz., one-half being actual employees in an industry is, indeed, sound. It is rather too early to judge the effect of the Act, but the very fact that some employers have recently expressed their unwillingness to correspond or negotiate with unregistered unions has produced a salutary effect on the growth of healthy unions and serves as a check on the so-called unions which exist on paper, or are created during strikes. If feasible more facilities should be provided by the Act for members to negotiate with employers, and to penalize employers who refuse or ignore negotiations with officers of registered trade unions, and further to penalize employers who dismiss or threaten to dismiss employees for joining a registered union.

Definite rules should be laid down regarding methods and procedure of negotiations between employers and employed through trade unions. The position of employees in State industrial concerns in relation to trade unions is most unsatisfactory. An amendment of Public Service Conduct Rules affecting employees in State railways and other industrial concerns is necessary. Some amendment of the rules regarding audit of accounts is also called for.

The years 1927, 1928, 1929 will be remembered as the worst period of unrest in the industrial history of Bengal and Bihar. The biggest strike in the jute industry



occurred in July and August, 1929, stoppages of works by strikes and lock-outs in railway workshops in Kharagpur and Lilloah were followed by sympathetic strikes in several engineering shops in Howrah and other incidents such as shooting of strikers at Bamungachi and holding up of traffic by strikers in front of the Law Courts in Howrah, caused widespread sensation, and they formed the subjects for interpellations in the British Parliament. The general public, having little interest in industries, realized for the first time in Bengal the significance of an industrial insurrection at the instigation of men unconnected with the labour movement of Bengal. Great excitement prevailed at Bowraah, about 12 miles from Calcutta, where the police had to open fire to suppress a revolt of the workers of the Fort Gloucester Jute Mill, who were subsequently locked out and went on strike for several months. Inflammatory speeches led to partial stoppage of work at the Ludlow Jute Mill at Chengail. Thousands of workers of the Tata Steel Works at Jamshedpur downed tools for several months. These strikes and lock-outs from June, 1927, to the end of 1928 affected over a hundred thousand men. More than twelve million working days and at least a crore of rupees in wages were lost.

The underlying cause of these stoppages was the growing consciousness of labour, but the immediate cause was partly economic and partly personal. The most deplorable factors in the strike situation were bad leadership, most careless handling of the strike situation by employers or their agents and the preaching of Bolshevism. It is a matter of profound regret that few of those who conducted these strikes have any experience of negotiations for a settlement, and they unconsciously did a great disservice to the infant labour movement in India. It is deplorable that in spite of the bitter experience of previous strikes they failed to realize that prolongation of strikes without funds or prospects of getting funds, without legal sanction for picketing and many other things essential for successful prosecution of strikes, may cause heavy financial loss to the employers, but the blow to the employees, who surrender unconditionally after weeks of semi-starvation and exhaustion of their slender resources (the strikes of Lilloah, Bowraah, Tatanagar are included in this category) is stupendous and crushing. Hundreds lost their jobs and neither newspaper articles with big headlines nor resolutions in the Council and the Assembly, nor open-air meetings and processions of strikers with red flags, proved to be any compensation whatsoever for the heavy loss of wages. The joint committee appointed by the Governor in Council in March, 1921, as a result of Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury's (president of this union) motion in the Bengal Legislative Council, enquired into the cause of the industrial unrest in Bengal and examined a large number of witnesses (workers as well as supervisors) employed in large industries, viz., jute, engineering, coal mining, cotton, railway, printing presses, etc., affected by an epidemic of strikes (89 in Calcutta, 12 in Burdwan coalfields, 2 in Barisal, and 1 in Kharagpur) in 1920 and 1921. The committee presided over by Sir John Kerr, the then Finance Member, after exhaustive enquiries (*vide* report of the Committee on Industrial Unrest, published by Government in September, 1921) came to the conclusion that a large number of these strikes (27 strikes not concerned with wages, 13 due to claims for overtime, khoraki, strike pay, shifts; 10 due to dismissal of workmen and similar disciplinary action, one for better facilities for progress, one for assault on men by European officers) could have been prevented or curtailed if a better understanding had prevailed between the employers and the employed, and if some machinery existed for bringing the parties together, immediately the differences occurred and recommended the formation of a conciliation board consisting of about 20 members to be appointed by Government to include a due proportion of all classes of the community—European and Indian representatives of both capital and labour. This board did function in one or two disputes in public utility service, viz., the strike on the Howrah Amta Light Railway and was presided over by Sir Campbell Rhodes, now a member of the India Council.

The Trade Disputes Act passed in March, 1929, was only a natural corollary of the action taken by the Bengal and Bombay Governments from time to time for settlement of industrial disputes. The Bengal committee, however, laid the utmost emphasis on the creation of an industrial concern of joint works committee (associated with the name of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, late Speaker of the House of Commons and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour), *vide* page 18 of the report.

The following is an extract from the last annual report of the union:—"It is the conviction of the organizers of this union, based on several years' experience of factory labour, that the plant of constructive trade unionism based on European model, will not take root for many years to come, until and unless the soil is weeded out and workers receive primary instructions. Closer contact and better understanding between employers and employed are essential for future industrial peace and this can be achieved by only one method, viz., joint committees (Panchayats), and working it honestly and earnestly to give it a fair trial."

The Indian Jute Mills Association decided in October, 1928, to increase working hours from 54 to 60 per week in single-shift mills and similar increase in the working of double shift mills. The change was necessitated in order to capture trade passing to Dundee and the Continent, and furthermore to discourage building of new jute factories, which were on the increase during the last two or three years. Before the change came into operation on 1st July, 1929, a conference of over 6,000 jute mill-hands organized by the Kankinarrah Labour Union, a registered trade union of over seven years' standing, was held on 12th March, 1929, on the maidan close to the Meghna Jute Mill in Jagatdal, and was presided over by Mrs. Dass, a Punjabee lady devoted to social service work.

The conference had two sittings, and the two most important resolutions which had any bearing on the strike that followed in July were fully discussed in vernacular and finally adopted as follows:—"That in view of the misunderstanding likely to arise over the adoption of 60 hours a week in the jute industry from 1st July, the conference urges upon employers to meet labour representatives at a conference and discuss the new terms and new rates of bonus for piece-work to be paid to weavers."

Mr. Roy Chowdhury, in supporting the resolution, said that he had heard all sorts of rumours regarding the attitude of labour towards the change. He suggested that in view of any misunderstanding likely to arise over the adoption of 60 hours a week, a conference should be called to discuss the matter and provide no handle to agitators already on the field to foment discontent. The above utterance was almost prophetic, and agitators seized the opportunity and did foment troubles.

The second resolution was as follows:—"That this conference urges Government to take drastic action against smuggling of country liquor from Chandannagore and illicit sale of cocaine and gambling in dens kept by notorious persons within the Bhatpara municipal area."

The proceedings of the conference and the resolutions were published in the papers in Calcutta and were forwarded to Government as well as to the managing agents of the local mills. Some of the managing agents courteously acknowledged receipt of the above, but none of them was willing to discuss the change from 54 to 60 hours and consequent change in wages. However, the resolution about the prevention of smuggling and gambling roused the ire of interested and influential persons in Jagatdal. They swore vengeance on Maulvi Latafat Hossain, M.L.C., general secretary of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, who was carrying on a crusade against gambling and drinking and drug taking, and even incurred the displeasure of the local police. The Excise officers took drastic action after a week or so, and raided many houses and arrested certain persons on suspicion. This goaded Mr. Hossain's enemies to fury, and they were determined to cause him humiliation. The Labour Union had a meeting on the 23rd June, attended by a number of local weavers, who reported that the management would increase the number of cuts necessary to obtain bonus from the 1st July, and this would mean some loss in wages for the extra six hours' work. They were all urged to work 60 hours and count the actual wages and find out the difference, and in the meantime the president undertook to negotiate with the managing agents for reconsideration of the weavers' bonus. Reports reached the union office that certain malicious persons of Jagatdal were spreading rumours that Mr. Latafat Hossain, the general secretary of the union, induced mill authorities to increase cuts in order to deprive the weavers of adequate bonus, and a pleader of Barrackpore, known to the gamblers and smugglers, was invited and was paid to fight the weavers' case in law courts. Certain steps were taken to counteract this false propoganda, and assurances were received from five or six mills that the weavers would work the first fortnight and draw their first week's wages at the end of the fortnight and afterwards decide on the course to be adopted.

What happened after the 1st July at Jagatdal is well known to all local managers. The weavers of the Alliance and three other adjoining mills informed the managers that they would not work more than 54 hours, and they actually left the looms on Friday evening. It is worth while recording here what was behind this scene of walking out. A pleader of Barrackpore, who had no connection with any labour union, quietly visited a certain shop at Jagatdal, and was induced by his retainers to speak to some of the weavers. He urged them not to work after 6 p.m. on Friday the 5th July. The pleader interviewed Mr. Milne, of the Alliance Jute Mill, and told the weavers that he was informed by the mill manager that he was quite willing to pay the old rate of bonus, but Mr. Latafat Hossain stopped him from doing so. He subsequently confessed to Mr. Ray Chowdhury that he could not grasp the question of bonus to weavers. The pleader told some of the weavers as early as Thursday the 4th that he would fight their case in law courts; that is to say, he would either stop the mills working more than 54 hours or would realize extra bonus through law courts. He received his fees in advance for his proposed fight. As prearranged by the shopkeeper, his fellow intriguer, the weavers walked out on the 5th, but the weavers of the Alexandra Mill of the same group were under the influence of Mr. Latafat Hossain, and refused to follow suit. The walk-out on Friday afternoon

went on for about three weeks. Meantime, Mr. Roy Chowdhury kept on negotiations with the managing agents of the Alliance and other mills, and they decided on 22nd July to satisfy the weavers' demands in full, and to pay them the old rate of bonus and notices were posted and sirdars were asked to communicate the news to the weavers. On Sunday the 21st July the pleader's clients called a meeting. Mr. Ray Chowdhury attended the meeting against the wishes of Mr. Latafat Hossain. Mrs. Dass, who presided over the conference in May and accompanied Mr. Ray Chowdhury to Jagatdal, was requested by the pleader to preside over this meeting. Mrs. Dass asked the men to wait a day or two and mentioned that Mr. Ray Chowdhury's negotiations were almost complete, and they would perhaps hear good news in a day or two. The pleader also spoke and asked the men not to strike but to continue work half-heartedly and demand Re. 1-8 per day. In fact, he repeated what he was told by his clients to do. The weavers returned on Monday the 22nd, but worked half-heartedly and stated that they were carrying out instructions. The good effect of the announcement on the same day that they would be paid at the old rate was neutralized by the pleader, who told the men on the same evening not to believe in the concessions mentioned in the notice posted at the mill gate, and that if the manager wrote to him direct he would then advise them on what to do. The weavers returned on the 23rd, but continued the tactics of passive resistance of the previous day. The mills had to be closed at 11 a.m.

Miss Prabhavati Das Gupta, President, Bengal Jute Workers' Union (with which none of the local millhands had any connections), visited Jagatdal after the 15th July and made the pleader's acquaintance and elected him as vice-president of her union. The idle workers of Jagatdal, at the instigation of the pleader and Miss Das Gupta, began strong picketing from 2nd August, and induced millhands of all the local mills—Anglo-India, Kankinarrah, Reliance—to come out. Mr. Latafat Hossain's house was attacked because he managed to keep going not only his own mill, Anglo-India, but also the Alexandra, belonging to another group. The strike fever, through the paid agents of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, spread to Tittagarh on the south and Gourepore on the north.

There was a conference on the 5th August at Bhatpara Municipal Office, attended by the district magistrate, the presidents and vice-presidents of the Kankinarrah Labour Union and the Bengal Jute Workers' Union. Red handbills were distributed throughout the mill area asking millhands to demand 25 to 50 per cent increase in wages. By the 10th August almost all the mill managers in Tittagarh district expressed their willingness to pay proportionately for the increased working hours and make other concessions regarding maternity benefit and follow the footsteps of the Begg Dunlop group of mills in Jagatdal, and the strikers in that area were quite willing to resume on the 12th, but an intense propaganda was started against resumption by Miss Das Gupta, who published notices that the assurances given by the mill managers were false, etc., and the resumption was delayed. Dr. B. C. Ray, M.L.C. (Barrackpore), a Swarajist leader, moved for the adjournment of the Bengal Council on the 9th August to discuss the strike, and the motion was carried by a small majority. The Hon. Mr. McAlpin, on behalf of the Government, could not comply with Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta's request to take action under the Trade Disputes Act. However, the Government took departmental action and called a conference in the Secretariat on the 14th August. Mr. Laird, the president of the Indian Jute Mills Association, Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, M.L.C., president, and Maulvi Latafat Hossain, M.L.C., vice-president of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, and Miss Prabhavati Das Gupta, president, Bengal Jute Workers' Union, separately discussed the strike situation with the members of the Executive Council of the Government. The president and the vice-president of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, gave their version of the origin and the progress of the strike, and declared that after the issue of the notice by the manager of the Alliance Jute Mill that "weekly wages from 1st July and onwards will be paid at the old rate of 54 hours" the dispute disappeared.

Miss Das Gupta had no other alternative but to sign the terms of settlement (recommendation of the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association to the members of the association). The terms were practically the same as were publicly announced by some of the members of the Jute Mills Association the week before, and were as follows:—(a) To pay the correct proportionate increase in total earnings for the extra hours' work; (b) to pay "Khoraki" on the same scale as before; (c) the scale of bonus remains the same as it was before the 1st July, when the mills were working 54 hours; (d) that favourable concession be given to an adjustment of wages to time-workers on the basis of concession to piece-workers; (e) that there be no victimization; (f) that favourable consideration be given to the provisions of maternity benefit; (g) that there be no corporal punishment.

The same was also signed by Mr. Laird, the president of the Indian Jute Mills Association and Mr. K. C. Ray Chowdhury, president of the Kankinarrah Labour Union. The officers of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union were mobbed on 17th and 18th August at Tittagarh, Khardah and Kankinarrah and asked to explain why

their agents issued false pamphlets against resumption the previous week on terms almost identical with those now before them. Mrs. Dass, of the Kankinarrah Labour Union, who motored to Tittagarh on the 19th August, 1929, to help in the resumption, was mistaken for Miss Das Gupta, and brickbats were thrown at her. She narrowly escaped severe injuries. By the 20th August most of the strikers resumed work.

The mills at Budge-Budge, 12 miles south of Calcutta, belonging to the Andrew Yule group and at Bowraah and Chengail were so far unaffected, notwithstanding intense agitation of the agents of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union which had neither any branch nor any members. The managers, however, under instructions from the head office, informed the millhands (who had little knowledge of the extent of the strike in the north or of the terms of the settlement) of the new terms of pay, khoraki, bonus, maternity benefit and 5 per cent increase of total earnings for the 5-day week, but the unexpected happened. The workers of 5 or 6 mills in Budge-Budge who were granted full terms of increase by the settlement without strike, downed tools on the 20th August, on the plea that some persons had told them that the increase granted to them fell far short of that granted in the north area. This strike was immediately followed by the strike of petroleum workers of Budge-Budge, organized by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, in sympathy with the strikers (tin plate workers) of Golmuri in Tatanagar in Behar. Six weeks' intense agitation and propaganda in favour of a sympathetic strike prior to the jute mill strike failed to create any impression on the oil workers but they came out with jute workers, who lived with them in the same bustees and enjoyed their fellowship. The strike at Budge-Budge spread across the river to Chengail, Chak-kashi and Bowraah. The jute mill strike at Budge-Budge lasted full 3 weeks, and affected about 25,000 hands including three mills across the river and approximately 280,000 working days and Rs. 315,000 in wages were lost without any gain whatsoever. This demonstrated the utter ignorance and extreme gullibility of the Indian factory labour.

The executive committee of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union removed Miss Das Gupta from the presidentship of the union, on the ground that she acted in a way detrimental to the cause of the workers and also for her so-called undemocratic and reactionary mentality. She replied in the English Basumati: "The union executives' banishment of me may mean the banishment from the union all jute workers and presence thereof a few bourgeois exploiters only. But I know not that few of the jesters will shortly stand by my side. As for those that are mercenaries, I wish, I could still stand by their side after the strike has been called off. But I lack the resources." There was a split in the camp and two rival parties, both called themselves Bengal Jute Workers' Union. One favoured a fresh strike at once and the other under Miss Das Gupta was not in favour of a strike then.

42 out of 85 mills were affected by the strike and about 158,000 out of about 250,000 were out at different periods for 5, 10, 20 and 30 days. Total number of working days lost was 1,725,000 and total loss of wages amounted to approximately Rs. 20 lacs.

The weavers would receive extra wages to the extent of Rs. 5 lacs a year and the rest about Rs. 6 lacs a year. As a matter of fact the concessions secured through negotiations by the Kankinarrah Labour Union for the Jagatdal group of jute mills, would practically have had the same result minus the huge loss of wages and some lives.

A court of enquiry under this Act has been appointed only once since the passing of the Act in March, viz., for promoting a settlement of the dispute in Bombay cotton industry and the report of the court has just been published. It is therefore premature to pass any opinion on it as yet. In view of what has happened recently, viz., the refusal of the Behar Government to refer the dispute of the tin plate workers at Golmuri to a court of enquiry under the Trades Dispute Act, although circumstances warranted it and public opinion demanded it, an amendment of Section 3 of the Act is perhaps necessary to direct the Government under what conditions they must take action even if one of the two parties to the dispute applies to dispel suspicion that Government sides with employers whenever a stoppage occurs. In fact the conciliation board created for investigation and settlement of trades disputes by the Government of Bengal, in 1921, could not function excepting in one or two occasions, although pressure was brought on Government from time to time to utilize this splendid machinery whenever big strikes (viz., the strikes of workmen of Messrs. Jessop and Co. Ltd., of Messrs. Burn and Co. Ltd., Howrah, of the mechanics of Howrah Amta Light Railways Co. Ltd., and elsewhere) occurred. The Government of Bengal invariably refused on the plea that employers were opposed to a reference to the board.

The attitude of the present Government of Bengal or more correctly speaking, the present head of the Government towards labour union, is indeed most satisfactory as will be evidenced from the following extract from the last annual report of

union (vide page 2).—"For some time past, the president of the union made efforts to bring Lord Lytton, Late Governor of Bengal, down to Kankinarrah to show him the wretched condition (housing, drainage, etc.) under which the jute workers eke out their existence and although Lord Lytton was willing he was prevailed upon by some of the jute mill magnates not to have any direct dealings with labour. However, H. E. Sir Stanley Jackson could not be hoodwinked by the capitalists and accepted the invitations of the union and visited Kankinarrah with the Hon. Lady Jackson and shook hands with common workmen and won the hearts of the members of the union. His Excellency's attitude in connection with industrial disputes was equally satisfactory as was evident from his personal activities to bring about a speedy settlement of that devastating strike of the workmen of the E. I. R. Carriage works at Lillooah in February, 1928, which spread like an epidemic to other factories in Howrah district, although the railway workshops are within the jurisdiction of the Central Government."

It must be said that the laws of India are most satisfactory from labour point of view and workmen had no occasions to complain of any legal persecution by employers.

### XVII. Administration.

The Central Government and Legislatures have more or less monopolised labour. This is evidently a mistake, for the simple reason that local governments and local legislatures are in close touch with local industries and are familiar with types of legislatures or administrative measures, suitable to the peculiar labour conditions in different industries, plantations and mines within the province. One of the main reasons why the passing of such an important measure like the Indian Trade Disputes Act was delayed for 5 or 6 years, was the wrangle between the Government regarding jurisdiction, or whether the Act was to be central or provincial.

Australian labour legislations are perhaps the best and the most instructive in the world and India has more things in common with Australia than England, e.g. both are agricultural countries and the industries of both the countries are more or less of recent growth and the percentage of industrial workmen of both countries compare favourable. There are two types of laws in Australia, viz. federal or commonwealth and state and are modelled on the United States principle of specifying the function of the central government and leaving other functions to the individual states. The Canadian system is the opposite. It defines the function of the provincial government and leaves the rest to the central government. Thus in Australia and the United States, the most important developments in labour legislature have taken place in the states and most of the Industrial Peace Legislations are provincial. In some of the State Acts in Australia, e.g., New South Wales Acts, of 1918, certain strikes and lock-outs have been made illegal and persons aiding and instigating illegal strikes or lock-outs are to pay heavy penalties, viz., £1,000. Another new section added in 1918, lays down a penalty not exceeding £100 for the proprietor and publisher of any newspaper, which advises, instigates, or excites or aids or abets an illegal strike. Local legislations of this kind seem essential to protect illiterate workers from exploitation by those who are not by any means trade unionists. Some of the recent actions of the central government regarding constitution of committees and commissions for investigation of labour problems, leave no room for doubt that the administration of labour as well as labour legislations should be provincial in future. One has only to read the proceedings of the select committee regarding the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, and the Indian Trade Disputes Act, 1929, to come to no other conclusion than the above.

The relation between the central and local governments need drastic changes. It was most amazing that the autocratic Government of India did not think fit to consult the Government of Bengal in the matter of either the personnel of such an important commission as the Royal Commission on Labour or the terms of reference and the schedule of subjects. It is essential that there should be a whole-time labour officer in Bengal with an adequate staff to carry on the administration of a labour department with a special officer to collect labour statistics and intelligence and institute enquiries into the cost of living.

## THE INDIAN JUTE MILLS ASSOCIATION.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) It is difficult to deal with the origin of labour as regards the associated jute mills, but so far as can be ascertained, the bulk of the labour force is non-Bengali. Most of the weavers come from Behar—from the following districts :—Chapra, Boalia, Ghazipur, Monghyr, Muzaffarpore, Patna, Bhagalpore, Arrah.

Most of the other workers come from :—Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces (Bilaspur), Behar, Bengal.

It is some time since census figures were taken, but in the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association the undemoted percentages are approximately correct :—

|                   |    |    |    |    |    |              |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|--------------|
| Bengal            | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17 per cent. |
| Behar and Orissa  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 60 ..        |
| Madras            | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 14 ..        |
| United Provinces  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5 ..         |
| Central Provinces | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4 ..         |

(ii) The main cause of the principal streams of migration is probably the increasing population, and the difficulty of finding work for all in the home villages. The young men leave their villages in search of work, and finding steady and remunerative employment in jute mills, eventually take their wives with them and gradually settle round the mills and raise families.

Madrasis were first seen in jute mill areas about 1906, when a few were employed in the Titaghur district. Since then their numbers have increased tremendously, and Madrasis are now in large numbers in most of the mill areas.

Bilaspuris have been coming to Bengal for many years, but previous to the year 1915, would only take open-air employment. In other words, they were employed principally at railway works and in brickfields. About 1915, however, scarcity of outside work and the high prices of food stuffs attracted these workers to the jute mills. They quickly adapted themselves to the new class of work, and there are now large numbers of this class of labour in the mill areas.

(iii) During recent years the tendency has been for all classes of foreign labour to come into the mill areas in increasing numbers.

2. (i) Most weavers send money to their homes periodically, and go home once a year for 2 to 3 months.

Madrasis go home for 2 to 3 months at intervals of 2 to 3 years, while Bilaspuris go for the same period at intervals of about 1½ years.

It is rather difficult to give accurate information under this heading, but the opinion is that, of the total labour force employed, only about 5 per cent. of the non-Bengali workers is permanently settled in the mill areas. About 17 per cent. of the total force is Bengali, so that only 22 per cent. of the total labour force is strictly permanent, but it should be understood that about 90 per cent. of the workers are entirely dependent on the jute mills for employment and have no other occupation to which they can readily turn apart from cultivation in their own villages.

3. (i) Recruiting so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned, is not required nowadays, as, with the exception of three hot weather months, labour is in good supply all the year round. Some years ago recruiting was very necessary during the hot weather, but, as above indicated, even in the hot weather months the labour shortage nowadays is not serious.

Good management and fair treatment make the best recruiting propaganda. If a mill has a good reputation for unlimited water supply, healthy surroundings, good housing, steady employment and fair treatment, an ample supply of labour will always be available. The workers going home on leave undoubtedly talk in their villages of the conditions which obtain in the jute mill areas, and by so doing, induce others to accompany them when they return.

At most mills recruiting sirdars are kept, chiefly for Madrasi and Bilaspuri labour; but their particular work is to look after their respective communities living in the workmen's houses.

(iii) It is the opinion of the Association that public employment agencies are undesirable so far as jute mill labour is concerned. There is no general disturbance of family life. Numbers of the workers leave some member or members of their families in their native villages to look after their houses and fields. They send money to them regularly, and visit them generally year by year. By working in the mills they are frequently able to add to their property; and in any case, the standard of living is improved.

7. (i) From August to February there is a certain amount of unemployment, especially amongst weavers, owing to a large influx of workers from upcountry during July and August; some returning from leave and others coming down for the first time. Nowadays there are insufficient vacancies to go round, and it is some time until these workers are absorbed by neighbouring mills or find other employment.

(ii) (a) Dismissals for bad work are practically unknown outside the weaving departments. In other departments workers are only dismissed for flagrant misbehaviour or bad time-keeping.

(b) As is usual in other countries and in other industries, a worker who is in good health prefers—unless he has other means of support—to go on working.

(c) One other cause of unemployment in recent years has been multiple-shift mills changing over to the single-shift system. This change automatically throws fully 25 per cent. of a mill's labour force permanently out of employment.

(iii) The Indian Jute Mills Association has no suggestions to offer in this connection.

(iv) It is the opinion of the Association that insurance for unemployment is scarcely a practical proposition at the present stage.

8. In connection with labour turnover, the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association have, for some time, been collecting various statistics. The statements have been submitted to the Chief Inspector of Factories for compilation.

## II.—Staff Organization.

11 The managing staffs of the jute mills in the membership of the association are, almost without exception, comprised entirely of Europeans trained and experienced in the United Kingdom, and consist in the majority of cases, of a manager in charge, one or more assistant managers, and an overseer in each department of the mill. Selection is according to qualification, knowledge and general experience of engineering and of the various processes involved in the manufacture of jute; and promotion depends on merit, reliability, adaptability and skill in handling of labour.

12. (i) "Subordinate supervising staff" might conveniently be divided, so far as jute mills are concerned, into two classes. In the first class there would be the more or less educated babu who has never been a mill operative himself, who is engaged, in the first instance, as an apprentice on a nominal salary and, having gained experience, may be promoted to supervision work, though possibly still incapable of doing the actual work himself. In some mills there is one babu in charge of each department under the European overseer. His duties would be to check attendances, to keep attendance registers and generally to assist in the supervision and work of the department. There is, of course, a separate clerical establishment employed in the mill offices and stores to look after production, wages, stores, etc., and to compile the various statements and reports required in connection with the running of the mill. The babu establishment is recruited, for the most part from the locality in which the mill is situated; young applicants are employed in the less important and lower paid posts to begin with, and are promoted according to merit as vacancies occur.

The second class would include sirdars and under sirdars, who constitute the lower subordinate supervising staff of the mill. They are wherever possible, selected from the rank and file of the mill labour force, on the recommendation of the managing staff, according to capability, efficiency, service, and the authority which they display over their fellow workers.

(ii) If training implies direct instruction from the managing staff, or even from the supervising staff, facilities for the training of jute mill workers are negligible. The bulk of the work in the mill is unskilled, and where training is necessary, as for instance in the spinning department, this is obtained in the course of actual employment, by the efforts of the worker himself. It frequently occurs, however, that a young workman learns his trade by assisting a relative at his loom or sewing machine, as the case may be, until efficiency is acquired.

As mentioned above, promotion to the status of sirdar is strictly by merit, and is effected by the European overseer in consultation with the manager.

13 (i) Relations between the staff, European and Indian, and the rank and file of the workers are, with rare exceptions, harmonious without being intimate. Upsets must and do occasionally occur, and are due, in the majority of cases, to oppression on the part of the subordinate supervising staff. This is severely dealt with by the management, to whom every encouragement is given to interest themselves in the personal health and general welfare of the mill employees. All grievances brought to the notice of the management are carefully investigated, either by the European in charge of the department or by the mill manager, who is always accessible for the hearing of complaints either by the workers themselves or by a deputation of sirdars. The employees have a right of appeal to the managing agents, to whom questions affecting wages are invariably referred.

(iii) The committee are not aware of the existence of any works committees in connection with the mills in the membership of the association, all disputes being settled amicably in the manner described above.

14. (i and ii) *Complements*.—In each department throughout the works, with the exception of piece-paid departments, a complement is drawn up, showing the number of hands it requires to run satisfactorily; and against this number is shown the amount in wages that such departments are bound down to. It can, therefore, be easily ascertained whether or not any of the departments are drawing money in excess of what they should actually be working to.

*The European Mill Clerk* each week selects any of the department's wages books, and checks the extension of each worker's daily attendances, the calculation of the amount of the worker's weekly wages, all additions, and particularly the carrying forward of totals.

*Overseers*.—As soon as work is commenced of a morning, and at each change of shift, the European overseer in charge of each department goes round to see if all his workers are present. In cases of absenteeism, this is recorded against the name of that particular worker in the register. At the end of each week, wages books are prepared by departmental babus, checked by the European overseer, and submitted to the general office where they are re-checked, and the number of hands working compared with the departmental complement number. After the books are checked, wages tickets are made out in the general office, checked for comparison with wages books, and then each ticket is initialled by the departmental European overseer.

*Piece-work*.—Although a complement of workers in piece-paid departments is laid down, no fixed amount in wages can be adhered to; but a check is made by calculating the total production of each section of the department, so that the total amount actually earned by production must equal the amount to be paid out.

*Tokens*.—Each department in a double shift mill has a differently shaped token, made generally of metal, and each shift worker is in possession of one on which is stamped the worker's number. Tokens are not necessary in single-shift mills as the operatives all work throughout the running hours of the mill.

*Issue of Tickets*.—Departmental babus receive pay tickets from the general office; and after having been checked and initialled by the European assistant, these are issued to the workers on pay day.

*Payment by Europeans*.—Unless on occasions where found to be inconvenient, payment of workers is made by the European assistants, and on completion, pay boxes are sent round the general office, and the balance, if any, checked and compared with the total amount of unpaid tickets.

15. (i) So far as it is possible to generalize, the following works *may* be given on contract:—(1) Importing, carrying, and storing of jute in mill godowns; (2) opening and selection of bales at the commencement of the process of manufacture; (3) carrying of jute from godowns to the mill building; (4) carrying of cloth to the finishing department; (5) calendering; (6) cloth lapping; (7) baling and bale pressing; (8) carrying of bales of finished goods and loading into railway wagons and boats; (9) discharging coal and carrying to boilers; (10) removal of mill dust and carting of ashes from furnaces; (11) foundry work; (12) small repairs to machinery and component parts.

The practice in regard to contracting work varies from mill to mill, and the above list covers the items which may be, but are not necessarily, given on contract.

(ii) Generally speaking, sub-contracting is not recognized by the mills, and is rarely, if ever, known.

(iii) Where, as is usually the case, the contracting work is done within the mill premises, control is exercised by the management in much the same way as the ordinary work of the mill and factory is supervised. Small repairs to machinery are frequently done outside the mill compound.

(iv) Contracting labour is, for the most part, employed on a piece-work basis, and the work is usually done more satisfactorily and more expeditiously than by time-paid workers. Where the contractor is held responsible for the work, direct supervision by the mill management is minimized.

### III.—Housing.

On 11th June, 1929, the Director of Public Health, Bengal, addressed the Indian Jute Mills Association, indicating that the question of the housing of industrial operatives had recently been receiving the consideration of the Government of Bengal, and that a report was required on the present condition of affairs existing in the industrial areas adjacent to Calcutta. In this connection, all mills in the membership of the Association were asked to supply the following information:—(a) whether housing of any description was provided by the mill for its operatives; (b) the number of dwellings so provided; (c) the number of operatives housed; (d) the nature of the accommodation provided, accompanied, where possible, by blue prints showing the layout of the mill lines and plans of the houses.



The associated mills went very thoroughly into this question, and copies of the replies received from members, along with fully detailed plans, were sent to the Director of Public Health, Bengal, on 6th August, 1929.

16. (i) About 30 per cent. of the total workers in the jute mills are housed in lines built by the various companies.

(ii) Housing is not provided by Government or other public agency.

(iii) The majority of workers, so far as can be ascertained, live in private lines owned mostly by sirdars working in the mills, or by shopkeepers trading in the bazaars.

(iv) A large number of Bengali workers live in their own houses, as do most of the sirdars.

17. Unfortunately, there are no facilities for the acquisition of land for workers' houses, and it is owing to the want of such facilities that most mill areas are so crowded and congested. It is possible to purchase land at a reasonable cost, many mills would re-model their bazaars on modern town planning lines, to the great advantage of their workers.

At present it is usually impossible to secure land for improvement schemes, and when it is obtainable, then only at exorbitant rates. It may be of interest to the Commission to quote a particular example. In the Howrah district, terms for the purchase of 40 bighas of land for housing, schools, and a clinic for women and children, were arranged to the satisfaction of the mill and the landlord in 1927. But several people who were not even tenants put forward claims to the land, without, so far as the mill could ascertain, any proof of their title. The mill therefore, is asked to take the risk of these claimants holding up the scheme in contemplation; and in addition, it must be prepared to evacuate the present occupants who, though they are all monthly tenants and have no claim whatever to the land, will not refrain from forcing the mill to take ejection proceedings.

The financial aspect of this arrangement is instructive. The landlord at present draws under Rs. 5,000 per annum in rent. His return on the purchase amount which is equivalent to ₹2,600 per acre, calculated at 5 per cent. will be 4½ times greater.

The Calcutta Port Commissioners have also been instrumental in raising land values in certain districts. Land purchased by them in the Howrah area is leased back to the mill at Rs. 8 per cottah per month, equal to a valuation of Rs. 38,400 per bigha, or nearly ₹9,000 per acre. Other plots are rented from the Port Commissioners at Rs. 10 per cottah per month, or more than ₹11,000 per acre.

18. (i) In many districts the worker elects to remain in a congested unhealthy *dustee* area, instead of taking advantage of the sanitary quarters provided by the mill owners, which, in most cases, are available at a cheaper rental than is being paid for the quarters provided by sirdars. The usual type of accommodation in mill areas is a number of rooms built either in a row, or round the four sides of a square courtyard.

(Note.—As regards this particular enquiry the Royal Commission will no doubt have received from the Director of Public Health, Bengal, the fully detailed statements supplied by the Indian Jute Mills Association.)

(ii) The lines provided by Mills are a vast improvement on the private lines. These are *pucca* built, and are kept in good repair. Each room has a door, a window, a ventilator in the roof, and a verandah with cooking place. In most cases all roadways and drains are *pucca*.

There are, of course, different types of lines in various districts, some being single-storeyed and some double-storeyed, according to the area of land available for building.

(iii) In practically all jute mill centres, roadways in the lines are lit by electricity. There is generally a septic tank latrine in the centre of the lines, with separate divisions for males and females. There is also, in practically all instances, a *pucca* drainage system throughout the lines, and a special staff of sweepers is kept solely for looking after the cleansing of the lines.

Except in certain quarters, such as in Calcutta where Corporation water is available, all mills provide free of cost, a continuous supply of filtered and chlorinated water, with the necessary standpipes; while, in several instances, this supply of water is extended throughout the bazaar.

19. It is very seldom that the lines are unoccupied to any extent, and it is only during the hot season, as a general rule, that there is accommodation available.

20. Rent charges vary a good deal according to district and class of work. The general monthly charge made by the mill is about 12 annas per room capable of housing four people, but this figure may be as high as one rupee per room per month, or as low as 4 annas per room per month. Indeed, in many cases, a certain amount of accommodation is provided free, chiefly to Madrasis and Bilaspuris, and also to poor Hindustani women living alone.

21. The amount of sub-letting in the jute mill areas must be very small, while the occupation of rooms in the mill lines by tenants in other employ is not allowed, although this must go on undetected to a small extent.

22. Living in lines provided by the mill owners undoubtedly improves the worker's standard of living, and labour must miss :—(1) filtered water supply; (2) electric lighting; (3) *pucca* drainage; and the comfort of the *pucca* houses, when they return to their somewhat primitive villages. In an industrial centre, however, there are always temptations for the young that are not found in their up-country homes, such as gambling, drugs, etc.; and stronger and more energetic action on the part of the police could minimise these evil influences to a great extent.

#### IV.—Health.

23. The general health condition of workers is, on the whole, very good; and with the exception of malaria at certain seasons, and occasional cases of cholera, jute mill labour has been immune for many years from anything in the nature of an epidemic.

(iii) Working conditions in jute mills in Bengal must compare very favourably indeed with jute mills in Europe. The mills in this country have much more clear space, and as the process of manufacture is confined to the ground floor, it is a simple matter for the management to see that everything is kept as clean as possible.

(iv) The staple diet of the workers is rice, dhal, atta and vegetables, to which, in some cases, are added fish, eggs and milk. In the case of Mahommedans a certain amount of meat is consumed.

(v) Generally speaking the physique of the workers is fairly good. Those operatives who come from up-country, are usually sturdier than the Bengalis, or people who have been permanently settled in Bengal for a long number of years. The weavers, in particular, have very good physique.

(vii) Bad housing accommodation will increase mortality. The *bustees* in bazaars, owned by private landlords, are always congested and overcrowded. There is also a lack of drainage, which is bound to cause disease.

24. (i) At practically all mills, dispensaries are provided under the charge of a qualified Doctor, with perhaps one or two Assistants. These dispensaries, in most cases, are supervised by the Company's European Doctor, who pays periodical visits.

The whole cost of running these dispensaries is borne by the employers, and all workers are given free medical attention and free medicines.

25. The majority of workers nowadays take full advantage of the medical facilities provided. Women do not attend a dispensary for treatment as freely as men, but this is being gradually overcome; nowadays women are more willing to be vaccinated against smallpox or inoculated against cholera.

26. (i) Septic tank latrines are provided in practically all mills, while where workmen's houses are provided, similar latrines are installed. These septic tank latrines are built in accordance with Government regulations, so far as design and capacity are concerned. There are separate latrines for males and females. The effluent from these latrines is analyzed monthly by Government officers and reports are sent to the various mill agents.

While writing on the subject of latrines, it might be of special interest to give a short account of two improvement schemes which have recently been undertaken in two of the chief mill areas.

The first of these schemes is known as the Titaghur Sewerage Scheme, the work for which was put in hand in January, 1924, and completed by the end of August, 1927. The scheme was worked to full capacity until the end of 1927, when it was found that the land for irrigation was inadequate to absorb the effluent, and for a time the old system of trenching the nightsoil had to be reverted to. To remedy matters, an activated sludge or Simplex plant was adopted and duly installed, and the Titaghur Sewerage Scheme is now working to its full capacity. There is no doubt that this scheme is a decided asset to Titaghur district, and a step in the right direction towards improving the cleanliness of the drains and the health of the inhabitants. Titaghur district comprises an area of about two square miles, and a population of about 70,000, so that it is obviously somewhat congested. With the introduction of the sewerage system, nightsoil carts have been entirely eliminated. The total cost of the complete scheme amounted to Rs. 13,20,000, which sum was contributed by the mills, less one-third allowed by Government.

It is now proposed to give an account of the other scheme, viz., the Bhatpara Improvement Scheme, which covers three headings, viz. :—(1) Sewerage, (2) water supply, (3) town planning.

Bhatpara is a riparian municipality, situated on the left bank of the River Hooghly, about 24 miles north of Calcutta. The area of the municipality is approximately  $5\frac{1}{2}$  square miles.

The following figures show the growth of the population :—1891, 11,764 ; 1901, 21,464 ; 1911, 50,414 ; 1921, 65,609 ; 1929, 80,000 (estimated.)

The increase in population is due almost wholly to the development of the jute manufacturing industry, as is evident from the following figures, showing the number of looms working in the respective years :—1891, 420 looms ; 1901, 1,244 looms ; 1911, 5,697 looms ; 1921, 6,379 looms ; 1929, 8,987 looms.

The 1929 figure represents 17·2 per cent. of the loom power of the jute mills in Bengal.

The number of workers employed in the jute mills in Bhatpara is 49,000, and the number of workers employed in other industries using mechanical or electrical power is 1,321.

The municipality is, roughly, half-moon shaped, the western convex boundary being the River Hooghly. The railway, which runs north and south, virtually forms the eastern boundary, but the municipality extends in places to the east of the railway. The only main road, which runs through the municipality, follows the convex contour of the river at some distance from it, the space between the road and the river being occupied by jute mills. A narrow strip along the eastern side of the road, and portions towards the north and south of the municipality, are built upon in a haphazard and congested fashion, but the bulk of the interior land is undeveloped and has no proper road system.

A water supply system, to which the mills give a free supply of water, has been in existence for many years, and there is a system of surface drains of a total length of 19 miles, which, owing to insufficient fall, has proved inefficient. These represented the efforts to cope with the problem of water supply and sanitation in the first decade of the century, but with the subsequent rapid expansion of the jute industry, it came to be realized :—(1) That it was necessary that an efficient sewerage scheme should be laid down ; (2) that the water supply should be improved and extended ; and (3) that new roads should be constructed for the relief of congested areas.

After considerable delay, due chiefly to the difficulty of deciding on the scheme best suited to the needs of the municipality, work is now in progress on a combined scheme, based on the requirements of an eventual population of 125,000 people. The municipal water main has been laid, and the water supply scheme, with 23 miles of piping, will be in full operation early in 1930. The acquisition of land for the sewerage scheme is practically complete and the work of excavation has been started.

It is expected that the work will occupy four years. The scheme includes a series of new roads, meeting at a central circus, and one of these will be the main artery running north and south through the town. The total cost of the scheme is estimated at Rs. 21,10,000, one-third of which will be contributed by Government. The mills will contribute Rs. 11,50,000 and the remainder will be met out of the municipal funds.

Apart from the two schemes detailed above, other schemes in other districts are under consideration.

(ii) The supply of pure drinking water is one of the most important items in connection with industrial areas, and this is certainly the case so far as Calcutta jute mills are concerned. At all mills pure drinking water is supplied free of cost, and, apart from being available inside the mill proper, the supply is provided by means of taps and hydrants to workmen's houses, in many instances the supply extending throughout the whole bazaar. In comparatively recent times, many tube wells have been sunk by the mills, and these now total, in the whole of the jute mill area, something between 60 and 70 wells. The other method of water supply is filtration of the river water, the chief filters in commission being the Paterson and Jewell filters. The Jute Mills Association has an arrangement with the Director, Bengal Public Health Laboratory, to make monthly examinations of water, both from the tube wells and filters, and a perusal of the 1928 report indicates a very satisfactory state of affairs, so far as the supply of water in the jute mill areas is concerned.

(iii) At practically all mills there are bathing ghats on the river front, both inside and outside the compounds ; these are now made free use of at all times. At the same time, inside the compounds at many mills, bathing tanks are provided, while in many instances, bath sprays are also available in the workmen's lines.

Those workers not living in the lines, and the inhabitants of the bazaars generally, bathe in the river at public ghats.

27. (i) Supervision of health and sanitary measures is carried out by doctors and engineers employed by the mills, in co-operation with municipal sanitary inspectors. The latter send returns in this connection to the Bengal Public Health Department.

(iii) Preventive work is carried on systematically, including vaccination against smallpox and cholera inoculations at the particular seasons when such diseases are supposed to be prevalent.

On 13th September, 1929, the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, indicated that in connection with the evidence to be given by the Certifying Surgeon of Factories, the Royal Commission would probably make enquiries regarding the progress of vaccination and prophylactic inoculation amongst factory operatives; and he invited the co-operation of the Indian Jute Mills Association in the collection of the necessary figures. The committee of the Jute Mills Association undertook to collect from mills the particulars required by the Certifying Surgeon of Factories, and details have been forwarded on account of each mill, showing the number of employees who have been treated during the past three years for :—(1) Vaccinations; (2) anti-cholera inoculations; (3) bili-vaccine (cholera) inoculations; (4) typhoid and para-typhoid inoculations.

No doubt, Government will have prepared a full statement in this connection for the information of the Royal Commission.

29. (i) It is impossible for the Indian Jute Mills Association to give particulars in this connection, but the opinion is held that industrial disease does not apply so far as this particular industry is concerned.

(ii) The School of Tropical Medicine, to which institution the Indian Jute Mills Association subscribes Rs. 27,000 per annum, has in recent years made several searching investigations in regard to the prevalence of tropical diseases in the jute mill areas, and some years ago a special officer was deputed to carry out research work regarding hookworm disease. This work was proceeded with for some time, but so far the Indian Jute Mills Association has not been informed of the result of the investigations, and to all intents and purposes, active work in the mill areas appears to have been stopped. Recently, the Bengal Branch of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association has been dealing with the question of leprosy in the mill areas.

30. The Association understands that the Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, have been in correspondence with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in this connection, and that a letter has been forwarded to Government indicating that at this stage legislation for sickness insurance, so far as the jute mills are concerned, would be a practically impossible proposition. The chief reason for this, of course, is the constant migration of the workers.

31. (i) Until recently the question of maternity benefits has not seriously arisen, but when the recent strike in the jute mills took place, the matter was considered in connection with the terms of settlement as between the Association and the Government of Bengal. There is no doubt that in the case of most mills, maternity benefits were paid in some form or other, but no particular rules were laid down. The position now, however, is somewhat different, as a definite recommendation has been put forward to members by the Indian Jute Mills Association. The following details give a general idea of the direction in which mills are aiming so far as maternity benefits are concerned :—

A woman worker reports her condition to the departmental timekeeper, who then advises the assistant in charge. A form is completed and signed by the departmental assistant, and also by the mill manager. The woman's name is then removed from the ordinary wages book, and the completed form is handed over to her. This form is presented at the mill weekly by the woman or a relative and the payment is recorded thereon. Report of the birth is made by the sirdar, and in the event of any trouble or doubt, the mill doctor—a qualified man—will make enquiries.

There is no standardized form of remuneration, but payment is made weekly at the rate of Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per week for five weeks, at the mill office. The fifth payment being a special payment, must be sanctioned by the manager, when the condition of the woman will be reported to him. Should the woman be seriously ill after the birth of her child, her leave pay may be extended for a further period of two weeks, after which payment stops.

A special maternity book is kept by each department, with the particulars of each case entered up. When payments cease, the completed form is sent to the mill office and filed.

The maternity benefits apply only to those women who have been employed in the mill concerned for not less than six calendar months, and in this connection any sick leave during this time is not counted as absence, or as breaking the continuity of the above period. If during the time of payment of maternity benefits it becomes known to the manager that the person receiving such benefits is working elsewhere in any capacity for a wage, the payments from the company on account of maternity benefit immediately cease.

(iii) The Indian Jute Mills Association is not averse to legislation so far as maternity benefits are concerned, but, in view of mills generally having adopted some form of payment, the opinion is held that at this stage legislation is unnecessary.

34. (i) At practically all mills provision is made for refreshments and shelters, and with regard to creches, the Indian Jute Mills Association has the following remarks to make :—

In July of this year, the Chief Inspector of Factories for Bengal addressed the Association on the subject of admission of infants into factories, and the provision made for their protection in jute mills by means of creches. A copy of the Chief Inspector's letter was circulated to all members of the Association, and, in the light of the replies received, the position was dealt with as follows—(a) The names of the mills in which creches are at present in use ; the number of creches in each mill and the departments in which they are installed ; (b) the names of the mills in which creches have been tried and ultimately discarded, the period they were in use in each mill before being discarded, and the reasons for discarding them.

The committee's reference to members indicated clearly that creches are not at present in use in any of the mills comprising the Association ; and so far as can be ascertained, no experiments with creches have in the past been undertaken.

(c) The experience of mills regarding :—(1) The extent to which creches are appreciated and used ; (2) the attitude or objections of the women employees ; (3) the extent to which separate creches are necessary for the different castes ; (4) arrangements for supervision ; and (5) the benefits, if any, derived from the use of creches.

In view of the reply given to questions (a) and (b) above, these points do not in practice arise, and any expression of opinion with reference to them must, therefore, be theoretical. The view generally taken by members of the Jute Mills Association is that a system of creches would not be welcomed, and would, for various reasons, be made use of only to the extent to which the admission of infants to factories was otherwise prohibited. The question must, however, depend to a very large degree on the type of labour employed, and it is not one with reference to which it is possible to generalize.

(d) In comparison with past years, it is considered that there is a marked decrease in the number of infants and young children being brought into jute mills. If this is the case, to what reason or reasons can the decrease be attributed.

The replies received from members of the Indian Jute Mills Association on this point are conflicting. Some agree that a decrease in numbers is apparent, and attribute this to the better class of labour being employed, to improved housing conditions, and to the stricter control and selection made possible by the single shift system of working. Others state that no change has taken place, while, in one case, an increase in the number of infants and young children being brought into the mill is reported. Here again, it is not possible to make any definite statement in view of the numerous factors to be taken into consideration, viz., the caste and class of the female labour employed in the preparing and sewing departments ; the housing accommodation and the domestic arrangements of the labour force ; the birth rate, and the extent to which the practice of bringing children into the factory is discouraged, or otherwise, by the mill management.

(ii) Several mills have provided playgrounds, which, so far as can be ascertained, are taken full advantage of, but the Association has no further information to give under this particular heading. Many mills also provide free cinema entertainments for their workers.

(iii) There has, in recent years, been a movement on the part of a few mills to inaugurate health centres and baby clinics, and it seems very likely that this movement will spread very considerably in the near future.

It might be advisable at this stage to give details of the health centre and baby clinic at one of the mills in Titaghur district. This welfare scheme was inaugurated about six years ago, and has increased in popularity with the female workers ever since. The qualified lady in charge has gradually overcome the reticence and mistrust with which this venture was once held in the eyes of the workers.

In many cases the mothers do not bring their children to the clinic until these are very emaciated by lack of proper nourishment, and it is only with careful treatment and strict adherence to the instructions received that such children receive another lease of life. A chart is kept showing the progress of babies, and in the event of a minor illness occurring, the baby is immediately seen by the matron, who gives the necessary instructions to rectify the trouble.

Pamphlets relating to the benefits of maternity and child welfare are distributed among the people of various castes.

With regard to this particular clinic, the following is a summary of the work done during 1928 :—

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Total attendances at the clinic .. .. .                    | 10,177 |
| Daily average attendance at the clinic .. .. .             | 40     |
| New patients .. .. .                                       | 2,048  |
| Midwifery cases—calls to .. .. .                           | 6      |
| Visits to houses where there were newly-born babies.. .. . | 505    |

The work of vaccinating the children has proved quite successful, and as many parents now realize the benefits of these precautionary measures, they are quite willing to allow their babies to be vaccinated.

Shortly after this clinic at Titaghur was started, another on more or less the same lines was inaugurated at Kankinarrah, and the building was completed in October, 1926.

The centre is under the charge of a qualified European lady worker, who holds the Diploma of the London Board of Education for Health Visitors, as well as the Certificate of the Central Midwives' Board.

The work of welfare centres is mainly to promote, by educational means, a higher physical standard among the children of mill workers, and to reduce the existing high rate of infant mortality, which is attributed almost entirely to ignorance of simple hygiene. Classes in hygiene and child care are held for midwives and expectant mothers, and in addition sewing classes have been formed for young girls, whose parents are workers in the mills. In the case of the latter, a course of callisthenics and girl guide games has been added. Active propaganda work is also carried on by means of pamphlets published in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu, which convey simple instructions in child care, diet, etc., and the prevention of disease. Such pamphlets are distributed among women workers, who can either read themselves, or whose relatives can do so.

The lady worker in charge of the centre carries out a great deal of visiting in the lines, in houses where births are notified, and where women are unable to attend the welfare centre on account of illness.

The lady worker in charge, so far as medical attention to children is concerned, administers a few simple medicines for minor ailments, but all cases requiring medical attention are dealt with by the qualified mill doctor. In special cases, where children are under-nourished and sickly, free milk is given, as well as Viroi, Scott's Emulsion, etc.

All children visiting the clinic are bathed, and those under one year old are weighed periodically, and a record of such weighments kept.

It is noticeable that during the early stages of the welfare centre's activities, the number of women who attended varied very considerably, which fact was undoubtedly due to the novelty of the institution. Recent reports, however, indicate that the popularity of such welfare centres is very considerable, and that there are large numbers of women workers who display a genuine desire to learn more of child care.

As is well known, jute mill labour is migratory, a fact which makes it difficult for records to be kept of the physical progress of children born in the mill lines. There are, however, in the experience of the Jute Mills Association, many cases of children who have been under observation for periods varying from 2½ to 5 years, and there can be no doubt of the improvement in their physical condition.

At Bhatpara a Health Welfare Exhibition, financed chiefly by jute mill contributions, has been held annually for the last three years. The following extract from the last report of the municipality indicates the lines on which these exhibitions are run :—“The exhibition dealt with, amongst others, mother-craft and child welfare, and spread and control of principal epidemic and infectious diseases, such as cholera, small-pox, typhoid, dysentery, kala-azar and tuberculosis. Food-stuffs, dietary and vitaminology with models of sanitary and insanitary food-stalls were also exhibited. A new stall was opened dealing with leprosy, for which posters in Bengalee, English and Devnagri were kindly lent by Dr. E. Muir, M.D., and models of a whole family affected with leprosy, and a clawhand resulting from it, were exhibited. Three models were prepared locally by the municipal staff dealing with the insanitary condition of our villages, physical culture and sanitary and insanitary houses. Each stall was in charge of two volunteers who explained everything to the visitors.

The Social Service League also exhibited their charts and posters which were appreciated by the visitors.

A printed booklet, containing useful hints on sanitation and hygiene, and an essay on 'How to keep fit and healthy' in easy Bengalee, was freely distributed. Cinema shows, dealing with public health matters, etc., were arranged for daily, six hours' show being allotted for the Purdah Day. A baby show was also held and prizes given.

### VI.—Education.

On 5th August, 1929, the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, addressed the Indian Jute Mills Association as follows :—" I have the honour to inform you that Khan Bahadur Maulvi Tasadduq Ahmed, Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division, has been placed on deputation by the Government of Bengal, in the Department of Education, to enquire into the existing educational facilities given to the workers and their children in the various industrial and trade centres and tea plantations in the province, in connection with the impending visit of the Royal Labour Commission. I should be obliged by your kindly notifying the different constituent concerns under you, of the appointment of the Khan Bahadur, and requesting them to give him every facility in carrying out his work. As the matter is urgent, I would request that early action may be taken on this reference."

On receipt of this letter, all members of the association were advised accordingly, and on 24th September, the following letter was received from the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal :—" I have the honour to express my keen appreciation of the great assistance which the members of your association rendered to Khan Bahadur Maulvi Tasadduq Ahmed, the special officer deputed to enquire into the educational facilities existing for the labourers and their children in tea gardens, industrial areas and collieries, in connection with the Royal Labour Commission. The Khan Bahadur will always remember with great pleasure the unfailing courtesy, which he received wherever he went."

In these circumstances, it appears likely that a full report has already been prepared under the headings (40), (41) and (42), and it seems unnecessary for the association to deal with the heading " Education."

### VII.—Safety.

43. It is the opinion that the provisions in the Bengal Factories Rules, 1928, are quite adequate.

44. It has been impossible, in the short time allotted, to collect statistics in this connection from all the associated mills, but as a basis, a statement is attached hereto, showing the number of accidents that have occurred at a mill, the extent of which is 1,300 looms, during the five years July 1924, to June 1929. This statement may be summarized as follows :—

|                 | Total accidents<br>for five years. | Average<br>per year. | Incidence.         |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Fatal.. .. .    | 2                                  | .4                   | —                  |
| Serious .. .. . | 57                                 | 11.4                 | 1 per 782 workers. |
| Slight .. .. .  | 58                                 | 11.6                 | 1 per 768 workers. |
| Total .. .. .   | 117                                | 23.4                 | 1 per 381 workers. |

It will be observed from the statement that the reported number of slight accidents is increasing, and this is due to the fact that even the most trifling accidents are now reported to the factory inspector and the Workmen's Compensation Claims Bureau.

In the majority of cases, the workers make the most of the slightest injuries, in the hope of getting some compensation.

45. Of the accidents in the foregoing statement, 73 were caused by the injured person's own negligence or carelessness ; 20 were due to the negligence or carelessness of others, and 24 were purely accidental.

Accidents vary in character to such an extent that no definite causes can be given. They may be caused by the carelessness of another worker, ignorance on the part of the injured person, and by breaking rules regarding the interfering with machinery in motion.

46. " Safety first " propaganda is very difficult to put into operation, owing to the illiteracy and ignorance of the worker. It is impossible to prevent accidents altogether, but a lot can be done by the efficient guarding of machinery. Very good work in this direction has already been done in recent years by the Factory Inspection Department, but the association thinks it would be to the advantage of all concerned if this department would issue annually an analysis of all the accidents that have occurred in jute mills during the year. Accidents should be classified as fatal, serious and slight, and figures should be given showing the number of accidents at each separate type of machine. In the case of those machines at which accidents are found to occur most frequently, the actual part of the machine should be detailed. This would enable managers to set themselves to eliminate this particular type of accident, and give valuable information regarding accidents generally.

48. In all mills, a properly equipped surgery and dispensary, with a qualified Indian doctor in charge, is provided within the mill compound. All accident cases

are taken direct to the dispensary, where first aid is given and minor operations are performed. Serious cases, after receiving first aid, are immediately sent to the nearest hospital.

49. *Stringency of inspection and enforcement of regulations.*—This is adequate as regards the jute industry.

50. An analysis is attached, showing the time of day and the time of year when the accidents enumerated in the previous statement, occurred. It is difficult to draw any conclusions of value from this analysis, but it would appear to show that working by artificial light, at the end of the day, had some bearing on the cause of the accidents.

The working conditions generally inside a jute mill are very good. Lighting, both natural and artificial, is excellent, and as from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. of extra workers are provided for relieving purposes, the continuous working time, in both single and multiple shift mills, is not excessive.

*Accidents (Time of Occurrence).*

|          |      |      |      |       |       |       |       |      |      |      |      |       |
|----------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| *5.30    | 6.30 | 7.30 | 8.30 | 9.30  | 10.30 | 11.30 | 12.30 | 1.30 | 2.30 | 3.30 | 4.30 | *5.30 |
| *6.30    | 7.30 | 8.30 | 9.30 | 10.30 | 11.30 | 12.30 | 1.30  | 2.30 | 3.30 | 4.30 | 5.30 | *7.30 |
| 5        | 11   | 7    | 13   | 12    | 9     | 4     | 7     | 9    | 9    | 7    | 5    | 19    |
| Total .. |      |      |      |       |       |       |       |      |      |      |      | 117   |

*Accidents.*

|  |          |      |      |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
|  | 1924     | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1929 |
|  | †2       | 4    | 9    | 27   | 38   | †37  |
|  | Total .. |      |      |      |      | 117  |

**VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.**

It is not proposed under this heading to deal with the various subsidiary headings, but it is the desire of the Indian Jute Mills Association to state that the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 has up to now worked very smoothly indeed. All claims for compensation, so far as is known, are settled in an expeditious manner to the mutual satisfaction of employer and employee.

In January of this year the Indian Jute Mills Association through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was asked for an expression of opinion on certain proposed amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act. Sixteen questions were put forward for consideration and these after being examined by the Committee and after consultation with members of the Indian Jute Mills Association were answered in the following manner:—

1. *To what classes of employees if any should the Act be extended?*—Looking at the matter from a purely jute mill point of view no extension of the Act is necessary as all jute mill labour is at present covered by Schedule II. Certain members of the Association have, however, expressed an opinion on the general point raised by Government, and the Committee of the Chamber may find it useful to have these observations before them. Admittedly no great extension of the scope of the Act is at present possible if the principle of including only these persons employed in industries, which are both organized and hazardous, is adhered to. The principle is justified, however, only on the grounds of expediency and practicability, and as India's economic development continues, the classes of workmen which the principle excludes will gradually diminish, while the claims of certain classes to inclusion within the Act will correspondingly increase. For the present it is certainly impracticable to extend the Act to cover all classes of manual labourers, particularly unorganized rural labour; but the Committee feel that by definite additions to Schedule II, the benefits of the Act might now gradually be extended to all workmen engaged in branches of industry which are sufficiently organized to justify the extension.

2. *Should any provision be introduced for securing workmen against possible loss by reason of the inability of their employer to pay any compensation that may be due?*—The Committee are not aware of any single instance of failure on the part of a workman to secure compensation by reason of the inability of his employer to pay, though on this point Commissioners of Workmen's Compensation will be able to speak with greater authority. Under present conditions, when the Act applies only to well organized industries, there would appear therefore to be no urgent necessity for legislation in this direction. At the same time, the absence up to the present of cases of inability to pay does not necessarily mean that a similar satisfactory state of affairs will continue, for the possibility of default will undoubtedly increase as the scope of the Act is extended. The Committee are accordingly in favour of protecting the interests of workmen by some form of legislation, and it is with regret that they note that the Government of India are inclined to regard as impracticable a scheme for compulsory insurance by employers coming within the Act. In the case of insured

\* Artificial Light.

† Only half-year's record.



employers, workmen, it will be noted, are afforded a measure of protection under Section 14 of the present Act, and unless the administrative difficulties, to which Government refer in paragraph 3 of their letter, are insurmountable, this Association would welcome legislation making it necessary for employers coming within the Act to insure against compensation claims. And if the principle of including only persons employed in organized branches of industry is maintained, the Committee do not quite appreciate how obstacles to compulsory insurance under the Act arise.

3. *To what extent, if any, should recurring payments be substituted for the lump sums at present payable under the Act?*—The Committee of the Association are inclined to favour continuance of the present system of lump sum payments, though they appreciate the arguments which can be brought forward in favour of pensions. They are aware of no strong desire on the part of their labour for any change in the present system, which has worked with the greatest smoothness and satisfaction during the years for which the Act has been in force. Schedule I of the Act provides for the payment of lump sums in cases of permanent partial disablement, and enables the injured workman to return from the jute mill to his village, where he may buy a plot of land or engage in some business, and thus be in receipt of a recurring income with the capital under his own control. The present system also enables the employer to settle claims rapidly and without the difficulties and litigation which would be liable to arise under a system of recurring payments. On the other hand, as is indicated by the Government of India, the payments of pensions, if it could be smoothly effected, might result in the receipt of substantially greater benefit for an equivalent amount of expenditure; but this argument pre-supposes, in the case of permanent disablement, improvidence on the part of the worker concerned, and, in the case of a deceased worker, either ignorance or improvidence on the part of those to whom the compensation is payable. So far as the latter case is concerned the Committee understand that the Workmen's Compensation Amendment Bill\* now before the Central Legislature, aims, *inter alia*, at protecting the interests of minors and of female dependants by giving Commissioners discretion to invest, apply or otherwise deal with the compensation payable, as he may think fit. The Committee consider that sufficient protection will thus be afforded, and they are not prepared to admit the improvidence of the average adult workman, or to agree that the interests and wishes of a majority, and the convenience and security of the employer, should be sacrificed to the interests of an improvident minority. Should Government, however, consider it absolutely necessary to provide for the payment of pensions in certain cases, this Association would recommend that the necessary discretion be placed in the hands of the Commissioners of Workmen's Compensation.

4. *Should the scales of compensation be enhanced either for the more poorly paid workmen or generally?*—Replying to this question from the point of view of jute mills, the Committee think they may fairly say that, in general, the present scales of compensation are adequate, whether in the case of death, permanent disablement or temporary disablement. In so far as the more highly paid workers are concerned, the compensation paid is certainly liberal, and the scales for these workmen should not, in any circumstances, be enhanced. But the question of increasing the scale of compensation to the more poorly paid jute mill workers appears to merit some consideration. The suggestion has been made by certain members of this Association that more liberal rates of compensation might be introduced for the benefit of workers earning Rs. 15 per month or less; and by others, that the minimum "assumed wage" under Schedule IV might be fixed at Rs. 15 per mensem. It is questionable, however, whether either of these suggestions could be recommended generally, for an increase in the amount of compensation would increase the difficulties of extending the Act, and it appears to the Committee more desirable that the scope of the Act should be widened than that the benefits obtained by a few should be enhanced.

5. *Should the waiting period be reduced either generally, or in the case of those workmen who are disabled for more than 10 days, and if so, to what extent?*—Members of this Association are of opinion that the present waiting period of 10 days involves no great hardship in the large majority of cases, and they consider that its present length constitutes the most equitable compromise between the claims of the worker upon his employer on the one hand, and the protection of the employer against malingering on the other hand. A reduction in the waiting period, besides materially increasing the administrative work of the employer by reason of claims in respect of trifling injuries, would undoubtedly strengthen the temptation to mangle, and until efficient medical inspection becomes a simpler matter than it at present is in the case of many employers of labour, any encouragement in this direction is to be deprecated.

The main object of a waiting period, whether 10 days, 7 days or less, is to discourage malingering by making the workman bear the loss of wages himself during the first few days of incapacity; and in the case of a minor injury entailing say ten or eleven

\* Since passed.

days absence from work, the Indian workman may reasonably be expected to do so by reason of the fact that he usually has one week's back wages to draw. But as Government point out in their letter, the waiting period operates to diminish the amount of compensation payable to workmen disabled for comparatively long periods, and it is here, if at all, that hardship arises. Government refer in this connection to the possibility of introducing "dating back" provisions; they mention that the disadvantage of the system is that the man who returns to work on the tenth day receives no compensation, whereas if his disablement lasts for one more day, he receives compensation for a week. The incentive to make the period of the injury exceed ten days would thus be emphasised, and on this ground the Association does not favour the introduction of the "dating back" system as a general rule. But this objection would not apply with the same force to a suitably modified form of the "dating back" system, designed to increase the gross amount of compensation paid to a seriously but temporarily disabled workman. If, for instance, it were feasible to arrange that a workman disabled for three weeks or more would receive compensation from the second or fourth day of disablement, this Association would have no strong objections to raise; for the longer period of disablement would make it easier to expose malingering, while the actual tendency to mangle would be less than in the case of a minor injury by reason of the difficulty which the worker would experience in maintaining himself for three full weeks on half pay or less.

6. *Should the list of relatives entitled to claim compensation be enlarged?*—The list of relatives who come within the definition of "dependant" under Section 2 (1) (d) of the present Act is reasonably comprehensive, and, so far as the Committee are aware, it has covered the vast majority of cases without causing hardship. But as Government point out in their letter, there is the possibility that the Commissioner may be compelled on occasion to grant the whole of the compensation to relatives who are in no way dependent, and that he may find himself unable to give compensation to other relatives who are in fact dependent but who do not come within the definition. The Committee are of opinion that in these circumstances the Commissioner should have discretion to go beyond the present definition of "dependant," and to distribute the compensation to those who, he is satisfied, were dependent upon the deceased; they consider that a provision to this effect might with advantage be incorporated in the Act, and they also recommend the addition to the list contained in Section 2 (1) (d) of "widowed sister" and "widowed daughter."

7. *Should proof of dependence be required in order to enable a relative to claim compensation?*—This Association is very strongly of opinion that claims to compensation should be subject to the claimant's ability to prove some degree of dependence; and certain members have recommended that, failing such proof of dependence, compensation should be withheld altogether. The Committee think it is logical to make dependence a necessary condition of the right to compensation, but it appears probable that justice would be best served by leaving the actual distribution to the discretion of the Commissioner.

8. *Should the compensation payable vary with the number of dependants and with the extent of their dependence on the deceased workman?*—If the underlying principles of Workmen's Compensation are admitted, it may reasonably be argued from the point of view of the workman and his dependants that compensation should vary with the number of dependants and with the extent of dependence; but a provision of this nature, if carried to its logical conclusion, would be impracticable from the point of view of the employer, and in many respects unjust to him. For if the compensation were to vary directly with these two factors, it would be illogical to impose a limit to the amount payable in any particular case, and this surely is not a proposal to be contemplated seriously. It would place employers of labour to an unreasonable extent in the hands of the Commissioners, with whom, presumably, the responsibility of ascertaining the number of dependants and of estimating the extent of dependence would rest; it would impose upon the employer an almost unlimited liability, and in the case of an insured employer would interfere seriously with the relationship between him and his insurance company. If, on the other hand, the suggestion is to prescribe a maximum for the amount of compensation payable in any particular case, at what figure and on what basis is this maximum to be fixed? To fix the limit above the present rate of compensation would be to increase the scale of compensation payable in certain cases, and the Committee have already argued against any such increase; and to fix the limit at the present rate would merely operate to diminish the amount of compensation payable in the case of few dependants or a small degree of dependence, which, although naturally acceptable to employers, would be very undesirable from the point of view of employees. Even with a limit, the proposal would obviously introduce serious administrative problems in view of the difficulty of estimating the extent of dependence under conditions such as those at present prevailing in India; it would also tend to defeat the objects of Section 8 of the present Act, for the employer would not be in a position to deposit compensation until such

time as the question of dependence was decided. The Committee trust therefore that the Chamber will offer strong opposition to the suggestion that compensation should vary with the number of dependants and the extent of dependence, and that they will point out the desirability of compensation bearing a fixed ratio to earning capacity, which is at least a measure of the relationship which existed between the employer and the deceased workman.

9. *Should Section 12 be amended :—(a) so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the person directly employing the workmen in every case, or (b) so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the principal, or (c) in any other manner ?*—The main objection to the law as it at present stands is that referred to by the Government of India, namely, that neither principal or contractor can, in the absence of an express contract governing the point, secure indemnification from a sub-contractor, though it is open to the workman to decide in a particular case which of the parties he is going to hold ultimately liable. Amendment of Section 12 is therefore desirable, and the primary object of any amending legislation should be in the direction of specifying clearly what party is to be sued for compensation. Members of this Association generally are of opinion that the Act should be amended so as to place liability in every case on the person directly employing the workmen, and they are opposed to the suggestion that contractors and sub-contractors should be legally entitled to indemnification by the principal; always provided, of course that there is nothing in the law to prevent specific contracts being made between the principal, the contractor and the sub-contractor, independently of the Act. The main advantage of this position would be that the principal could make arrangements to accept liability in respect of steadily contracted labour, such as jute and coal unloading labour, and would at the same time be in a position to refuse liability in respect of sporadic labour, over which he has no control. Reference is made in Government's letter to the fact that contractors who are responsible for the employment of labour have little or no control over working conditions. This may be to some extent true; but, on the other hand, the principal has no control over the labour so employed and experience would appear to indicate that the majority of accidents do not occur through defects in working conditions, but through carelessness on the part of the workmen or through inadequate supervision.

10. *Should any penalty be provided in the Act for failure to comply with Section 16 ?*—A provision of this nature would chiefly affect uninsured employers of labour, as Mutual Indemnity and Insurance Companies at present undertake to submit the returns called for under Section 16 of the Act on behalf of their insured employers; and presumably it is mainly, if not entirely, uninsured employers who fail to supply the required returns. The provision of a penalty would therefore form an additional inducement to insure against compensation claims, and is desirable on that account; but the penalty should be leviable only where gross negligence or intentional default is established.

11. *Should employers be required to submit returns of accidents in respect of which compensation has not been paid, and if so, to what extent should this provision apply ?*—The objections to a provision of this nature enumerated in paragraph 12 of Government of India's letter are, in the opinion of the Committee, convincing, apart from the almost intolerable burden which the provision would impose upon employers of labour. The main advantage of enlarging the scope of the Act in this connection would be to enable Government to judge of the extent to which insured persons succeed or do not succeed in obtaining compensation, but, as pointed out by Government, it would be extremely difficult to define the accidents in respect of which the employer was liable to pay compensation and did not do so. It might, however, be feasible to arrange for returns to be made only where compensation for death or disablement lasting more than 10 days is debarred under Section 3 (b) and 3 (c) of the Act.

12. *Should a dependant claiming compensation be relieved of the necessity of approaching the employer for settlement of his claim ?*—In view of Government's explanation of the present position, the Committee see no reason why in the event of an employer failing to deposit compensation, the dependant of a deceased worker should not be entitled to apply to the Commissioner direct, but care should be taken to ensure that notice of the accident reaches the employer, and that his failure to deposit compensation is not necessarily construed as a repudiation of his liability to pay compensation. No change, however, should be introduced which relieves an injured workman of the necessity of first approaching the employer for settlement of his claim.

13. *What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that dependants who may have valid claims for compensation, do not lose compensation through ignorance of their rights ?*—Members of the Association agree to the suggestion made by the Government of India in paragraph 14 of their letter, namely, that employers should be required to report all fatal accidents to the Commissioner, who would then be in a position to

enquire into cases where compensation had not been deposited. Moreover, it is presumed that while a Commissioner is prevented by Section 22 of the Act from initiating proceedings on his own motion—and this is a position which the Committee consider should be maintained—the Commissioner has freedom to draw the attention of dependants to their right under the Act. It might also assist if notices explaining the rights of dependants to compensation were prominently displayed at all public works, at Municipal Offices and at Post Offices. The Committee, however, deprecate the suggestion that Inspectors of Factories and Mines should be authorised to prefer complaints.

14. *Should employees be required to maintain a register of relatives of their workmen?*—The Committee very much regret to note that the Government of India are inclined to favour this suggestion, and they trust that the Committee of the Chamber will strongly oppose it. In the first place, the additional labour which would be imposed upon employers in initiating and maintaining the register would be out of all proportion to any advantage which might accrue. The register could never be regarded as reliable, and might by reason of incompleteness or of erroneous entries be actually detrimental to the interests of certain dependants. The suggestion is a thoroughly impracticable one, not only so far as unorganized industries are concerned, but also for factories, mines, railways, etc., because of the frequent and numerous changes which occur in the personnel of the labour force. And it seems unreasonable to impose this burden on these industries in which cases of non-payment of compensation are comparatively rare, just because their superior organization makes the suggestion a less impracticable one, whereas other less organized trades, in which the chances of non-payment are greater, escape.

15. *Should Commissioners be empowered to call on employers depositing inadequate compensation for fatal accidents, to make a further deposit?*—This appears to be a very reasonable proposal, provided the total amount of the deposit called for does not exceed the amount of compensation payable, as calculated on the deceased's "assumed wage." The Committee understand that Commissioners have in practice called upon employers to deposit the correct amount, and they see no objection to the amendment of the Act in conformity with this practice.

16. *Should provision be made for the suspension of distribution by the Commissioner pending disposal of an appeal against his decision?*—The Committee recommend the amendment of Section 8 (1) of the Act on these lines for, here again, Commissioners do in the majority of cases withhold payment of compensation pending disposal of appeals. The change suggested will not therefore involve any departure from the present practice.

## IX.—Hours.

### A.—Factories.

55. (i) When the Factories Act of 1912 came into force on the 1st July of that year it was decided more or less unanimously by the Jute Mills in Calcutta and district, after a great deal of discussion, that 13½ hours per day would be worked, with only such changes in the then existing shift system as were necessary to meet the requirements of the new Act.

At that time there was a fairly general feeling in favour of working an 11-hours day with a single shift of adult workers and a double shift of children. From the point of view of the management at the works, the single shift presented a strong inducement as against any other system of working; but apart from this altogether, there were mills in favour of both single shift and multiple shift working, due no doubt to the particular districts of the mills, and the particular class of labour which these mills had to deal with.

During the period 1912 to 1922, several mills changed from multiple shift to single shift working, and in 1922, when further legislation resulted in the Factories Act of 1912 being modified, new rules and regulations came into force on the 1st July, 1922. In accordance with these new rules, mills are not permitted to work any adult more than 11 hours on any one day, or more than 60 hours per week. So far as half-time workers the minimum age limit was raised from 9 to 12 years, the maximum working hours remaining unaltered at 6 hours per day. This change, however, merely meant a re-arrangement of shifts, without in any way increasing the number of half-time workers employed.

The position at the moment, so far as the mills in the Indian Jute Mills Association are concerned, is that 50 per cent. of the total loomage are working under the single shift system and 50 per cent. under the multiple shift system, the exact loomage figures being 25,256 looms on single shift, and 25,265 looms on the multiple shift system.

The present agreement between members of the Jute Mills Association is to work 60 hours per week, and there are two methods of working this agreement:—(1) single shift; (2) double shift.

The *single shift mills* work 60 hours every week, made up of five days of 11 hours each and one day of 5 hours; theoretically each worker operates for these hours, but in actual practice, the mills employ anything from 10 to 15 per cent. of extra hands for purposes of relief.

So far as single shift mills are concerned, there is, of course, no complicated system of shifts, the workers operating as under:—From 5.30 a.m. to 11 a.m., equals  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours; from 1.30 p.m. to 7 p.m., equals  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours, a total of 11 hours per day. And to make 60 hours per week, these mills run five days of 11 hours each, and 5 hours on Saturday, the latter being from 5.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

With regard to *double shift mills*, attached hereto is a diagram shewing the general arrangement for multiple shift working; and this diagram may be taken as a basis for all mills which are working on this particular system.

The hours of labour are from 5.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., worked, as the diagram shows, on a system of shifts. The shift system for daily workers is divided into three shifts, termed Nos. A, B and C shifts, which are worked as follows:—A and B shifts start at 5.30 a.m., and continue until 9 a.m., a period of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. A is then relieved by C and has a period of one hour for breakfast. A shift on resuming work at 10 a.m., takes the place of B which has worked from 5.30 a.m., a period of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The workers of B shifts are now free from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. At 2 p.m. B shift relieves C which goes off for tiffin from 2 to 3 p.m. C shift resumes work at 3 p.m., and works till 6 p.m., being relieved by A which works from 6 to 7 p.m., so that each of the respective shifts works a period each day as under:—A shift,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  hours; B shift  $9\frac{1}{2}$  hours; C shift, 8 hours.

The details given above do not entirely coincide with the diagram attached, because each shift is given a spell of electric light working in rotation.

Extra workers are also employed to the extent of being sufficient for relieving those who require to leave the mill for any particular reason.

Piece workers, the majority of whom are adult males, are also employed on the shift system, but in their case, a working day is one of 11 hours, and five shifts are employed. The system is that four shifts start work at 5.30 a.m. The first relief arrives at 6.30 a.m. for a period of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, and this continues all morning until each of the four shifts has had, consecutively,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours rest. No. 5 shift, which has worked from 6.30 a.m., is now free for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, and on resuming after that period of rest, the same relief routine is gone through. The shifts, however, only get one hour's rest in the afternoon, and on resuming work, continue until 7 p.m.

The working day of 11 hours is thus broken up into three periods, so that labour generally has long intervals of rest, and by no means, as many think, a spell of continuous work.

(ii) There is no overtime work. Previous to 1st July, 1929, any broken time caused by strikes or holidays, was allowed to be made up, but since 1st July, in accordance with the agreement arrived at by the Indian Jute Mills Association, there is now no making up of lost time.

(iii) Workers are only on call during the actual period they are at work.

56. The days worked per week are regulated by the Indian Jute Mills Association; or, in other words, production, as far as possible, is kept in line with the demand for jute goods.

As an instance of this, it will perhaps be of interest to detail below how the Indian Jute Mills have worked for a period of years, viz:—

1909—Mills worked five days per week January–September, and six days per week October–December.

1910—Mills worked six days per week January–August, and five days per week September–December.

1911—Mills worked five days per week January–September, and 80 per cent of the mills worked four days per week October–December.

1912—80 per cent. of the mills worked five days per week January–June, and six days per week July–December. On 1st July, 1912, the new Factories Act came into force, which embodied 81 hours working per week, instead of 90 hours.

*Notes.*—It will be assumed from this, of course, that all mills were at that time working on double shift.

1913—Mills worked six days per week throughout the year.

1914—Mills worked six days per week January–March. 81 per cent. of mills worked five days per week April–September and six days per week October–December.

1915—Mills worked six days per week throughout the year.

1916—Mills worked six days per week throughout the year.

1917—Mills worked six days per week January–March and five days per week April–December.

1918—Mills worked as follows:—Six days per week from 18th January to 9th November, 1918; five days per week from 10th November to 22nd November, 1918; four days per week from 25th November, 1918 to 8th January, 1919.

1919—Mills worked as follows :—Four days per week from 1st to 15th January, five days per week from 15th January to 31st March, four days per week April–December.

1920—Mills worked as follows :—Five days per week January–March, six days per week April–December.

1921—Mills worked as follows :—Five days per week January–March, four days per week April–December.

Since then, up to 1st July, 1929, all mills in the membership of the association have worked 54 hours per week, this applying to both single and double shift mills. In November, 1928, however, owing to an obvious increased demand for jute goods, and also owing to competition both abroad and on the banks of the Hooghly, the Indian Jute Mills Association decided, as from 1st July, 1929, to increase working time to 60 hours per week, and this is being worked on the undernoted lines :—

Single-shift mills—five days of 11 hours and one day of 5 hours, 60 hours per week.

Double-shift mills work as follows :—One week of 4 days of 13½ hours, 54 hours ; and one week of 4 days of 13¼ hours and one day of 12 hours, 66 hours, making a total of 120 hours per fortnight, of 60 hours per week, which means that both single and double shift mills are producing on exactly the same basis.

The Indian Jute Mills Association cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which might force those mills on the multiple shift system to adopt the system of single shift. It is undoubtedly a fact that single shift working is suitable to certain districts, but it is likewise a well established fact that certain districts, for many reasons, prefer to adhere to the system of multiple shift working.

In 1927, in his report to the Local Government, the Chief Inspector of Factories recommended that the Factories Act should be amended to meet certain difficulties, and prevent various irregularities that had been experienced. The following amendments were proposed and put before the Government of India, viz. :—(a) The multiple shift system should be made illegal ; (b) the working hours for women and children to be limited to between 6 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. ; (c) the working hours for women to be limited to 10 hours daily ; (d) the working hours of the mill machinery to be limited to 11 hours daily.

The local government put the above proposals before the Chamber of Commerce, who forwarded them to the Indian Jute Mills Association for consideration, and undernoted is the record of the consensus of opinion :—

|                | In favour.<br>per cent. | Against.<br>per cent. | Neutral.<br>per cent. |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) .. ..      | 45·17                   | 52·41                 | 2·42                  |
| (b) and (c) .. | 11·78                   | 85·80                 | 2·42                  |
| *(d) .. ..     | 17·00                   | 52·41                 | 2·42                  |

\*Note—With regard to (d), some members of the association refrained from voting.

The percentage in favour of (a) represents very nearly that of the mills already working on single shift.

As the result of this opinion, Government took no action, and it is to be hoped, as already indicated, that no action in this connection will be taken.

As previously stated, 50 per cent. of the total loomage on the river have adhered to double shift working, and so far as can be gathered, it is the intention to continue working on this system.

From a commercial point of view, it is admitted that the system of multiple shift is not an economic proposition ; but in districts like Titaghur, Budge-Budge and Bhatpara, where this system is being worked, there would undoubtedly be very serious trouble if single shift working was to be introduced. Those working on double shift undoubtedly earn lower wages, in comparison with mills operating on the single shift system, but the hours of labour are less, and this is one of the chief arguments to be put forward. Another very important point and one which the Indian Jute Mills Association cannot impress too strongly, is the question of unemployment, and it is an admitted fact that unemployment is very prevalent in certain of the jute mill areas. Should those mills, working at present on double shift adopt the system of single shift, it would mean, automatically, approximately 50,000 people would be immediately thrown out of employment ; and this, it must be admitted, would be a very serious matter indeed.

As already indicated, there are points in favour of both systems of working, both from the view of labour and from the view of the management, and it should therefore be left to individual mills to decide as to how working operations should be conducted.

The chief inspector of factories has, on various occasions, complained that the inspection staff has found it impossible to check the register books of those mills on multiple shift. This statement the Indian Jute Mills Association emphatically contradicts, and there are several groups on the river who have proved, time and

again, that this is not the case. If certain groups on double shift working can prove this conclusively, it should apply to all, and it seems rather to be a question of increasing the inspection staff. Undoubtedly, from the factory inspector's point of view, single shift working makes checking very easy, but this is surely no reason for legislation towards making those mills, at present on multiple shift, adopt the single shift system. It is interesting to note that at one mill in the membership of the association—Union South—the system of working was recently changed from single to double shift at the request of the workers themselves.

57. (i) The restriction under the Factories Act to a sixty hour week has, undoubtedly, been very beneficial to labour. Workers have more leisure, especially at week-ends, and general efficiency has been considerably increased.

(ii) The restriction has had little or no effect on the jute industry, the increase in the efficiency of the workers making up for the restriction in working hours.

58. The effect of restricting the daily limit to 11 hours is hardly noticeable in multiple shift mills, where the majority of workers, i.e., time workers, do not work more than 9½ hours per day.

59. Here, again, the Indian Jute Mills Association cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which would curtail present working hours, and it is to be hoped that no action in this connection will be taken at the present time. The Indian jute mill worker undoubtedly prefers starting work in the early morning, and looks forward to a period of rest during the heat of the day. It may be argued that this does not apply in the case of those mills working on multiple shift, but against this argument it has to be kept in mind that the operative has short spells of working, and is in a position, as a rule, to choose the periods of rest that best suit his individual domestic arrangements.

60. (i) (a) In all mills, both on the multiple and single shift system of working, relieving hands are provided, equalling at least 10 per cent of the total number of employees, which means that 10 per cent. of the workers are always resting during the working period.

(b) So far as single shift mills are concerned, there is, apart from the number of relieving hands, a spell of 2½ hours in the middle of each working day for a period of rest; and during these 2½ hours the machinery is silent. So far as double shift mills are concerned, all workers, as the diagram of shifts discloses, have a generous allowance for recess.

(ii) In the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association, the existing law is quite suitable, but provision should be made to allow for extra hours for cleaning, repairs and maintenance work.

(iii) The hours worked at present under both systems are the most suitable from the workers' point of view.

(iv) All workers have at least one holiday per week, and in the mills working under the multiple shift system, all—except a few, required for cleaning and repairs—have from two to three full holidays each week-end. In addition these weekly holidays, other holidays are observed, these being on the occasion of the principal religious festivals, both Hindu and Mahomedan.

61. (i) Sunday is a day of rest, and no work is done on that day, except in case of emergency. Multiple shift mills are closed one week on Friday, Saturday and Sunday; and the next week on Saturday and Sunday alternately. Repair work and cleaning are carried out on Fridays and Saturdays each alternate week, and the only people employed on Sundays are boiler attendants, electric engine drivers, and filter plant attendants. Each of these workers is given a day of rest every fortnight, and the same applies to workers engaged in the transport of goods, as, according to law all persons must get one day of rest every fortnight.

In those mills working on the system of single shift work ceases at 10.30 a.m. every Saturday, and is not resumed until 5.30 a.m. on the following Monday morning.

(ii) It is the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association that the law as it at present stands, is suitable, and that no alteration should be made.

62. Exemption from the 60 hours per week, although not specifically permitted under the Act, is sanctioned on application by the Mill to the Factory Inspection Department, in respect of workers who come under the heading of "maintenance staff." These workers may be classified as follows:—(1) Boiler attendants; (2) electric engine drivers; (3) pump attendants; (4) mistries; (5) General outside staff.

Full advantage is taken of these exemptions, as rope repairing or repairs to machinery, after hours, can be undertaken without infringing the law; that is to say, that the workers detailed above can operate, say, for 14 hours on any particular day in case of emergency, but the total hours per week must not exceed 66 and one full day of 24 hours off work every 14 days.

Workers engaged in transporting jute, gunny bales and stores, also come under this head, and exemption for these workers is the same as for the maintenance staff.

## X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

### A.—Factories.

81. So far as can be ascertained, the 1922 Act has had no effect on employment, in a general sense.

82. The admission of infants to factories has been discussed at various times, and it appears to be difficult, under the circumstances, to alter existing arrangements. The women, who work in the mills, must have their young children with them to feed and keep under observation. Apart from this, however, the admission of infants to factories is a matter which rests entirely within the jurisdiction of the Chief Inspector of Factories, and if, in his opinion, it is dangerous for the children to be inside any particular department, he may prohibit their admission. So far as the Indian Jute Mills Association can gather, the presence of children in the mills has never been seriously questioned, and the opinion is held in many quarters that the children are much better off being with their mothers inside the mill, than being left with relatives in the bazaar.

83. The regulations for women's work are probably more suitable for women in the mills working multiple shift than in those mills working the single shift system. Women under the former system have longer periods of rest during the day, shorter hours, and more days of rests during the week.

84. (i) Regarding the suitability of regulations affecting children, the hours worked are short, six hours being their full working day. Four hours at a stretch is the longest working period, and the shortest working period is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

(ii) Ages vary from 12 to 14 years, but many of these children try very hard to get employment before they reach the specified age. In all cases half-timers are certified for employment by the Government Certifying Surgeon.

85. There is no doubt that children try to find double employment, and invariably succeed in doing so in districts where mills are situated close together. They are encouraged in this by their parents, and also by the sirdars who employ them, but the mill authorities try to prevent this as far as possible. The parents of the children encourage them to work double in two mills, so that they may earn more money, while the sirdars also encourage the system as they probably make more money out of these children, by promising to keep quiet and not report double employment to the authorities concerned.

86. The preparing side of the work in a jute mill does not call for highly skilled labour, and apprenticeship is therefore not required, a few weeks at any of the machines being long enough to make the worker proficient. It is certainly the case that so far as weavers are concerned, this class of labour is skilled, but, generally speaking, weavers become proficient very quickly.

With regard to mechanics, joiners, blacksmiths, etc., no specified time is served as an apprenticeship. These particular men start work as boys, and are paid a nominal wage until they become of use. There is no system of regular apprenticeship such as at home, the result being that although the boys in Indian jute mills get on much faster, they are not so highly trained as they might be.

87. There is no "blind alley" employment in jute mills, and none of the children are dismissed on reaching full age. What usually happens is that they simply step up to higher-paid jobs. When vacancies for sirdars occur, the workers with the longest records of service receive consideration, and, if at all suitable, are promoted.

88. It appears to be the general opinion that young adults and children on the double shift system have some advantage over those mills working on single shift, the reasons being (1) shorter hours; (2) longer periods of rest; (3) more holidays.

At the same time this statement should not be accepted as general, as there are in certain districts, certain classes of labour who have their own ideas as to both single and multiple shift working. One point to be kept prominently in mind is that the worker on single shift earns more money, which, of course, is a very important factor.

89. Women and children, who work in factories not subject to the Act, should have some protection, and no doubt it would be advisable to extend the Act for their benefit.



## XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Wages for both time and piece workers vary considerably in accordance with the situation of the mill and the particular system of working, but the under-noted figures for a mill of 1,000 looms may be taken as a reliable average for a mill working on the multiple shift system :—

*Statement of Average Weekly Wages.*

| Department.                   | No. of hands. | Hours worked. |         |         | Average wages per worker. |             |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------------------------|-------------|
|                               |               | Hrs. 11       | Hrs. 9½ | Hrs. 8½ | 4-day week.               | 5-day week. |
|                               |               |               |         |         | Rs. as. p.                | Rs. as. p.  |
| <b>Batching—</b>              |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 1             | —             | 1       | —       | 11 0 0                    | 13 13 0     |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 19            | —             | 13      | 6       | 4 13 0                    | 6 2 6       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 609           | —             | 406     | 203     | 2 12 9                    | 3 9 9       |
| <b>Sacking preparing—</b>     |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 2             | —             | 2       | —       | 8 13 0                    | 11 10 0     |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 36            | —             | 24      | 12      | 5 0 6                     | 6 3 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 588           | —             | 392     | 196     | 2 7 9                     | 3 3 6       |
| <b>Hessian preparing—</b>     |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 2             | —             | 2       | —       | 9 5 0                     | 11 10 0     |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 33            | —             | 22      | 11      | 5 5 6                     | 6 3 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 554           | —             | 369     | 185     | 2 7 6                     | 3 2 6       |
| <b>Sacking spinning—</b>      |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 2             | —             | 2       | —       | 7 8 0                     | 9 12 6      |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 39            | —             | 8       | 31      | 4 12 3                    | 6 2 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 810           | —             | 278     | 532     | 2 9 6                     | 3 4 9       |
| <b>Hessian spinning—</b>      |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 2             | —             | 2       | —       | 7 8 0                     | 9 12 6      |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 41            | —             | 12      | 29      | 4 12 3                    | 6 1 3       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 745           | —             | 286     | 459     | 3 0 3                     | 3 14 0      |
| <b>Sacking winding—</b>       |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head Sirdar warp ..           | 1             | 1             | —       | —       | 5 0 0                     | 6 11 0      |
| „ „ cop .. ..                 | 1             | 1             | —       | —       | 6 14 0                    | 8 15 0      |
| „ „ beaming .. ..             | 1             | 1             | —       | —       | 7 14 0                    | 10 0 0      |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 2             | 2             | —       | —       | 4 6 6                     | 6 0 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 142           | 136           | —       | 6       | 4 9 6                     | 5 1 3       |
| <b>Hessian winding—</b>       |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar warp ..           | 1             | 1             | —       | —       | 6 14 0                    | 8 15 0      |
| „ „ cop .. ..                 | 1             | 1             | —       | —       | 6 14 0                    | 10 8 6      |
| „ „ beaming .. ..             | 2             | 2             | —       | —       | 7 8 0                     | 9 10 0      |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 6             | 6             | —       | —       | 4 15 0                    | 6 11 0      |
| „ workers .. ..               | 377           | 372           | —       | 5       | 4 8 6                     | 5 6 0       |
| <b>Sacking weaving—</b>       |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 2             | 2             | —       | —       | 15 12 9                   | 20 6 0      |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 13            | 13            | —       | —       | 8 5 3                     | 11 1 9      |
| „ workers .. ..               | 266           | 255           | 7       | 4       | 8 2 9                     | 9 3 0       |
| <b>Hessian weaving—</b>       |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 7             | 7             | —       | —       | 19 11 3                   | 22 0 9      |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 51            | 51            | —       | —       | 8 8 6                     | 10 12 3     |
| „ workers .. ..               | 1090          | 842           | 248     | —       | 5 15 0                    | 7 4 9       |
| <b>Calendering—</b>           |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 1             | —             | 1       | —       | 6 4 0                     | 8 1 6       |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 5             | —             | 5       | —       | 4 7 9                     | 6 2 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 230           | —             | 153     | 77      | 3 2 6                     | 4 0 0       |
| <b>Machine sewing—</b>        |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 2             | 2             | —       | —       | 5 13 0                    | 7 9 3       |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 4             | —             | 4       | —       | 4 2 9                     | 6 2 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 172           | 154           | 18      | —       | 2 4 3                     | 3 6 3       |
| <b>Hand sewing—</b>           |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Head sirdar .. ..             | 1             | 1             | —       | —       | 5 13 0                    | 7 9 3       |
| Other sirdars .. ..           | 6             | —             | 6       | —       | 4 9 3                     | 6 0 0       |
| „ workers .. ..               | 226           | 223           | 3       | —       | 2 3 0                     | 2 15 0      |
| <b>Inspection department—</b> |               |               |         |         |                           |             |
| Workers .. ..                 | 12            | —             | 8       | 4       | 2 4 3                     | 2 15 3      |

Also detailed below is a statement of average monthly wages, which likewise can be taken as a fair average for a mill working on the multiple shift system :—

*Statement of Average Monthly Wages.*

|                                 | No. of<br>workers. | Hours worked<br>per day. | Average wages<br>per worker.<br>Amount. |     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|-----|
|                                 |                    |                          | Rs.                                     | as. |
| Head babu (factory) .. .. .     | 1                  | 9                        | 180                                     | 0   |
| Head babu (mill) .. .. .        | 1                  | 9                        | 135                                     | 0   |
| Doctor .. .. .                  | 1                  | 7                        | 165                                     | 0   |
| Draughtsman .. .. .             | 1                  | 6                        | 105                                     | 0   |
| Departmental head babus .. .. . | 3                  | 9                        | 90                                      | 0   |
| Other babus .. .. .             | 85                 | 9                        | 32                                      | 0   |
| Jamadar .. .. .                 | 1                  | —                        | 20                                      | 0   |
| Other durwans .. .. .           | 38                 | —                        | 15                                      | 0   |
| Mehter Jamadar .. .. .          | 1                  | —                        | 22                                      | 8   |
| Other mehters .. .. .           | 17                 | —                        | 14                                      | 8   |
| Boat manjhees .. .. .           | 148                | —                        | 16                                      | 8   |
| Head Engine viceman .. .. .     | 1                  | 10                       | 120                                     | 0   |
| Others .. .. .                  | 27                 | 10                       | 34                                      | 0   |
| Head engine joiner .. .. .      | 1                  | 10                       | 58                                      | 0   |
| Others .. .. .                  | 21                 | 10                       | 33                                      | 0   |
| Head tinsmith .. .. .           | 1                  | 10                       | 53                                      | 0   |
| Others .. .. .                  | 9                  | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |
| Head blacksmith .. .. .         | 1                  | 10                       | 52                                      | 0   |
| Others .. .. .                  | 10                 | 10                       | 37                                      | 8   |
| Hammermen .. .. .               | 7                  | 10                       | 18                                      | 0   |
| Head turner .. .. .             | 1                  | 10                       | 66                                      | 0   |
| Others .. .. .                  | 24                 | 10                       | 33                                      | 0   |
| Head electric fitter .. .. .    | 1                  | 10                       | 70                                      | 8   |
| Others .. .. .                  | 3                  | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |
| Engine sirdars .. .. .          | 2                  | 10                       | 34                                      | 0   |
| Boiler sirdar .. .. .           | 1                  | 7½                       | 38                                      | 0   |
| Firemen .. .. .                 | 23                 | 7½                       | 26                                      | 0   |
| Head mill viceman .. .. .       | 1                  | 10                       | 50                                      | 8   |
| Other vicemen .. .. .           | 23                 | 10                       | 25                                      | 0   |
| Pin boys .. .. .                | 28                 | { 12@10<br>16@ 6 }       | 10                                      | 0   |
| Head spinning viceman .. .. .   | 1                  | 10                       | 52                                      | 0   |
| Other vicemen .. .. .           | 11                 | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |
| Head winding viceman .. .. .    | 1                  | 10                       | 52                                      | 0   |
| Other vicemen .. .. .           | 9                  | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |
| Head factory viceman .. .. .    | 1                  | 10                       | 52                                      | 0   |
| Other vicemen .. .. .           | 26                 | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |
| Head factory joiner .. .. .     | 1                  | 10                       | 52                                      | 0   |
| Other joiners .. .. .           | 15                 | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |
| Head sewing viceman .. .. .     | 1                  | 10                       | 52                                      | 0   |
| Other vicemen .. .. .           | 9                  | 10                       | 30                                      | 0   |

With reference to single-shift mills, a statement is submitted below on the same lines as that given for mills working on the multiple-shift. In the case of single-shift mills, all workers are paid on the basis of 60 hours per week, and the average weekly wages are as under :—

| Department.                   |    |    |    | Average wages per<br>worker for 60 hours. |    |    |
|-------------------------------|----|----|----|---|----|----|
|                               |    |    |    | Rs.                                       | a. | p. |
| <b>Batching—</b>              |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 12  | 15 | 3  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 7   | 2  | 9  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 4   | 5  | 3  |
| <b>Sacking preparing—</b>     |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 13  | 12 | 9  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 9   | 13 | 6  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 3   | 12 | 6  |
| <b>Hessian preparing—</b>     |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 13  | 12 | 9  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 9   | 13 | 6  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 3   | 12 | 6  |
| <b>Sacking spinning—</b>      |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 14  | 6  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 10  | 6  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 4   | 2  | 0  |
| <b>Hessian spinning</b>       |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 14  | 6  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 10  | 6  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 4   | 2  | 0  |
| <b>Sacking winding—</b>       |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar warp .. .. .      | .. | .. | .. | 9   | 11 | 0  |
| „ „ cop .. .. .               | .. | .. | .. | 10  | 8  | 0  |
| „ „ beaming .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 13  | 4  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 10  | 0  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 5   | 12 | 0  |
| <b>Hessian winding—</b>       |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar warp .. .. .      | .. | .. | .. | 9   | 11 | 0  |
| „ „ cop .. .. .               | .. | .. | .. | 10  | 8  | 0  |
| „ „ beaming .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 13  | 4  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 10  | 0  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 5   | 12 | 0  |
| <b>Sacking weaving—</b>       |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 24  | 8  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 13  | 4  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 9   | 8  | 0  |
| <b>Hessian weaving—</b>       |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 24  | 8  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 13  | 4  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 8   | 4  | 6  |
| <b>Calendering—</b>           |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 11  | 2  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 8   | 6  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 5   | 0  | 0  |
| <b>Machine sewing—</b>        |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 12  | 0  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 8   | 8  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 5   | 0  | 0  |
| <b>Hand sewing—</b>           |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Head sirdar .. .. .           | .. | .. | .. | 9   | 8  | 0  |
| Other sirdars .. .. .         | .. | .. | .. | 7   | 8  | 0  |
| „ workers .. .. .             | .. | .. | .. | 3   | 8  | 0  |
| <b>Inspection department—</b> |    |    |    |   |    |    |
| Workers .. .. .               | .. | .. | .. | 3   | 8  | 0  |

The above figures deal with one particular mill, but are a fair average for any mill working on the single-shift system.

With regard to monthly wages, it is not necessary to differentiate as between multiple-shift and single-shift mills, and the wages given in the case of the former are equally applicable to the latter.

97. (i) There have been no decreases in jute mill wages, and undernoted are increases which have taken place in recent years :—

|                     |              |                  |              |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| May, 1918 .. ..     | 10 per cent. | January, 1920 .. | 20 per cent. |
| September, 1919. .. | 10 ..        | October, 1920 .. | 10 ..        |

In connection with the recent strike, a further increase was conceded, which varies from 7½ per cent. to 10 per cent., so that in the last 11 years the Indian jute mill workers' emoluments have been increased to the extent of approximately 60 per cent.

When the Indian jute mills curtailed production to a four-day week, the workers were granted a *khoraki* payment, which was practically equal to another day's pay. This payment was paid according to the undernoted scale :—

|  |                                       |       |       |                   |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| Half-timers .. ..                                  | .. ..                                 | .. .. | .. .. | 4 annas per week. |
| Workers earning from Re. 1 to Rs. 3 7 9 pies .. .. | .. ..                                 | .. .. | .. .. | 6 .. ..           |
| " .. ..  | Rs. 3 8 annas to Rs. 5 7 9 pies .. .. | .. .. | .. .. | 8 .. ..           |
| " .. ..  | Rs. 5 8 annas upwards .. ..           | .. .. | .. .. | 10 .. ..          |

This *khoraki* payment was first paid in December, 1918, and was continued to December, 1919, when it was stopped owing to mills working six days per week. Since April, 1921, however, this payment has always been made, and has eventually been incorporated in the wages. It should be explained that in the case of single-shift mills no *khoraki* is, or can be, paid, but that the rate of wages is so adjusted as to include the equivalent of the *khoraki* payment.

(ii) The reasons for variation in wages are due to higher costs of living.

98. A statement showing the total amount of money orders issued by the post offices serving the Calcutta jute mills, during the years 1910 to 1928, is detailed below, and alongside these figures is a statement of loomage, showing the increase at this point :—

| Year.      | Amount of Money Orders. |        | Looms.     | Year.       | Amount of Money Orders. |  | Looms. |
|------------|-------------------------|--------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|--|--------|
|            | Rs.                     |        |            |             | Rs.                     |  |        |
| 1910 .. .. | 78,37,347               | 31,755 | 1920 .. .. | 1,41,19,282 | 40,367                  |  |        |
| 1911 .. .. | 72,92,292               | 32,711 | 1921 .. .. | 1,32,22,237 | 40,898                  |  |        |
| 1912 .. .. | 79,33,694               | 32,632 | 1922 .. .. | 1,32,32,150 | 41,339                  |  |        |
| 1913 .. .. | 82,84,806               | 36,841 | 1923 .. .. | 1,41,72,263 | 45,563                  |  |        |
| 1914 .. .. | 81,96,055               | 38,120 | 1924 .. .. | 1,48,16,726 | 48,018                  |  |        |
| 1915 .. .. | 94,02,588               | 38,354 | 1925 .. .. | 1,42,07,449 | 49,399                  |  |        |
| 1916 .. .. | 98,63,492               | 38,652 | 1926 .. .. | 1,54,39,832 | 49,848                  |  |        |
| 1917 .. .. | 98,56,349               | 39,065 | 1927 .. .. | 1,64,28,425 | 50,354                  |  |        |
| 1918 .. .. | 1,19,29,434             | 39,401 | 1928 .. .. | 1,73,57,616 | 50,521                  |  |        |
| 1919 .. .. | 1,09,99,346             | 39,451 |            |             |                         |  |        |

In this connection it will be advisable to deal with a district such as Titaghur, where there has been no extension of jute mills since 1910. This being the case, the population has likewise remained more or less stationary, and it is estimated that 45,000 jute mill workers are employed in this particular district.

A statement is detailed below showing the total number and amount of money orders issued by the Titaghur post office during the years 1910 to 1928. This shows that the number of money orders has increased by 10,713, while the value of them has increased by Rs. 3,25,976 :—

*Statement showing the total number and amount of Money Orders issued by the Titaghur Post Office during the years 1910-1928.*

| Year.      | Number. | Amount.  |            | Year.  | Number   | Amount. |  |
|------------|---------|----------|------------|--------|----------|---------|--|
|            |         | Rs.      |            |        |          | Rs.     |  |
| 1910 .. .. | 29,828  | 4,33,039 | 1920 .. .. | 46,360 | 8,51,948 |         |  |
| 1911 .. .. | 27,080  | 3,83,760 | 1921 .. .. | 35,284 | 6,41,806 |         |  |
| 1912 .. .. | 30,642  | 4,40,424 | 1922 .. .. | 35,060 | 6,89,122 |         |  |
| 1913 .. .. | 34,304  | 5,22,484 | 1923 .. .. | 39,647 | 8,09,051 |         |  |
| 1914 .. .. | 31,742  | 4,84,146 | 1924 .. .. | 38,928 | 7,97,758 |         |  |
| 1915 .. .. | 39,351  | 5,90,699 | 1925 .. .. | 37,523 | 7,69,269 |         |  |
| 1916 .. .. | 38,562  | 6,14,047 | 1926 .. .. | 37,652 | 7,39,845 |         |  |
| 1917 .. .. | 35,247  | 5,54,226 | 1927 .. .. | 41,958 | 7,83,307 |         |  |
| 1918 .. .. | 40,783  | 6,88,838 | 1928 .. .. | 39,541 | 7,58,975 |         |  |
| 1919 .. .. | 40,117  | 5,58,167 |            |        |          |         |  |

In connection with the recent strike, the following details with regard to Titaghur are interesting.

The amount sent from Titaghur post office to villages under normal conditions is approximately Rs. 15,000 per week, whereas the amount sent from Titaghur post office to villages during the period of the recent strike was approximately Rs. 5,000 per week.

Likewise, the amount received in Titaghur post office under normal conditions is approximately Rs. 1,000 per week, whereas the amount received during the period of strike was approximately Rs. 5,000 per week, showing that money was being withdrawn from up-country centres during the strike period.

Another important mill area may be taken, namely Bhatpara, which is served by three post offices, Bhatpara, Kankinara and Jagatdal. The following are the amounts remitted from these offices by money order for the years 1914 and 1928 :—

|                   | 1914.    | 1928.    |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
|                   | Rs.      | Rs.      |
| Bhatpara .. .. .  | 1,35,227 | 3,67,425 |
| Kankinara .. .. . | 2,17,453 | 5,09,125 |
| Jagatdal .. .. .  | 2,47,020 | 6,85,865 |

With the further increase in wages recently granted, remittances for 1929 are likely to be still larger.

101. There is no particular method of fixing wages. The whole question is very complex, and individual mills, in certain districts, arrange amongst themselves what the fair rate should be for any particular fabric or for any particular class of work.

102. Overtime is confined to the mechanical and engineering departments, and is paid for at time and a quarter rate, with double rate for Sundays if, by any chance, work on Sundays should be necessary.

103. There is no standardization of wages, and rates for both time and piece workers vary in accordance with particular districts.

Mills in the Calcutta area are at a decided disadvantage compared with those situated at Titaghur, Kankinara, Budge-Budge, or similar places. The former are not only cramped for space, which has prevented all possibilities of expansion in the past, but must pay higher wages for the inferior labour, which alone can be secured in the urban area. Jute mill workers much prefer to work outside, where the amenities of life are greater, and the cost of living lower than in the city area. In consequence, the labour available in Calcutta consists, to some extent, of inferior workers, who, by reason of their lack of skill, cannot obtain employment in more agreeable surroundings.

The effects of such inferior labour are twofold ; a higher class of jute is necessary to obtain the normal quality of cloth, and production, as a general rule, is considerably reduced.

105. There is no minimum wage ; workers are paid according to attendance in the case of daily labour, and according to output in the case of piece work.

106. (i) Fining is only resorted to after repeated warnings have been given and, in practice, amounts to only an extremely small fraction of the total wages paid. The particular department affected is the weaving. Should a person be caught stealing, it is the custom to give full pay and dismiss him or her on the spot.

(ii) There are no other deductions.

(iii) The money realized by fines is simply a deduction from the general wages, although, in some instances, the money realized through fines is set aside against pensions paid to old servants.

(iv) It is the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association that legislation, so far as deductions are concerned, is not desirable.

107. (i) Wages are paid weekly to operatives and monthly to other employees.

(ii) Weekly wages are paid usually on the last working day of the week following that during which they were earned ; and monthly wages on the 15th of the month following.

(iii) The Indian jute mills are strongly of opinion that no legislation is necessary in this connection, as the present methods are quite suitable and cannot be improved upon. In other words, wages are paid as quickly as possible, which means that the time kept in hand is necessary for making up wages, both as regards weekly and monthly labour.

(iv) Unclaimed wages amount to a very small fraction of the total wages billed, as all workers are paid wages actually earned, when claimed. In many cases, the small amount of back wages unpaid is utilized for pensions to old servants.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Generally speaking, there has not been much change in the efficiency of Indian workers in recent years, but there is no doubt that in comparison with, say, 20 years ago, it has been proved that the shorter hours have resulted in more efficient working. In other words, the operative has had to work harder to make a wage more or less in line with what was earned previously. Although jute mill labour migrates and changes to a certain extent during the year, the same workers over a period are employed, and efficiency, therefore, at the present time, may be considered quite satisfactory.

113. In the opinion of the Jute Mills Association, a comparison such as this can be of little value. There is undoubtedly a great deal of difference between the efficiency of Indian and foreign workers in the textile trades, and these remarks undoubtedly must apply to other industries. So far as the jute mill industry is concerned, one foreign worker, either in Dundee or the Continent, has to do work that requires the services of two operatives in this country. It is not that the work is unduly hard, and not on account of climatic conditions, but simply because this has been the custom so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned.

114. (i) Comparisons are not affected to any extent by the migration of workers, and this particular phase does not apply to Calcutta jute mills. The same labour is employed all the year round, and there are practically no "slack" seasons.

(ii) Comparisons apply more to the use of machinery and handling of the work. Unless there is expert supervision, the workers would take very little thought about the quality of production.

(iii) The general efficiency of plant, so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned, is undoubtedly high, and machinery generally is kept up to a high standard of efficiency, and scrapped when machines of an improved nature are placed on the market.

(iv) The comparative efficiency of management may be taken at a good average, and only those who have had long service and very thorough experience, are appointed to any of the responsible posts. At the same time, conditions differ so much that it is very difficult indeed to make any real comparison.

(v) The physique of the workers, on the whole, can hardly be described as satisfactory. This is probably due to climatic conditions, and also to the lack of interest in anything that requires exertion. In certain areas, playing fields and play-grounds are provided, with the idea of improving physique.

(vi) Health, in many cases, affects the efficiency of the workers, and, as a general rule, fever is the cause, due not to the nature of work in the mills, but to climatic conditions, particularly at the change of seasons. Generally speaking, workers have ample leisure time in comparison with workers in other countries, which, if taken advantage of, should be to their benefit.

(vii) Facilities for education, except in a few isolated instances, are conspicuous by their absence, and it is to be admitted that in comparison with the standard of European countries, little progress has to be recorded. Indeed, the workers themselves are very indifferent so far as improved education is concerned.

(viii) Standards of living vary to a very great extent, although it is an undoubted fact that in recent years there has been some improvement in this respect, and it is quite reasonable to anticipate that such improvement will gradually continue. There has always been and, as far as can be seen, always will be, a vast difference in the mode of living of the various castes who operate in Calcutta jute mills. At the same time, it is hardly correct to judge the standard of living by what is seen in the jute mill areas, as a large majority of the operatives do not use their earnings in these particular districts, but remit, as has already been illustrated, a large percentage of those earnings to their up-country homes.

(ix) The climate of Bengal, in comparison with those of other countries, is certainly not conducive to high efficiency. The mills are built to minimize as much as possible the effects of the heat on the operatives. During the hot weather months, work is undoubtedly very trying, and, on the whole, the workers in a modern jute mill realize that they are well off so far as air space and spare room, in all parts of the mill buildings, are concerned.

115. (i) This heading must, naturally, apply to single-shift mills, where the working hours have been changed to suit new conditions. It is understood that so far as single-shift mills are concerned, production has been maintained at a level more or less equivalent to what was the case when these mills were on multiple-shift; and from a commercial point of view, this must profit the millowners. So far as the changes in the number of working hours in the double-shift mills are concerned, production has increased more or less in proportion with the number of extra hours worked.

*Note.*—In making these remarks, the change as from 1st July, 1929, from 54 hours to 60 hours is referred to.)

(ii) The changes in other working conditions again apply to the single-shift mills, and it is understood that those mills which have adopted this system of working are quite satisfied with results. Single-shift working undoubtedly makes for better control and efficiency, but this should not be taken as any criterion that production or efficiency in multiple-shift mills is in any way less than is obtained in the case of single-shift working.

(iii) The association has no records to show to what extent expenditure on health and sanitation affects output.

(iv) As explained under a separate heading, the housing of workers is a very big question, and one which receives continued attention from the Calcutta jute mills; but so far as production is concerned, the housing of workers has little or no apparent effect.

(v) There have been no alterations in the method of remuneration, except for increases in wages from time to time, and the Indian Jute Mills Association doubts very much if production or the quality of work is affected by any change in this connection.

(vi) It is the opinion of the association that alterations in wages have no effect on production one way or another. There has certainly been, in recent years, in spite of substantial increases, little or no improvement either in quantity or quality of work produced.

(vii) *Legislative Enactments.*—The Indian Jute Mills Association has nothing to say under the heading of legislative enactments.

(viii) Dietary, so far as the jute mill workers are concerned, has no direct effect on production, and, notwithstanding the substantial amounts remitted to up-country homes, workers generally appear to have plenty of food.

(ix) The Indian jute mill worker, with a few exceptions, is not addicted to the use of alcohol or drugs and so far as this is concerned, no material effect on production is noticed.

(x) Industrial fatigue has not been experienced in any way so far as the jute industry in Bengal is concerned.

116. It is difficult to say what methods should be adopted for securing increased efficiency. When labour is plentiful, the work is done more efficiently, for the simple reason that workers are afraid of being deprived of their jobs. The system of fining workers to improve efficiency, is undoubtedly unsuccessful but, at the same time, very necessary to keep in check the tendency towards bad work, especially in the factories. The labour in Indian jute mills is entirely different from the labour in mills abroad, and illiteracy, undoubtedly, has a great deal to do with this aspect.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) Employers are organized under the Indian Jute Mills Association.

(ii) Although there is a registered trade union in the Kankinara district, the workers at present are dealing with members of an unregistered trade union, and any complaints or grievances are supposed to be dealt with by this union.

120. The comparative failure of trade unionism as a responsible force in this country is due, the association considers, to the absence of controlling legislation.

Take for instance, the recent widespread strike in the jute mill area. This may have been, to begin with, and in the case of a few mills, something in the nature of an industrial dispute. Apart from this phase, however, members of the so-called Bengal Jute-workers' Union were entirely responsible for bringing '70 per cent. of the trade to a standstill, by addressing meetings in the various industrial centres, and giving promises and assurances which could never, on any account, be complied with. Without going into any further detail, the Indian Jute Mill Association wishes to refer in this memorandum, to an extract from the Report of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for the year 1924, on the subject of trade union legislation :—

In 1922, the Chamber made representation to the Government of Bengal on the proposal for the introduction of legislation for the registration and protection of trade unions. The question arose from a recommendation that was made by the Legislative Assembly early in 1921, and the Government of India thereupon consulted the local governments. After receiving and considering their replies, the Government of India drafted a Trade Union Bill, which they circulated at the end of August, 1924. On the bill being sent to the Chamber by the Government of Bengal, the committee examined it in consultation with their industrial sub-committee, and expressed views upon it in a particular letter.

The general position of the chamber in respect of trade union legislation was defined in 1922. It was, briefly, that according to information available, there were but few labour organizations in India, having as an object the protection and the

improvement of the conditions of labour. The Committee of the Chamber, however, indicated that trade unionism should be encouraged to develop along proper lines, and that legislation, with that end in view, might be undertaken. At the same time the Bengal Chamber of Commerce deprecated the application to India, where *bona fide* labour bodies were recent in origin, few in number, and premature in organization, of legislation framed to suit conditions in western countries, where labour unions are of long standing, numerous and highly organized. The chamber went on to emphasise the point that in England legislation for the registration and protection of trade unions did not precede but had followed the establishment of labour organizations. Although holding this view, the Committee of the Chamber recognized that advantage ought to be taken of the experience gained in the United Kingdom, and therefore did not object to the main features of the proposal, which were at that time put forward.

The Chamber of Commerce stated at that time that genuine combination of workers, formed not with the object of creating discord, but with the object of advancing the prosperity of the workers, would be welcomed by all employers of labour.

As regards the provisions of the 1924 Bill, the following points were dealt with :—

- (a) The exclusion of political purposes from the statutory objects of a trade union ;  
 (b) registration ; (c) immunity from civil suits ; (d) picketing.

With reference to (a), political purposes were excluded by the Bill from the list of the statutory objects to which the funds of a union might be devoted. But the opinion was held that something more than this was required to preclude the possibility of unions developing into political organizations, and it was suggested by the Chamber, that three-fourths of the members of the executive of every union should be persons actually employed as workers in the industry with which the union is connected. It was also suggested that an attempt should be made to insert in the Bill provisions penalizing the expenditure of union funds in any shape on political work.

Regarding the question of the registration of trade unions, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce re-affirmed an opinion previously expressed, *viz.*, that registration ought to be compulsory. There are, unquestionably, difficulties in the way of compulsory registration, but there is no doubt that the question ought to be considered in every detail. It seemed impossible to support the provisions of a Bill which gave, in certain circumstances, immunity to trade unions from civil suits in respect of acts done in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute. The Chamber of Commerce at that time did not support the Government of India in excluding from the Bill any provisions relating to picketing, and recommended that a definite responsibility should be laid on unions, or executives of such unions, for the prevention of the issue of orders authorizing picketing in any form by the members of the unions. The Chamber concluded by stating that should the unions authorize, or their members or executives take part in picketing, they should be held responsible for their actions, and their funds should be made liable accordingly.

The views of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in regard to the provisions of the 1924 Bill, were summarized by Sir Willoughby Carey in a resolution which he moved on behalf of the Chamber at the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon on 16th December, 1924. The resolution was as follows :—

“ That this association accepts the principle of the development on sound and healthy lines of trade unionism in India, and that, with this end in view, it supports the legislative proposals of the Government of India, subject to the following qualifications :—(i) that registration should be compulsorily enforced in respect of every trade union ; (ii) that political purposes should be definitely excluded from the scope of the activities of every union ; (iii) that picketing should be declared illegal ; and (iv) that no immunity should be afforded to unions to relieve them of collective responsibilities for acts committed by their members.”

No action was taken by Government in connection with this resolution, but the whole matter has again been brought to a head by the strikes which have recently taken place in the jute mills in and around Calcutta. As a result of these strikes the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association have considered the question of interference with mill labour, in particular by unregistered trade unions ; and the committee, after careful consideration, have suggested to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that a resolution on the following lines might be moved at the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon, which takes place in Bombay at the end of this year :—

“ That this association requests the urgent attention of the Government of India to the extent to which, in recent industrial disputes, unregistered trade unions have interfered between employers and their labour ; the association affirms the views



expressed in the resolution of 16th December, 1924, to the effect that registration should be compulsorily enforced in respect of every trade union, and that picketing should be declared to be illegal and effectively dealt with; and in the interests of peace and prosperity in the industries of India, the association urges Government to introduce, at as early a date as possible, legislation to amend the Trade Unions Act, XVI of 1926, accordingly."

The Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association trusts that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, at the meeting of the Associated Chambers at the end of this year, will put forward this particular point in as strong a manner as possible.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

The jute mill industry has for many years been more or less immune from industrial disputes, and labour, on the whole, has been contented. It is well known, of course, that the Indian jute mill worker is comparatively highly paid in comparison with other industrial labour in this country, and this is illustrated to a very great extent by the number of people constantly applying for work, and by the surplus labour in the various jute mill areas unable to find employment. Recently, however, a widespread strike has taken place, and this has affected, at intervals, practically every mill on the banks of the Hooghly.

The Indian jute mills, under an agreement made in 1921, have worked continuously for the last eight years, 54 hours per week; but owing to very distinct indications that the supply of jute goods did not equal demand, it was decided in November, 1928, to increase working hours from 54 to 60 per week as from 1st July, 1929. It is to be noted, however, that this change was not decided upon altogether from a commercial point of view, but with the instinct of self-preservation. The Calcutta jute mills, by curtailing output, were undoubtedly making substantial profits. On the other hand, by curtailing production, it was possible for competitive jute mills, both in Dundee and the continent, to work full time and increase loomage, while, so far as Calcutta was concerned, new mills, were started on the banks of the Hooghly. Such being the case, it was obvious that the associated mills had to take action, and this action, as stated above, was a resolution passed in November, 1928, to increase working time from 54 to 60 hours as from the 1st July, 1929. It was not anticipated that such a change would disorganize labour, as it was a case of longer hours and higher wages, which, in the ordinary course of events, would be welcomed by labour in other countries. To begin with, when the change was made, there were undoubtedly adjustments which had to be given effect to, and for a short time work proceeded on smooth lines. About the middle of July, however, agitators, posing as leaders of labour and as members of the *unregistered* Bengal Jute-workers' Union, began to get busy, and taking advantage of a few mills being on strike, eventually managed to bring to a standstill about 70 per cent. of the jute mills in Calcutta and district.

Matters got to such a stage that Government were forced to take action, and with almost 300,000 people out of work, there is no gainsaying the fact that the position was very serious indeed. The Jute Mills Association refused to negotiate with the so-called Bengal Jute-workers' Union but Government did so, and eventually arranged with the Indian Jute Mills Association to meet their labour to some extent.

The terms of the settlement arranged with Government, who were acting as intermediaries between the association and the Bengal Jute-workers' Union, were as under:—

(i) *Wages*.—The Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association agreed to recommend to members of the Association the terms already publicly announced:—(a) to pay the correct proportionate increase in total earnings for the extra hours worked; (b) to pay khoraki on the same scale as heretofore.

They also agreed to recommend to members:—(c) that the scales of bonuses remain the same as they were before 1st July, when the mills were working 54 hours a week, and (d) that favourable consideration be given to an adjustment of wages to time workers on the basis of the concession suggested for piece workers.

(*Note*.—This did not apply to mills where such adjustments had already been made).

The Committee also agreed to recommend to members:—(ii) that there be no victimization; (iii) that favourable consideration be given to the provision of maternity benefits; (iv) that there be no corporal punishment.

(*Note*.—The committee wish to point out that corporal punishment is already strictly prohibited.)

(v) That the authorities of each mill will consider favourably reasonable statements of grievances put forward by their workers.

As an illustration of the absence of strikes, so far as the Calcutta jute mills are concerned, the following information is perhaps interesting.

In terms of the Calcutta Jute Fabrics Association Forms of Contract, sellers have to send cabled information to their buyers when notice has been received from a jute mill that there is a possibility of delay in the shipment of goods on account of a strike at the mill, fire, accident to the machinery, or any similar cause. At the same time as the notice is sent by the sellers to the buyers, a notice must also be sent to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. On receipt by the Chamber, the notice is entered in a special register under a serial number.

*The register was commenced in May, 1915, and up to the end of 1927, the total number of notices entered in it was 113, most of which were in connection with strikes. From the beginning of 1928, to July, 1929, 46 more notices were registered, and from the middle of July to 5th September, 1929, the number of notices registered was 624.*

The undernoted statistics, compiled from figures supplied by all associated mills affected by the recent jute mill strike, are also instructive :—

(i) Time lost on account of the strike, (a) Total number of loom-hours lost, 5,444,005 ; (b) number of looms involved, 41,643.

(ii) Total loss in production for the period of the strike ; (a) Hessian, 64,021,775 yards, (b) Sacking, 51,795,746 yards ; estimated to represent in value Rs. 170,17,142.

(iii) Total loss to labour force in wages for the period of the strike, Rs. 21,11,409.

(iv) Total number of hands affected by the strike, 2,67,345.

There was a serious and prolonged strike at Fort Gloster Jute Mills last year, which lasted for a period of fully six months. It is well known that this strike was not of an industrial nature and was fomented all the time by men posing as labour leaders, a few of whom were arrested and are now undergoing trial in Meerut. The managing agents of the Fort Gloster Jute Mills, viz., Messrs. Kettlewell Bullen and Co., have decided not to give a written statement regarding this strike, but are prepared, if the Royal Commission so desires, to give oral evidence. The Indian Jute Mills Association is of opinion that this evidence should be taken.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

145. (i) Attached hereto is a statement\* shewing the retail prices of certain articles of foodstuffs at Calcutta, and the Indian Jute Mills Association is indebted to the Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics for these details.

It is rather difficult to form a correct list of foodstuffs consumed by jute mill workers inasmuch as they usually belong to different religious sects and different provinces, the dietary therefore being different in each case.

It will be seen that the prices prevailing at the end of June have been shown for each year, excepting 1914, for which year the prices at the end of July have been given, June prices not being available. Retail prices have been shown for all but three commodities, viz., chillies, turmeric and raw sugar (gur), for which retail prices are not available. Wholesale prices from the Calcutta Prices Current and Money Market Report have been given in these three cases. It may be noted that in the registers kept of retail prices, potatoes are not shown with any qualifying clause to show the class, but from 1924, the quotations are the lowest published in the Municipal Gazettes. In the case of wheat, the quotations up to 1923, are for country flour, while the rest of the quotations are for "atta".

From the details set forth, it will be noticed that the increase in the prices of foodstuffs as between 1914 and 1929, is as under :—

|                        |    |           |                    |    |           |
|------------------------|----|-----------|--------------------|----|-----------|
| Rice—coarse .. ..      | 37 | per cent. | Salt .. .. .       | 50 | per cent. |
| Wheat flour—country .. | 36 | ..        | Potatoes .. ..     | 13 | ..        |
| Gram (Channa) .. .     | 37 | ..        | Chillies .. .. .   | 50 | ..        |
| Arhar Dal .. .. .      | 58 | ..        | Turmeric .. ..     | 73 | ..        |
| Mustard oil .. .. .    | 33 | ..        | Raw Sugar (Gur) .. | 71 | ..        |

Although these percentages cover a period of 15 years, special note should be made that in between the various years, prices at certain times for most commodities have ruled considerably lower than the prices given at the end of June, 1929.

In connection with the percentages given above, it must again be recorded that this compares with an increase in jute mill workers' wages, in recent years, of at least 60 per cent.

\* Not printed.

Mr. R. P. ADAMS, O.B.E., M.I. MECH. E., CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES,  
BENGAL.

### I.—Recruitment.

3. (i) In textile factories the existing method of recruitment is almost entirely through sirdars (gangers). In shipbuilding yards, structural engineering works, and jute presses, the labour is principally obtained through, and their work controlled by contractors. In smaller engineering concerns and specialized industries recruitment is usually direct by the management.

(ii) Direct recruitment by the management is undoubtedly desirable, but the sirdar and contractor methods of recruitment have been long established and are practices which have been engendered by conditions. All attempts to change these methods appear to have failed.

(iii) It is considered that the establishment of public employment agencies would serve no useful purpose. As there is no apparent unemployment, the principal function of an employment agency, viz., the providing of employment, would be of no value.

4. There are undoubtedly two kinds of disturbance of family life :—(a) rural or up-country ; (b) suburban or local.

Generally speaking, persons employed in jute mills and some of the larger engineering establishments are affected by (a), inasmuch as they maintain homes in their villages whilst engaged in work in the industrial areas of Bengal, and to which they return periodically. In such cases there is either partial or complete severance of the principal of the family from his home for the greater portion of the year (b), however, is confined principally to jute mill workers not covered by (a), and where the extent of disturbance may be modified according to whether (1), the families live in the vicinity of the mill, (2), live at a distance from the mill or (3), employed on the multiple or single shift system of working. Where the multiple shift system is in operation there is no simultaneous enjoyment of meals and prescribed rest of the family, and where workers live at a distance from the mill no matter what the shift system, the extreme hours of departure for work and return encroaches on the home life and deprives the families concerned of time for leisure, common association and improvement.

### II.—Staff Organization.

15. (i) The shipbuilding, general engineering and jute pressing industries, employing about 81,000 persons, let out the greater amount of their work on contract within their own premises. The extent varies from 70 per cent. in general engineering and 80 per cent. in shipbuilding, to 95 per cent. in jute pressing.

Regarding the character of contract work, all work in the industries noted above, with the exception of small jobs for which contracting is impracticable, is divided into its various processes and sections and given on contract.

(iii) In so far as the observance of the provisions of the Factories Act is concerned the manager is responsible for all labour, whether directly employed, or by contractor.

(iv) Some of the effects of the contract system are :—(a) The workers' wages are entirely in the hands of the contractor ; (b) employers can rely on the necessary supply of labour and on the completion of their own contracts to time ; (c) employers are enabled to tender for jobs with a greater degree of accuracy.

### IV.—Health.

26. (i) (a) Under the Factories Act, all factories with the exception of those outside municipal limits, are required to provide latrine accommodation in accordance with a scale laid down in the factories rules, and they must be designed and constructed to the standard approved by the Chief Inspector of Factories and the Director of Public Health. In most of the larger factories, septic tank latrines are provided. Eighty-seven septic tanks have been installed during the past ten years and these provide accommodation for approximately 375,000 workers.

As regards tea factories and small concerns outside municipal limits, only a few have been provided with latrine accommodation. The difficulties being experienced are the scarcity of conservancy coolies, the natural habits of the labour, and the necessity for separate latrines for different castes. Owing to the open position of most of these factories, the absence of latrines seldom gives rise to any nuisance within the factory compound.

(b) Where housing accommodation is provided by factory owners the sanitary arrangements are usually the same as in the factory.

(ii) (a) The provision of drinking water in factories is governed by Rule 29 of the Bengal Factories Rules.

Its enforcement gives no anxiety except perhaps in the smaller establishments in congested areas or away from municipal water-supply where lack of general cleanliness and up-to-date control makes pollution and inadequacy possible. Purity and adequacy of supply in the smaller establishments depend largely on the habits of the workers themselves and they are such that no small employer can keep abreast of them in attempting to comply with the above rules.

The larger industrial establishments however, notably jute mills, go far beyond the requirements of the Act in this matter, and where municipal supply is not available tube wells are sunk from which sufficient water is obtained to meet more than the workers' needs, or expensive plant for purifying the river water is installed. Some jute mills whose tube wells have proved unsatisfactory have even routine arrangements for bringing down water by boats from Calcutta to meet workers' requirements in that respect.

(b) Where workers live in quarters provided by the factory owners and near the factory itself, the same system of water supply of the factory is extended to the quarters for the workers' benefit. Where workers live away from the factory and within municipal limits of water-supply, water is generally available in the shape of a common hydrant or road taps so distributed that all living within the vicinity may make use of them.

Outside of municipal areas, however, or wherever there is no water supply, workers have to rely upon wells and tanks which may, or may not, be polluted or adequate, depending upon the workers' habits and the state of the previous monsoon.

(iii) It can be generally said that with respect to all large industrial establishments bathing and washing facilities are provided for the workers. In smaller factories, however, situated in the congested areas of municipalities on account of the lack of space, adequate bathing and washing arrangements cannot be provided, although perhaps there is no bar against an employee making use of the municipal tap within the factory for that purpose. Such workers, therefore, have to rely upon the adequacy of water-supply and the municipal hydrant near their own homes. Those workers living outside the reach of municipal water supply make use of tanks and the water from wells, the former often being polluted possibly, shared by buffaloes and made use of for all domestic purposes.

28. (i) There is no provision in the Indian Factories Act embracing the control of temperature in factories, from the point of view that extremes of temperature cause distress or ill health to workers. Extremes of temperature are undoubtedly detrimental to the health of workers but limits and extent are unknown. To consider the problem is to decide on standards, and the latter are impossible without prolonged scientific investigation. The subject is inseparable from the consideration of humidity and ventilation; distress and ill health do not arise necessarily from extremes of these factors individually; the sum total of their effect is the true criterion or the cooling power of the atmosphere. The aim should be the establishment of cooling power standards for different industries, and not the limiting of temperature. But the inclusion in the Act of a provision giving the Chief Inspector of Factories discretion in curtailing temperature by alteration to structures and the like would serve as a temporary expedient and possibly given an impetus to the proper consideration of the problem, i.e., cooling power and the establishment of cooling power standards. See Appendix M.

(ii) (a) The local Government has attempted to give effect to the recommendations of Mr. Maloney in his report on the humidifications of cotton mills in India. There are only 17 cotton mills in this province and it appeared to the local Government from the data gathered by Mr. Maloney that the conditions were not so severe in those mills as to necessitate restrictions of the kind he proposed. Government were reluctant to impose on an impoverished industry any control which would give a doubtful result. The local Government therefore called upon the Factory Inspection Department to make further investigations and to report as to the applicability of (a) the Humidity Schedule proposed by Mr. Maloney; and (b) the cooling power standard, and also to take whatever steps they could to improve the conditions by application of the Ventilation Provisions of the Act. The steps taken by the local Government are:—(a) inauguration of investigations; (b) issue of special rules to enable the investigations to be carried out; (c) adoption and embodiment in the rules of Mr. Maloney's proposal of prohibition of artificial humidification by steam when the temperature reaches 85 degrees Fahr.; (d) issue of other rules to curtail temperature.

(b) A report has been issued on these investigations for Government's consideration, together with simple recommendations to conform to local conditions. The effect of Government's interest in this subject in the manner described above has been to stimulate the interest of employers of cotton mills in the systems on the market for the control of temperature, humidity, and air movement, automatically.

#### V.—Welfare.

34. (i) *Provision for Refreshments, Shelters and Crockets*.—In so far as the smaller establishments are concerned there can be said to be no definite arrangements to accommodate workers in these respects. It is not only a question of lack of room but small employers have not reached the stage of consideration of such refinements. As regards refreshments, workers are left to look after themselves and apparently there is no objection raised to food sellers entering the factory compounds. In the larger engineering concerns, however, better arrangements are generally made with respect to those workers who cannot return to their homes on account of distance; food stalls and shelters being provided within the precincts of the factory.

As regards textile factories and the meal time accommodation of workers living at a distance, little has been done to provide special shelters or refreshment rooms. Like other large industrial establishments, food vendors are permitted to enter the precincts of the factory, but generally speaking, that is the maximum of progress in this direction. Where mills are comparatively isolated, however, and the majority of workers live in the immediate neighbourhood of the mill and in the mills property, bazaars in many cases, have been erected by the employers, and are controlled by them, thus clean and wholesome food is guaranteed to the workers at reasonable prices.

The provision of crockets or enclosures for infants has long been under consideration by employers, but the difficulties of the situation can only be appreciated by those intimately acquainted with the customs, habits and prejudices of the workers. Two or three employers have actually made the experiment of erecting enclosures within the mill for the purpose of segregation of infants, and have encouraged but not forced its use on female workers. Differences of caste, habits, and customs, however, appear to have been an insuperable barrier to the establishment of their effective and correct use. Those enclosures, erected by way of experiment, have had to be dismantled.

#### VII.—Safety.

44. Mines, docks and railways do not come within the administration of the Indian Factories Act and, therefore, there is no obligation on their part to submit returns or statistics to the Chief Inspector of Factories. In all regulated factories, however, i.e., factories registered under the Indian Factories Act, managers are compelled to submit returns of accidents in a prescribed form according to Rule 65 of the Bengal Factories Rules. The particulars of the form ensures such information that accidents may be classed as fatal, serious or minor, on an "absence from employment" basis.

The statistics show that accidents of greater severity take place in districts in which the more important industries are established. This points not so much to the greater hazards of those industries, jute and engineering, but to the greater precision in complying with the law in respect of accident reporting as the result of better management and control. The increase in the totals year after year (see Appendix C (1)) is a measure of the increased efficiency of the department in registering factories both new and long established, and is a result of increased inspection staff and rigour in enforcing the provisions of the Act. The efficacy of the safety provisions is thereby overshadowed and not made apparent by these statistics.

45. A review of the analysis of accidents for the past ten years shows that causes of accidents in order of danger are:—transport, falling objects, persons falling and jute machinery. Generally speaking, these accidents could not have been prevented by any safety devices and there was little neglect on the part of managers in taking reasonable or prescribed precautions to ensure safety. In most cases the injured workers themselves or their colleagues were largely responsible for the accidents or they were victims of circumstances which could not be foreseen. Generally the measures taken by inspectors as regards preventable accidents are sufficiently effective to prevent their growing to commentable totals.

47. On the average about half a dozen accidents reports per annum reach the department in connection with serious and fatal accidents to workers in non-regulated establishments. . . . From the number of accidents so reported it is obvious that the majority are not brought to notice. This statement would seem to suggest an extended application of Section 2 (3) (b) of the Indian Factories Act, but as explained hereafter, there is a limit to the efficacy of the Act in remedying evils of this nature in small concerns, for drastic action in many cases would only lead to their liquidation. These remarks regarding the extension of the Act apply in the main to small concerns, but there are other classes of employment not at present regulated which appear to call for some sort of control, viz., the unloading and loading of ships in dock, the work on boats made fast to pontoons and jetties, and the construction of buildings and bridges. During the construction of the King George's Dock many serious and fatal accidents occurred, and generally the dependants of the deceased and the injured workers received compensation; but a dispute over a particular fatal accident in which the port commissioners sought to establish their right to refuse compensation, brought to light the helpless position of a large number of workers on account of their being outside the protection of the Indian Factories Act; a strange position in view of the fact that there were present all the elements of danger which engendered such an Act.

49. *Stringency of Inspection and Enforcement of Regulations.*—(i) *In industry generally.*— . . . It may be rightly claimed that the provisions of all chapters, other than Chapter IV (employment of labour) present little difficulty in establishment and that the Act properly functions in those directions, but the attempt to restrict the hours of employment of workers under Chapter IV has given rise to innumerable difficulties, particularly in jute mills where the majority of factory labour is concentrated. Jute mills have adopted systems of overlapping shifts which have nullified the efficiency of administrative measures designed to enforce the provision of Chapter IV with precision. The position now is that either the local Government or the Chief Inspector of Factories should be given powers to modify shift systems, or approve of them, or the Act amended to make the present administrative arrangements more effective. This matter is enlarged upon in the reply to item 88.

There is another very important matter with regard to rigour in the enforcement of the Act which strikes at the root of all departmental work—adequacy of fines and due appreciation of the underlying principles of the Act by magistrates. A glance at the lists of prosecutions, offences and fines in past annual reports will suffice to demonstrate how widely different are magistrates' views regarding Factory Act infractions. Indeed, it has become part of the inspector's consideration when instituting proceedings whether the inspector's power to arrange for punishment of the offender, is not more effective in print than in actual test in court. A manager, hitherto law abiding, and having a proper respect for law and the court, is not likely to be impressed by a subsequent visit of the inspector or a warning from that officer, after having been brought to court and taken part in lengthy proceedings; the net result of which was the imposition of a few rupees fine only.

## IX.—Hours.

### A.—Factories (see Appendix M).

57. (i) The 60 hours' restriction imposed by the Act, generally speaking, has had little effect so far as the larger industries are concerned, as it merely legalized conditions previously in existence, but in some of the smaller industries such as printing presses, oil mills, etc., it has certainly had the effect of reducing the total weekly hours. In the case of maintenance staff and other non-process workers, the conditions of the various exemption notifications restricting the weekly hours to an average of 60 or 66 hours in any one month has undoubtedly effected a reduction in the number of hours worked and a consequent reduction in wages. Judging from the number of applications for relief from the 60 hours' restriction received from employers from time to time, it is evident that the restriction has had considerable effect.

(ii) The 60 hours per week restriction has had no apparent adverse effect on industry.

58. The daily limits for women and children of 11 hours and 6 hours respectively afford a fair measure of protection and have undoubtedly had some beneficial effect, but in engineering, shipbuilding and other non-textile industries the want of elasticity

or accommodation in hours to meet the demands of the market has been the cause of considerable inconvenience to employers, and it is questionable if any benefit accrues to the worker.

59. It is considered that reduction of the daily limit in respect of women to 10 hours per day would not adversely affect any industry in the province. No industry actually works women more than 10 hours per day. In single-shift jute mills, although the hours for women are specified at 11 per day, extra hands are employed to enable all women to take periods of rest, which are not specified, at least half-an-hour during both the morning and afternoon shifts.

In so far as adult males are concerned, it is considered that in view of the want of elasticity or accommodation in daily hours, the daily limit should be withdrawn and hours restricted only to a weekly maximum. This question will be further enlarged upon when proposed amendments to the Act are put forward. A reduction of the weekly maximum to 55 hours is worthy of consideration.

60. (i) (a) The principle of a rest for recuperation from fatigue is embodied in the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act. There is no substantial evidence that the periods of continuous work as permitted by the Act are excessive, or that the prescribed hour, or half hour as the case may be, for rest is too little. There are no comprehensive records as to the effect of various periods of continuous work on fatigue with respect to the Indian worker. It might be a subject for special investigation but there are no medical records in existence or obvious cases of injury or ill health due to fatigue to justify investigations at present.

(b) Generally the prescribed rest periods coincides with the workers' natural meal times. This may not apply, however, to multiple-shift mills, where the machinery is run continuously throughout the day, as this system necessitates a departure from the laws regarding employment of women in textile factories in Great Britain where the meal times of all women must coincide. There is evidence that, generally speaking, the workers take a meal by habit during the middle of the day and also later when they reach their homes in the evening. The question of meals should not altogether be treated with relation to fatigue from the point of view of actual work within the factory. A large number of workers employed in jute mills have to start for work before 5 o'clock in the morning and it is doubtful whether they prepare any meal before leaving. Again, they do not reach their homes until 8 p.m. or so in the evening when they partake of their principal meal of the day. Meal times and rest should be considered from the point of view of the time they leave their homes and return to them, and also the actual continuous long-period rest they receive at night as a result of the extreme hours to which mills compel them to work during the day.

(ii) With the exception of multiple-shift mills, the prescribed rest periods appear to be suitable, but the existence of conditions as explained above, seems to call for some sort of control in such factories, so that the principles of Chapter IV of the Act may be properly established and also Article 3 of the Geneva Convention observed.

(iii) The hours of work of the majority of non-textile factories are reasonable. They generally conform to a single-shift, so that all workers of a particular factory have the same hours of employment and enjoy a simultaneous mid-day rest. The running of the machinery, therefore, is controlled by the prescribed hours of the factory. This makes for comparatively easy detection of infractions of Chapter IV, and, in consequence, the enforcement of the provisions of that chapter is more certain. Rest is provided during the hottest part of the day and coincides with the time when workers take their meals by force of habit. The division of the hours of rest of Section 21 into two portions of half hour each, together with relief from the complete hours' rest, on a short day, by the proviso to that section, is a recognition of the requirements of the workers and their established habits.

Generally, non-textile factories declare a length of working day less than that permitted by law, and hence the evils of early rising and late return from work do not arise.

These observations, however, do not apply to the hours of employment of jute mills. Both systems of employment, multiple-and single-shift, in that industry are guilty of encroachment on workers' leisure by reason of early departure and late return; but whereas the single-shift guarantees an extended rest period at the most beneficial time during the middle of the day and the precise enforcement of the provisions of Chapter IV, the multiple-shift cannot.

(iv) As a general statement, it may be said that the workers of engineering and miscellaneous non-textile establishments of fair size, enjoy, besides the weekly holiday prescribed under the Act, a half holiday on Saturdays and approximately 16 festival

or religious holidays distributed throughout the year. Jute mill workers on the other hand, employed on the multiple-shift system, have, up to July of this year enjoyed besides their legal weekly holiday, two extra days each week together with festival holidays varying from 9 to 15 days distributed throughout the year. Single-shift workers of the same industry, however, have had only one extra day's holiday each week together with the other holidays already mentioned. The holidays of cotton mill workers are akin to those of jute mill workers on the single-shift system, except that they do not enjoy a half holiday on Saturdays.

61. The general practice is to give the Sunday holiday, and this or a substituted day is rigorously enforced. It can be stated that the large majority of the workers in the province enjoy a full day's rest per week. No change in the law is necessary.

## X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

### A.—Factories.

82. The entry of infants into factories can be prohibited, but if this power were used, an embargo would be placed on female labour in textile factories which would cause grave labour troubles and economic difficulties. Their presence, therefore, has to be tolerated, and for the purpose of avoiding accidents which sometimes occur to little children, one or two tentative attempts have been made to establish creches. These attempts, however, have been more or less unsuccessful, but profitable experience has been gained, and it is hoped will be used to advantage in future ventures. It is difficult to understand why female employees will not take advantage of enclosures or creches provided for the safety of their children, and it would seem that any such welfare work, in which there is possibly a gesture of force, is likely to end in failure.

83. The regulations for women are unsuitable in so far that they permit women to be employed between 5.30 a.m. and 7 p.m., hours which unduly encroach on their leisure. In many cases, women have to leave their homes with children before 5 a.m. in darkness, and get back to their homes in darkness about 7.30 or 8 p.m. The present practice in single-shift jute mills is to allow a 2½ hours' midday rest period. This is obviously desirable. The restriction of the daily limits by half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening, i.e., 6 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., would result in a 10-hour day, provided the 2½ hours' midday rest period is retained. It would also pave the way to a desirable reduction of one hour in the working day of children.

Some form of legislation in connection with the employment of women before and after childbirth seems necessary. Regulations somewhat on the lines of the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act, 1929, might be considered.

84. (i) The hours of work permitted under the Act, viz., six hours per day, are unsuitable from the point of view of education, and should be reduced to five hours. This would work in conveniently so far as the textile industry is concerned, with the proposed 10 hours' working day for women. The adoption of a five hours day would eliminate the necessity of prescribing a rest period.

(ii) The present maximum and minimum ages, viz., 12 to 15 years, is satisfactory and no change is advocated.

85. Section 44A of the Factories Act, which was introduced in the amended Act of 1926 for the purpose of preventing the employment of children in two factories on the same day, is ineffective. A fair amount of double employment is known to exist, but it is impossible for either managers or inspectors to detect it. The evil can only be remedied by compulsory elementary education.

88. The multiple, double, or overlapping shift system of employment is peculiar to approximately 50 per cent. of the jute mills of Bengal, the remainder, together with other textile factories, having adopted the single-shift system of working. The working hours in all other industries are on the single-shift principle.

The shift system in a typical multiple-shift mill is shown below.

*Time-workers*.—A. 5.30 to 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. B. 5.30 to 9.30 a.m. and 2 to 7 p.m. C. 8.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*Piece-workers*.—A. 5.30 to 7 a.m.; 8 to 12 noon and 1.30 to 7 p.m. B. 5.30 to 8 a.m.; 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. C. 5.30 to 9 a.m.; 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. D. 5.30 to 10.30 a.m.; 12 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

*Half-timers (children)*.—A. 5.30 to 10 a.m. B. 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. C. 2.30 to 7 p.m.



It will be observed that the morning starting hour and the evening stopping hour are the extreme limits permitted by the Factories Act for the employment of women and children. Work is continuous over the 13½ hours' period, i.e., the maximum daily output from the machinery is obtained consistent with the limits prescribed for women and children. Such a system is claimed by its sponsors to be satisfactory, in that it enables the jute mill group to satisfy the market on a short week (hitherto four days, now a week of four days and a week of five days alternately) and at the same time retaining sufficient time in reserve for the purpose of accommodating increased demands for their product and the continued control of the market. When that reserve is absorbed, as it is now being absorbed, then the time will have come for the establishment of more factories with consequent possible loss of control. It is understandable, therefore, that such employers will seek, with all the powers and influence at their disposal, to postpone that event and oppose any interference which deprives them of the maximum advantage from their machinery and block.

It is necessary to state what is conceived to be the employers' position, in order to appreciate the difficulties of enforcing the provisions of the Act affecting women and children as embodied in the hours of labour restrictions of Chapter IV. With the multiple-shift system, the mill machinery is in operation continuously for thirteen and a-half hours each day, and it is possible, therefore, for a man, woman or child to be "on call" for that time, provided that the internal discipline of the mill, the management, the routine, and the arrangements made, administrative or otherwise, are insufficient or defective in preventing such an abuse. The point in question, therefore, is, Do conditions which promote abuse of this kind exist in such mills? In the first place, and in so far as concerns mills not provided with near housing accommodation, the system confines a large percentage of employees to the mill premises for the whole of that period of thirteen and a-half hours, since their working day is spread over that period. The intervening periods of rest, whether short or long, are not rest therefore in the true sense of the word. They do not provide the change and complete detachment from the work and influence of the mill that the same leisure would do if enjoyed before the commencing hours of the mill or after the latter has closed down for the day, or if there were no possibility of the workers being "on call" as guaranteed by the single-shift system. In fact, in order to meet the industry's requirements, as understood by multiple-shift employers, the rest periods, from the point of view of the health of the workers, are not beneficially placed. The question regarding what happens when there is a shortage of labour must now be considered. With the multiple-shift system there is maintained within the precincts of the mill a superabundance of labour to satisfy any shift and, therefore, it is reasonable to assume, bearing in mind the policy of the jute mill group outlined above, that a manager will differentiate between this and that person's prescribed hours of labour, even if he is in a position to confound or check the information supplied by his recruiting sirdars? The instrument permitted to inspectors of factories to check abuses of this kind is the employment register, and it goes without saying that where shifts overlap, the essence of precise enforcement as regards hours is precision in recording attendance of workers by employers. It is obvious, and it has been shown by facts and by prosecutions, that precise attendance recording is impossible in a multiple-shift mill, and therefore the establishment of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act must always fail in such circumstances. Wherever there are probabilities of the eleven hours and six hours' limits allowed to women and children being exceeded, there the health of those persons is jeopardized. Wherever there are probabilities of women and children having their intervening rest periods taken away from them to satisfy the continuity of a process and maintenance of an estimated output, there also health is jeopardized. Wherever women and children are compelled to rise early, sometimes at 4.30 a.m., possibly without food, in order to be in the mill at 5.30 a.m., and are unable to reach their homes until about 7.30 or 8 p.m. at night, conditions from a health point of view cannot be accepted as satisfactory. It may be said on behalf of the multiple-shift system that the short week gives a compensatory long period week-end rest, but as a matter of fact the multiple-shift mills have now encroached upon that long week-end rest to suit their own ends.

Another and important aspect of this question is that the multiple-shift system undoubtedly interferes with the customary habits of the workers. By habit the worker takes one of his principal meals of the day between the hours of 12 a.m. and 2 p.m., and the above system cannot guarantee that; in fact it deliberately upsets it to suit manufacturing interests. There is a provision in the English Factories Act which enjoins that the meal times of women, young persons and children shall be simultaneous.

"Meal times to be simultaneous, and employment during meal times forbidden. With respect to meals the following regulations shall (save as is in this Act specially excepted (a)) be observed in a factory and workshop:

(1) All women, young persons and children employed therein shall have the times allowed for meals at the same hour of the day; and

(2) A woman, young person or child shall not, during any part of the times allowed for meals in the factory or the workshop, be employed in the factory or the workshop or be allowed to remain in a room in which a manufacturing process or handicraft is then being carried on."

There are certain exceptions permitted in the English case respecting textile factories, but it lays down that in no case must the meal time arrangements interfere with the customary habits of the workers concerned, so that, judged by the experience of Great Britain, the multiple-shift system is condemned. The early hour of 5.30 a.m. for commencement of work compels employees to prepare their food over night for next day's consumption, and all persons with knowledge of Indian conditions realize the danger of eating stale food.

Regarding the single-shift system of working, the extreme hours permitted by law to women and children are here again the criterion of the mill working day, but with the exception of children all workers have the same hours of employment. Moreover, there is a common rest period in the middle of the day (the hottest period) for the simultaneous enjoyment of meals and rest for all workers. The very nature of this system precludes any possibility of gross irregularities as regards the provisions of Chapter IV with respect to women and men; for once a woman is registered as a worker she works for the whole time the machinery is in motion, the mill hours being within the law. It is possible, however, when labour is short for children registered on a morning shift to be employed, also on the afternoon shift, but with the elimination of the possibilities of illegal employment of women which are inseparable from multiple-shift employment, concentration on child employment becomes possible and administrative methods made more effective.

The evils of early and late employment explained above, resulting from working to the extreme hours permitted by law to women and children, also applies to the single-shift system but obviously in a modified form. On grounds of health, therefore, the present extreme hours which engenders the multiple-shift system should be reduced, thereby shortening the working day. Single-shift mills have hitherto worked for five days of the week but now, in furtherance of the policy of the jute mill group six days are worked, and the weekly hours of adults extended to the limits permitted by Section 27, viz., 60 hours. There is, therefore, no long week-end compensating rest for a long working day or long absence from home for single-shift employees, but, on the other hand, there is no legal enforcement of the long rest in multiple-shift mills. In fact the latter have now encroached upon that rest to meet manufacturing requirements, which shows that, when establishing these systems, health conditions did not receive proper consideration.

There is one very important point which should be noted here and that is that all mills by working to the morning and evening limits permitted by law to women are contravening Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, ratified by India, in so far that female workers do not receive a continuous rest of eleven hours per day. This matter and the proposal to reduce the working day has been commented upon elsewhere, but the underlying interest of both is that of health of workers.

89. *Work of Women and Children in Factories not subject to Act—(i) Use by Local Governments of Section 2 (3) (b).*—There is undoubtedly a large number of factories in Bengal which fail the twenty persons stipulation of Section 2 (3) (a) of the Act for registration purposes. These comprise in the main soorkey mills, rice mills, iron foundries, printing presses, match factories and a miscellaneous collection of establishments in the congested areas of the province. In all of these factories, however, the number of women and children employees can be considered negligible. In one instance only use has been made of Section 2 (3) (b); it was as the result of an attempt by the proprietor of a factory already registered to avoid the administration of the Act by dispensing with the use of power-driven machinery. The majority of these factories are badly situated, and their structures not designed for the housing of machinery and employees. There is, therefore, a limit to the utility of the Act in such cases, for generally the concerns have so little capital that compulsory fencing and structural alterations would probably precipitate liquidation.

(ii) *Advisability of extended application.*—There appears to be no real grounds for the extended application of Section 2 (3) (b) of the Act on account of the few women and children involved. Factories of that class should undoubtedly be subject to some sort of control whether the employees are male, female or children, but authority can be most effective in such cases if it is applied before the premises are actually licensed. Moreover, there should be no consideration of such small concerns becoming registered until the Act can be effectively administered in existing factories. Owing to the difficulty of ascertaining the number of persons actually employed in

small tea factories, however, the extension of the Act under this sub-section is now being considered in respect of these concerns. Another aspect of this case is the position of such employers with respect to the Workmen's Compensation Act. A fatal accident in many of these factories would possibly impose on the manager a compensation payment which would ruin him.

Refer to Appendix "M" (Defects and proposed amendments to the Indian Factories Act), paragraphs 8, 9 and 36.

## XII.—Wages.

99. *Payment in Kind and Allied Problems.*—Little has come to the notice of the Factory Inspection Department regarding matters of this kind. In so far as the establishments of the larger industries are concerned, it can be safely said that the practice of payment in kind does not exist and that managers naturally and probably keep within the requirements of the English Truck Act unknowingly. As regards smaller factories, however, the conditions of employment and the poverty of employers do probably engender abuses of a sort, but it is doubtful whether payment in kind is one of them.

A few complaints have reached the department having bearing on Truck Act matters; two of them referred to the non-payment of wages on account of failure of the concerns in question. An investigation of another revealed the fact that the workers had been housed and fed by the proprietor over a considerable period, but no wages had been paid to them.

106. *Deductions.*—The absence of trade union organization or societies with authority to attend to the interest of workers other than those engaged in industrial establishments, would make it extremely difficult to obtain reliable information as to the extent to which fines are imposed on such workers, although the practice undoubtedly exists in regard to all employment.

Legislation, therefore, would be very difficult to frame for such employment, and also to administer, circumstances which appear to be appreciated by the Government of India, who suggest, in their letter No. L-1418, dated 25th June, 1925, that it would be "impracticable to extend its scope (Legislation) beyond industrial establishments." It appears, therefore, that district magistrates would not be in a position to give useful advice in such matters, since establishments, other than industrial, are excluded in the first instance.

Chambers of Commerce and commercial associations would probably be able to give reliable information as to the extent of such fining systems and the purpose to which such fines are placed in so far as the firms they represent are concerned, but what Government might consider abuses of such systems would obviously be impolitic for them to put forward.

The trade unions which are in existence in this Presidency are weak, and it would be difficult to assert that they exist to uphold or secure employees' legitimate rights. Complaints have been received from such so-called unions, mostly malicious, pointing out infractions of the Factories Act as an offset to deserved dismissals of an employee, etc., but no case regarding the abuse of the fining system has ever been reported to this department by such associations. Information received from labour unions is usually found to be unreliable and a waste of the department's time to investigate.

The fining system may be said to be general in all industrial establishments and fines are generally imposed for (a) breaches of discipline, (b) bad or negligent work or injury to materials and (c) injury to machinery or tools supplied by the employer. (a) and (b) are generally the causes of fines in jute and cotton mills and tea gardens and (a) and (c) in engineering concerns.

As about 80 per cent. of the total labour force in this Province is employed in textile and engineering concerns, instances of fines taken at random from their registers will probably serve to show whether the system is abused and whether it constitutes an evil or not. An inspector of factories has power to inspect employment registers and the wages come under his investigation from the point of view of overtime (Section 31 of the Act). Further as it is the practice on the part of managers to impose fines on subordinates for breaches of the Factories Act and so be in a position to produce evidence of due diligence in the event of prosecution, the inspector is in a position to check up the fining system and detect abuses.

It has been found in jute mills that the majority of fines are inflicted on piece workers and, in particular, weavers for bad and negligent work and injury to material.

The following are cases taken at random from a few mills :—

|                                    | Wages,<br>per<br>week. | Fines.             | Cause.                      | Per cent.<br>of<br>wages. |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A—mill—weavers .. ..               | Rs. a. p.<br>3 14 3    | Rs. a. p.<br>0 2 0 | (b) for bad<br>work.        | 3                         |
| "                                  | 8 8 0                  | 0 4 0              | (b) Do.                     | 3.8                       |
| "                                  | 6 11 6                 | 0 4 0              | (b) Do.                     | 3.7                       |
| "                                  | 6 0 0                  | 0 2 0              | (a) Committing<br>nuisance. | 2                         |
| B—mill—weavers .. ..               | 8 4 0                  | 0 4 0              | (b) For bad<br>work         | 3                         |
| "                                  | 7 13 9                 | 0 4 0              | (b) Do.                     | 3.2                       |
| "                                  | 8 8 0                  | 0 8 0              | (b) Do.                     | 6                         |
| A.—mill—Preparing Depart-<br>ment. | 2 8 0                  | 0 2 0              | (b) Do.                     | 5                         |
| Finishing carding .. ..            | 2 12 0                 | 0 2 0              | (b) Do.                     | 4.5                       |
| Selectors .. ..                    | 8 8 0                  | 0 8 0              | —                           | 6                         |
| Sirdar .. ..                       | 5 8 9                  | 0 8 0              | (b) Bad super-<br>vision.   | 9                         |
| B—mill—Spinner .. ..               | 3 8 0                  | 0 2 0              | (a) For leaving<br>tokens.  | 5                         |
| "                                  | 3 8 9                  | 0 2 0              | (c) For being<br>late.      | 5                         |

With respect to any of the above fines, in no case does it exceed 5 per cent. of the employees' wages where monthly wages is taken and in no case investigated does it appear that an employee has been fined more than once in a month, and all fines are imposed by European supervisors. In the case of A mill, the aggregate of fines per week amounted to Rs. 50, the majority of which were imposed on weavers and the balance on the remaining classes of time workers for breaches of discipline, time keeping, etc., the total wages bill for the week being Rs. 14,000. The registers of workers of another mill showed a wages bill of Rs. 4,200 and fines aggregating Rs. 6-2 annas per week. In the case of B mill the aggregate of fines per week was Rs. 300, Rs. 200 being imposed on weavers for bad work and the remainder on the time workers for breaches of discipline and infractions of the Factories Act: the total pay bill in this case approximated, Rs. 15,000.

In so far as smaller factories are concerned it would be difficult to obtain authentic information. It is said that rice mill owners impose no fines; that is reasonable since skill scarcely arises and there is no question of bad work. Punctuality and discipline does not enter into the question by the very nature of the process.

That there can possibly be no attempt at recovering losses due to bad workmanship on the part of employees may be appreciated from the fact that when a weaver is fined 4 annas the loss to the company in the shape of bad material is from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20, and further, bad material consistently turned out by a mill means possible relegation of the mill to a lower grade by the buyers. In one case recently this has resulted in a loss of Rs. 3,000 per month until the time of regrading 12 months hence, so that if bad work is being done, the only remedy, after the first fine is imposed, is dismissal of the employee responsible—a course which can only be adopted when labour is plentiful.

It has been found that it is not so much the amount of the fine as the generality of its imposition which proves effective.

Some managers try suspension in the case of old employees for breach of discipline or bad work as it is a question of pride. It may be said that abuses creep in by means of transfer of fine to subordinates if a sirdar is fined for bad supervision. This is impossible to detect but, in some mills where managers have encouraged employees to state their grievances, such abuses would be somewhat minimized.

Cotton mills impose similar fines and in approximately the same proportion to wages; warnings are given before they are imposed, and when an employee is found to be doing better work the fines are returned to him in the shape of a bonus.

Information shows in the case of engineering concerns that in no case does the fine exceed 5 per cent. of the employees' wages and the aggregate of fines is negligible compared with the total wages bill. Such fines are generally inflicted for breaches of discipline, arriving late, etc., and injury to tools supplied by the employers. The fines suggest, bearing in mind the value of damaged material, that no effort is made to recover the loss, but the fines are inflicted to prevent re-occurrence of the loss. With several engineering concerns such fines are credited to funds devoted to the benefit of the workers. This practice appears to agree with the law already in force in some countries.

Generally, I am of the opinion that in so far as the bigger factories are concerned, and in which practically 80 per cent. of the labour is concentrated, there is little or no abuse of the fining system, that the fines imposed are fair and reasonable, having regard to the circumstances, and that the workmen personally are made aware of the system before they enter employment. The system, as at present carried on, falls naturally within the chief provisions of the English and other Truck Acts and the recommendations of the English Truck Committee of 1906-08, in that fines are rarely imposed on children (15 years of age) and that fines do not exceed 5 per cent. of the employees' wages (averaged monthly) and that in some cases fines are credited to a fund for the sole benefit of the workers. Further, the fear of strike or loss of labour where only skilled labour is acceptable, is a sufficient deterrent to abuses. As regards smaller concerns, whether or not such abuses exist, it is difficult to discover, but as such concerns only represent a small percentage of the total labour employed, expensive legislation for their special control in this respect would not be justified.

107. *Periods of wage-payment.*—(iii) Information has reached the department on one or two occasions respecting workers being unpaid as the result of failure of the concerns to which the workers belonged, the amounts due covering several months of wages. In such cases, therefore, some legislation seems called for to minimize the workers' loss by restricting the delay in payment of wages as a matter of course.

Further, the possibility of abuses by contractors in the payment of their men can be readily imagined when there is no influence and control by the principal. It is quite possible that labour dissatisfaction, on occasions, has had its origin in the machinations of contractors or sirdars in the matter of wages: the contractor or sirdar effectively passing on responsibility to the shoulders of the employers.

The maintenance of wages registers by a contractor, however, the establishment of rates of pay and the recording of hours worked, etc., would probably be necessary for the elimination of such abuses, but would be a matter of considerable difficulty and general harassment in present circumstances.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

115. (i) There has been no controversy with concerns other than jute mills on the question of restriction or modification of hours which would bring to the fore the problem of the effect of working hours on production. It is recognized of course by all reasonable employers that there is a limit to the advantage of over employment and that there is a tendency towards loss and not gain during hours worked beyond those that they have found reasonable by experience. The voluntary payment of overtime money for work beyond prescribed hours is a recognition of the fact that the worker must be stimulated in some way to maintain the efficiency he usually gives during the prescribed day. The voluntary establishment of a working day by the majority of employers, less than the limit allowed by law, together with a simultaneous rest for all workers, is tantamount to a declaration of what is reasonable and efficient in India, both from the point of view of the employer and the worker.

As indicated above, however, a certain group of jute mills using the multiple shift system is otherwise disposed towards this problem of a standard day and limits for their respective workers.

The matter has arisen in consequence of the abortive attempts of the department to enforce the legal limits of employment in such mills, and in order to ensure the survival of the law and the protection of workers, it has been proposed to declare the multiple shift illegal and promote the simple employment (single shift) established in other industries. The employers concerned maintain that the change to the latter system would involve a loss of production, but from information gathered from managers who have had experience of both systems, it is certain that there is a gain in production and all round efficiency.

116. The efficiency of the worker is a function of his health and contentment, and since the proposals and recommendations contained in Appendix "M" have for their object the improvement of the latter, increased efficiency is bound to result from their establishment. It may be said, however, that the abolishment of the multiple shift system would be a definite step towards greater efficiency. It affects a large portion of the industrial population of Bengal, and hence, apart from its capacity to promote frustration of the law, the adoption of such recommendations should have prime consideration.

#### XVII.—Administration.

138. Taking workers as a whole in Bengal, it cannot be said that they are acquainted with factory legislation. The Bengali workers, who perhaps are more literate, and workers engaged in the more skilled or engineering trades, have perhaps some distorted notion of the purpose of the Act, but even that knowledge does not appear to be any help to the administration. Textile workers are, however, almost entirely illiterate and, therefore, posting of abstracts in the vernacular, which is an epitome of the chief requirements of the Act, fails in its object, and that is to acquaint the workers with the protection which is legally due to them. Whatever knowledge they possess of such legislation must come by hearsay, the interpretation by sirdars and perhaps interested agitators, both with ulterior motives. Children in jute mills are afraid of the inspector instead of looking upon him as their protector, which attitude is really a reflection on the understanding and ignorance of their parents and the influence of sirdars who control both.

Complaints do certainly reach the department purporting to come from workers pointing out breaches of the Act, which might indicate to a casual observer a superficial knowledge of the Act, or, at any rate, an understanding of its purpose and a desire for its rigorous enforcement, but generally there is some ulterior motive underlying the complaints, more or less unconnected with Factory Act matters, and suggesting sirdar or clerk influence for purposes of their own. It is the general experience of the department that there is no real anxiety on the part of the workers for the precise enforcement of the provisions of the Act, and that as long as their pay is not interfered with by employers and that they get extra pay for extra time worked, they are not much interested in Factory Act requirements for the purpose of their protection.

It may still be said therefore that a worker is completely occupied in the business of keeping his job; he works for himself and has little mind for anything which involves self-sacrifice or collective help.

139. (i). Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors of Factories, Bengal, are recruited entirely from men well qualified and experienced in both the theoretical and practical sides of the engineering profession. Assistant Inspectors work conjointly and directly under the supervision of Inspectors. Appointments as "Inspector" are open to both Europeans and Indians in equal competition but up to the present the one Indian Inspector on the staff graduated through the Assistant Inspector class. Appointments as "Assistant Inspector" are reserved for Indians. Full-time Certifying Surgeons of Factories, attached to the department for the purpose of certifying the ages of children and their fitness for employment, are recruited from the Indian Medical Department.

Prior to the War, the staff of the department consisted of the chief inspector and two inspectors, but as the result of the changes brought about by International Conventions and the rapid developments in labour legislation, gradual increases in the number of inspectors were necessary, until in 1927 when the last new post was created, the staff reached its present strength. The personnel of the department now consists of (a) chief inspector; (b) 6 inspectors (5 Europeans and 1 Indian); (c) 3 assistant inspectors (Indians); and (d) 2 full-time certifying surgeons of factories.

The staff, prior to 1927, was inadequate for the effective administration of the Act. Three hundred and fifteen factories remained uninspected in 1924, 291 in 1925, 243 in 1926, and 160 in 1927. In 1928, 3 inspectors were absent during the greater part of the year on home leave, but in spite of this depletion in staff, the number of uninspected factories fell to 21, the reason being found in the opening of a branch office and the permanent posting of an inspector in the tea districts. The consequent dearth of inspectors at the head office during the year was a serious handicap to efficient inspection work in the Calcutta industrial area. The number of factories on the register at the close of the year 1928 was 1,384 and the number of visits made throughout the year, including special enquiry or investigatory work, totalled 2,478. Two hundred and thirty-three factories were visited twice, 86 three times and 121 more than three times. In addition, 103 visits were paid for various purposes, to small concerns not on the register.

The ratio of the number of inspectors to the number of factories, however, is only one factor of any basis on which an opinion on the adequacy or otherwise of the staff may be formed. Consideration must be given to the regular loss of the services of Inspectors absent on home leave, to the measure of support accorded by the courts in prosecution cases, and to the volume of investigatory and advisory work in connection with matters appertaining to labour and labour legislation, which now devolves on the department.

Under ordinary circumstances, inspectors are granted from 6 to 8 months' home leave every 3 or 3½ years and therefore, as an approximate average, the services of at least one inspector may at all times be discounted. The inadequacy of the penalties imposed by the majority of trying magistrates in cases of infringement of the factories Act is a serious handicap in the effective administration of the Act. Deterrent fines would result in a considerable reduction in the work of the department and the number of inspections necessary would be reduced.

From the experience of past years, it is considered that, under the present circumstances, the creation of additional posts (say one inspector and one assistant inspector) sufficient to cover the absence of inspectors on leave, would render the staff adequate for the efficient administration of the Act, provided that steps are taken to assure reasonable support from the courts. In the event of a decision to bring factories employing 10 persons or more within the scope of the Act, still further augmentation of the staff would be necessary.

(iv) The results of prosecution cases, on the whole, have been inequitable. Many more cases than should be necessary have had to be instituted, a considerable amount of the work of the inspectors has been stultified and the principles of the Act, to some extent, jeopardised. It is often more effective to rely on the fear of punishment than to demonstrate the weakness of the penal sections by prosecution proceedings in court. Small fines are met with indifference and very often have the reverse from the desired effect. Particularly in the case of illegal employment of labour, the financial gain which accrues at the expense of a small fine, is a direct encouragement to continued deliberate infringement.

In factories, other than jute mills, the number of prosecutions under the various chapters of the Act, viz., Health, Sanitation, Safety, Illegal employment, Submission of returns, etc., have been fairly evenly distributed, but in jute mills it is interesting to note that approximately 94 per cent. of the cases concerned the illegal employment of labour. Out of the total of 270 cases shown in the statement, a total of 253 were on account of labour infractions. One hundred and twenty-six were for the illegal employment of adults, 104 for the illegal employment of children and 23 for default in the maintenance of the Employment Register. The multiple shift system of working which is still in force in about 50 per cent. of jute mills is primarily responsible for the large number of infractions of the employment provisions of the Act. The working hours of these mills spread over a 13½ hours day and with the system of overlapping shifts which readily lends itself to collusion on the part of time-babus, sirdars and the labour itself, it is impossible for either managers or inspectors to check even approximately, the total infractions which daily occur. It is seldom possible for the inspector to take the names of more than a few people discovered working illegally as when it becomes known that he is in the mill, large numbers of children and adults speedily make their exit, or are driven out by the babus and sirdars. Further, in many cases, where illegal employment is evident, the various means resorted to by time-babus and sirdars to confound the inspector, makes it exceedingly difficult and often impossible to obtain evidence sufficient to support a prosecution.

Due to the large number of prosecutions now being instituted, managers and their lawyers have gained considerable experience in taking advantage of any little technical defect in the law and it is now customary to engage an experienced lawyer to conduct the proceedings on behalf of the Crown. A few cases have been unduly protracted and the fines insufficient to cover the expense incurred by Government. Particulars and comments on typical cases are given in recent Annual Reports on the administration of the Act.

Speaking generally, adequate fines when imposed, together with the natural reluctance of most managers to appear in court in answer to a charge of violation of the Act, have had the effect of obtaining for labour a fair measure of protection, but if the penal sections of the Act are to be really effective and irregularities kept within reasonable limits, fines commensurate with the offence must be imposed in all cases, and shift systems must be subject to some form of Government control.

## APPENDIX C (1) (abridged).

Statement showing the Statistics of Accidents in Bengal during the years 1919-1928.

| Year.      | Fatal. | Serious. | Minor. | Total. |
|------------|--------|----------|--------|--------|
| 1919 .. .. | 49     | 432      | 657    | 1,138  |
| 1920 .. .. | 71     | 598      | 772    | 1,441  |
| 1921 .. .. | 60     | 534      | 824    | 1,418  |
| 1922 .. .. | 60     | 606      | 943    | 1,609  |
| 1923 .. .. | 76     | 627      | 967    | 1,670  |
| 1924 .. .. | 49     | 731      | 1,442  | 2,222  |
| 1925 .. .. | 79     | 909      | 1,692  | 2,680  |
| 1926 .. .. | 76     | 1,123    | 1,811  | 3,010  |
| 1927 .. .. | 66     | 1,165    | 2,320  | 3,551  |
| 1928 .. .. | 79     | 1,204    | 2,374  | 3,657  |

## APPENDIX M.

*The Indian Factories' Act, 1911 (Act X I F of 1911).*

As modified up to 1st June, 1926.

*Defects and Proposed Amendments.*

1. The Act in essence is an English instrument, English in conception and principles, and has been founded on the main provisions of the equivalent English legislation.

2. In order, therefore, to appreciate the object of the various provisions of the Indian Act, their scope and efficacy as ascertained by experience, it is necessary to analyse the English Act as regards extent of application, and so bring into proper relief the fact that the final form of the latter is the product of evolution which all interests have helped to shape, and that as far as the Act in India is concerned, there is still much to be provided in principle, if and when conditions are found to favour the establishment of such provisions. In brief, therefore, the English Act applies to (a) Factories, (b) Workshops, and, in general, under the Indian Factories Act (a) is covered by Section 2 (3) (a) of the Act and (b) by Section 2 (3) (b). Practically speaking, the English Act differentiates between textile factories and non-textile factories, and as the conditions of employment in the former type from the health point of view of the workers are considered more harmful, the provisions applicable are much more stringent. Under the Indian Factories Act there is no such differentiation; all factories of all industries being treated alike with perhaps the possible exception of factories using lead compounds in their processes, but conditions are such in India that even that extra protection may be considered more theoretical than practical.

3. In the evolution of the provisions of the English Factories Act, a just distinction has been made between adult males and all other classes of worker. Quite rightly, men are supposed to be able to look after themselves. English industrial history proves that; generally speaking, therefore, the only parts of the Act which apply to them relate to health and safety, cleanliness, fencing of machinery, means of escape in the event of fire, and dangerous trades. Of the other classes of worker, viz., females, young persons and children; women and children receive the protection of the general provisions as to health and safety, together with a great number of special regulations designed for the same end. Their working hours are exactly defined, meal times stipulated and holidays legally provided for, and stringent conditions regarding overtime employment imposed. With children, naturally the same protection is given as to the other classes but their hours are shorter and the health and safety provisions are more stringent. Since the Act of 1920, however, children below the age of 14 years are forbidden to work in factories or workshops altogether. The difficulties of administration of the Indian Factories Act, which is an adaptation of the English Act, can be clearly appreciated when it is observed that the English Act is an outgrowth of the protection given to children in the textile trades, and that, since the first enactment, other industries and classes of worker have come up for protection, all with their special peculiarities and difficulties and each covered by a separate enactment. These various enactments have been consolidated from time to time, but in the consolidation the special protection to the



various industries and classes of worker have been steadfastly maintained. The Indian Factories Act attempts to commence where the English Act ends, by embracing all industries and conditions, social and otherwise, far worse than those obtaining in England at the time of the original enactment. By a series of simply phrased provisions, the Indian Act endeavours to establish practically perfection of conditions of employment at the onset of India's industrial era; the provisions are applicable to all classes of factories and workers in general, with an attempt to accommodate particular classes of workers and processes by inclusion of exemption provisions, with local powers to frame conditions and provisos. The Indian Factories Act has not been evolved. The peculiarities of Indian conditions and labour have not been allowed to make themselves properly felt during the process of law-making and have, therefore, not helped in shaping provisions to which all interests are amenable. The Act, foreign in form, has been imposed on workers and establishments not parties to its evolution, and so the present position resolves itself into an attempt at enforcing something in advance of Indian industrial conditions.

4. In the consolidated English Factories Act, all interests have been properly and progressively represented, the conditions which have been imposed are not so rigid as to hinder industrial progress, and accommodation is provided for such further improvements as may be dictated by experience and progress. The provisions are abreast of the times and no further, and have been so framed that they do not presuppose an ultra efficient administration, in advance of the capacity of the administration to supply. They simply record a compromise of what the various interests desire. In India, however, the provisions have been thrust on the workers in their almost finally pruned form, against their will, instead of being wrested from employers progressively in accordance with the workers' own estimate and conception of protection. This has a tremendous bearing on their real necessity. The result is that the principles of the Act have been established in Bengal not so much by enforcement of the letter of the law, but by the wisdom and accommodation of inspectors, and the prosperity of the dominant industries. In fact, in India, the letter of the factory law is its own frustration; its brevity and lack of accommodation cannot withstand the test of the courts. The ensuing proposals, therefore, are based on the idea of greater accommodation to all industries, so that legislation may become truly progressive and may be fostered along lines as natural as the English provisions, and so that protection to workers may be true in fact, relying on the power of the courts, and not so much on the power of inspectors to interpret to what extent the Act can reasonably be enforced.

5. *Chapter I—Definition of "Employed."*—Accidents have been reported to the department occurring in places remote from the factory premises to which the workers belong, or otherwise outside the precincts of the factory. Engineering works and shipbuilding yards, to a large extent, come under this category, and it appears that, as the Act stands, there can be no control over such workers either from the point of view of accident prevention or overwork. Further, such workers appear to be inadmissible for the purpose of computation of the 20 persons' stipulation of Section 2 (3) (a) of the Act. This seems to be inequitable, for undoubtedly there is a considerable amount of outside labour of this description needing protection from long hours; hence the Act should be made applicable in certain respects. Obviously the whole Act cannot be applied as a manager has no control and little influence over conditions outside his factory, but the inspector should be in a position to eliminate hazard at the place of work, whether the latter is within the precincts of the factory or without, and the names of such workers should be recorded in a register accessible to the inspector. The same observation applies to workers of a building company engaged in repairing or extending the premises of a factory already registered. Their work at present is not embraced by the term "manufacturing process" of the registered factory, so that those workers receive no protection. The definition of "employed" in Section 2 should be amended, therefore, to embrace the above classes of workers.

6. *Section 2 (3) (a).—Definition of "Factory."*—In consequence of the above suggestion, the definition of factory should be amended so as to include concerns specializing in outside work of the above nature, which at present fall short of the 20 persons' stipulation within their own works. This addition might take the form of an extra sub-section 2 (3) (c), so that, by an addition to section 53, by which the Governor-General in Council is vested with special powers, only particular portions of the Act may apply to such concerns. At the present moment, wharves, jetties, docks, railway sidings, warehouses, quays and buildings under construction, do not come under the Factories Act, although in such places the most dangerous hazards recorded, *viz.*, falling weights, persons falling, rolling stock, etc., exist. Under the English Factories Act such workmen are given protection, although limited, and it seems necessary, therefore, that similar protection should be given to Indian workers. The present definition of factory, or main definition, restricts application

of protection to workers engaged in manufacturing processes, and hence there should be an additional sub-section which, together with the additional provision mentioned above, would allow certain sections of the Act to be applied to them.

7. *Section 2 (4) Definition of "Occupier."*—The term "managing agents" has a special meaning in India, and it is not clear whether it was the intention of the legislature that "managing agents," in the Indian sense, should be rendered liable for offences. It is known that managers have restricted powers of improvement and alteration of conditions within the factory, and that they simply have to carry out the policy and systems of control as arranged and laid down by managing agents. In fact, the manager is liable to become penalized for offences for which he is not responsible, and outside his powers of elimination. In other words, the managing agents usurp the functions of the manager in many ways, and, in particular, wherever enforcement of the provisions of the Act interferes with the exigencies of the business. It should, therefore, be made clear that managing agents may become liable for infractions, without the manager having to jeopardize his position by proving in court due diligence to the full extent of the powers that the agents have conferred upon him. The Act provides that the name of the manager shall be furnished, and in the same manner, it should also provide that the name of the responsible director in the managing agency firm be furnished.

8. *Chapter III.—Section 9.*—At present there are four clauses to this section designed with the object of ensuring a pure and suitable atmosphere in factories, but there is one condition which appears to have been entirely overlooked by the framers and which indicates a too strict adherence to European conditions. This is connected with temperature. There is nothing in the Act which enables an inspector to order structural alterations necessary for the reduction of temperature to ensure reasonable working conditions. This lacuna in the Act has been felt by inspectors in administering the health provisions of Chapter III, and it was the subject of comment and suggestions in Mr. Parsons' Report on Humidification in Cotton Mills. It is admitted that a standard of temperature can never be a criterion of comfort; the standard to be followed must embrace the factors of temperature, air movement, and relative humidity. It is recognized also that different factories and different industries must require, by reasons of peculiarities of process, different standards. These standards can only be properly obtained after prolonged investigations by authorities competent to handle such matters, but in the meantime relief to factory workers can be secured by including in the Act a provision empowering the Chief Inspector or Inspector to enforce simple structural alterations, or other simple improvements in factories where the temperature is obviously excessive and remediable by simple means. Such a proposal has for its aim a stricter control over smaller establishments in the structural designing of which, as shown particularly by the low position and material of roofs, the health of workers has not been taken into consideration. The larger and well constructed factories of the principal industries would rarely be affected by these additional powers. Temperature control should be included in an additional clause to section 9 of Chapter III.

9. There is one other matter which has exercised the minds of those responsible for the administration of the Act. Whatever powers have been conferred on Inspectors under this chapter to improve the health and safety of workers, have been frustrated, in the case of smaller factories, by their obvious inability to withstand the expense involved in those improvements. The adequate establishment of such a provision would, in the majority of cases, precipitate failure or liquidation.

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of course, that enterprise should have full scope, but it is equally as true that there is mutual obligation between employers and workers, and they should not be compelled to forego the fundamentals of protection in the hope of a future benefit in which they will never partake. The solution to the problem of the health of workers in small factories, in this chapter, is the application of authority before the workers are allowed to build or occupy premises for manufacturing purposes. It is the duty of the Health Department to develop into a department of preventive medicine, and there should be some provision in the Act which compels and to give consideration to the health requirements of workers, and to the site of their concerns, without the administering authority being able to perpetuate the use of its powers of remedy after establishment. The perpetual use of its powers of remedy after establishment of workers' huts and structures is an evil, from the view-point both of health and of the real remedy lies before the factory is started, not after it is established, and the real remedy lies before the factory is started, not after it is established. There is no provision in the equivalent acts of European countries compelling the factory owner to consult, yet prior consultations take place as a matter of course, and the real remedy lies before the factory is started, not after it is established. The adequate establishment of a provision in municipal acts to the effect that

the site and structure of a factory must conform to the requirements of the Indian Factories Act, or chief inspector of factories, before a license to occupy a site or commence manufacture can be granted.

10. *Chapter IV.—Section 21 (1) (a) (ii).*—In framing this sub-section it was the intention of the legislature to provide rest time for workers in agreement with the habits of the workers concerned. It was the intention to permit the division of the hour's rest of (1) (a) (i) into two portions of half hour each, with a limiting period of continuous work between, of five hours, those rests being distributed throughout the working day in the most convenient way to meet the worker's requirements, provided the five hours' continuous working period was not exceeded. As the section stands, however, it appears that both half-hour rests must be given before the seventh hour of work commences. This is wide of the intention of the legislature. The sub-section, therefore, should be amended to restore the original intention, as its present form has given rise to administrative difficulties. The following amended sub-section is therefore suggested :—

“ At the request of the employees concerned, periods of rest at intervals not exceeding five hours, of not less than half-hour each, the aggregate of rest each day not being less than at the rate of one hour for every completed six hours of work, rest being an idle period preceded and succeeded by work.”

This would maintain the principle that a proportionate amount of rest is required for a proportionate amount of work done.

11. *Section 21 (1) (b).*—It is provided in this sub-section that a child may be employed continuously for five and a half hours without harm. A recommendation, is made below, on section 23 of the Act, that the working day of children should be restricted to five hours only. If adopted, sub-section (b) will become redundant.

12. *Section 23 (b).*—These limits were determined mainly by considerations arising from the conditions of child employment in textile factories, the principal users of child labour. Their conditions of employment have been further influenced by the conditions of employment of parents. The limiting hours of employment of the latter are determined by the restriction on females, so that in actual practice, and in so far as it concerns jute mill employment in Bengal, many children, although protected by a short working day, have to leave their homes at about 4.30 to 5 in the morning in the dark, and return in the evening, about 7.30 to 8 also in the dark, in order to satisfy the employers' requirements of a continuous output from their machinery during the extreme hours prescribed by law. A reduction in the limits to 6 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. for children would be a step in the proper direction and, by its influence on adult employment, would tend towards the establishment of a shorter day.

13. *Section 23 (c).*—This section is closely connected with the hours provisions for females. It is proposed below to reduce the working day for women to 10 hours, and it is considered that children's working hours should be an exact sub-multiple of that figure. Such an arrangement would tend towards the abolition of overlapping and complicated systems of shifts for children. A working day for children of five hours only, therefore, is proposed, and this arrangement can be easily fitted in with a system of compulsory primary education. A longer day, with wide limits of application, tends to encourage a system of overlapping shifts, and, in view of its abuses, the latter cannot easily be associated with an education system on a part-time basis.

14. *Section 24.*—One of the first things which occurs to anyone studying the conditions of female employment in jute mills, is the lack of wholesomely regulated family life outside working hours. It is obvious that, for greater contentment, economy in living, and family association, the meal times for women and children should not be distributed throughout the day, but should take place simultaneously. This principle has been recognized in England, and embodied in the English Factories Act, and a similar provision ought to be applied to India.

15. The need for greater restriction on female employment has also been brought to the fore on account of jute mills employing women to the extreme morning and evening limits permitted by law to women. The present limits, viz., 5.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., are a breach of article 3 of the Geneva Convention on the night rest of women, and, as in the case of children, many leave their homes about 5 a.m. and do not return until about 7.30 p.m. For these reasons the extreme hours should be reduced to 6 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Also, the present 11 hours working day for women should be reduced to 10, and a lengthy mid-day rest period should be assured. Eleven hours each day, the present extreme limiting hours, the distributed meal times, and the evils which these three factors can cause when in operation simultaneously, obviously require reviewing.

16. The shorter day and associated restrictions would promote a simultaneous rest of adequate duration for women and children during the hottest part of the day, a condition of industrial employment which is established by law in Great Britain,

where the principle that the system of employment will not interfere with the habits of the workers, is maintained. At the same time the suggested restrictions would have the effect, in an indirect way, of promoting the abolition of the multiple shift system in jute mills; a method of progress which the Labour Commission of 1908 strongly favoured.

17. *Section 26.*—The aim of this section is to protect employees from overwork by requiring certain information to be given to those responsible for the enforcement of the restricted working day. The assumption is that workers in India are not able to look after themselves, thus necessitating a departure from the English Act in which there is no equivalent provision, at any rate, in so far as adult male employees are concerned. The object of the section has been rendered nugatory to a very large extent by the manifold possibilities of exemption under section 30. In other words, the existence of section 30 demonstrates the general futility of section 26. India is not industrialized to the extent that she has a large number of long established businesses which can anticipate, rely on, and arrange for, orders and work with precision, hence flexibility of accommodation in fluctuating markets must, as far as possible, be allowed. The present arrangement of declaration of specified hours with immediate notification of any change in the latter, together with the consequential rest rearrangements, is not conducive to industrial progress, and, in actual fact, cannot be enforced. Practically any industry may obtain indirect relief from it under section 30. This position has arisen through the failure to treat each industry separately from the point of view of labour protection and according to its own special progress. India has reversed the evolutionary process of labour protection; it has attempted to apply a series of strict conditions to all industries, and has assumed that the conditions of English employment are available to aid their enforcement. Legislation in advance of public opinion can never be effectively administered, and to bring factory law, as it stands, more in line with current events and understanding, section 26, in so far as it applies to adult male workers, should be abolished. There is evidence that workers are now able, to some extent, to look after themselves, and are in a position to defend and retain by collective support, privileges which they have long enjoyed. The general regulation making powers proposed to be conferred on the Governor-General in Council, in a new section, will embrace any necessary application of section 26 to adult males employed in certain arduous trades, or those subject to complicated shift systems. In any such application of that provision, however, to adult workers of any industry, the points of view of all interests should be obtained by means of advisory bodies to the Governor-General, consisting of representatives of all the interests concerned. This innovation will be enlarged upon later in considering the exemption section of the Act. Jute mills, for instance, should have their shifts regulated whenever it is found that the arrangement of the hours of employment promotes abuses of other provisions, and interferes with the general administration of the Act for protected workers. Therefore, the original powers of the Inspector to approve of a system of shifts should be revived, and should either take the shape of a new sub-clause to this section, for general application, or find expression amongst those series of suggested regulations applicable to the jute mill industry. In addition to this, and for general application, there should be a positive declaration against the multiple, overlapping, or relay system of shift working. The toleration of that system has actually negated the shortened day as envisaged by the Labour Commission of 1908. Indirect control has failed in Bengal in so far as this particular is concerned, and it has also failed apparently in England; which fact evidently induced that country to use more direct methods (see the amendment to the 10 hours Act of 1895).

18. *Section 26* should still of course apply to women and children, a condition which is provided also in the English Factories Act.

19. *Section 27.*—The abolition of section 26, as applied to adult males, would give industries flexibility to meet fluctuations of work. It is also proposed to withdraw the daily limit section 28, and this will further remove irksome restrictions. The weekly limit should be reduced to 55 hours; this implies a ten hour day for five days and a half-day on Saturday, a holiday long enjoyed by workers thus becoming indirectly enforced. In that limit, when jute mill conditions are borne in mind, article 3 of the Geneva Convention regarding women and night employment, is preserved indirectly; also there is an indirect encouragement towards a shorter day for adult males, and simultaneous mid-day rest for women and children. Further, the weekly limit provides, automatically, a proportionate compensatory rest for workers who elect to work, or are compelled to work, a shorter week than five and a half days with a longer and more intensive day; a principle which has as far as circumstances permitted, been strictly adhered to in Bengal in framing the conditions respecting exemptions from the present maximum day.

20. *Section 28.*—As indicated above there should be no restriction on the daily employment of adult males. If industries are to become properly established and

consolidated as understood in Europe, they must arrive at that state through the adult workers. Protection cannot be divorced from self-help, and the latter is an associate of skill and education. Apart therefore from the requirements of manufacturers to be able to meet fluctuations in work from day to day, a condition which always arises where industries are not consolidated or are comparatively new, the adult worker also requires full scope to react to changing circumstances and, by experience, to help himself to select, decide and express collectively, the type and extent of control he requires.

21. Without such support no legislative control can be made absolutely effective. Most industries feel the need sometime or other of working their male employees beyond the eleven hours a day, and as Section 30 (2) is too sluggish in action to give the requisite immediate relief and flexibility, the Act should be amended to eliminate Section 28.

22. *Chapter V, Section 30.*—This section is a recognition of the fact that the main provisions of the Act are too stringent or too inelastic for general application, and that different industries have peculiarities which must be legally provided for. In this section an attempt has been made to provide elasticity by cataloguing processes according to their academic merits of continuity, intermittency, etc. This attempt at generalizing, however, in a few clauses has resulted in lack of precision, with the attendant evil that all industries may, by a wide interpretation of the section, institute complete or partial claims for relief from Chapter IV of the Act. The total nullification of the provisions of that chapter is prevented, however, by the fact that any claim must be to the satisfaction of the local Government. In actual fact, sanction or disapproval of a claim rests on the recommendation of the Chief Inspector of Factories, whose work should not be to pronounce on the intricacies of this or that factory or industry, but to carry into effect what the various industries have found they can answer for under present conditions and circumstances. In carrying into effect this section the chief inspector is really being asked to replace by thought and reasoning, what has been the product of many minds in Great Britain over generations of industrial controversy, resulting in separate enactments, subsequently consolidated. To repeat the introductory paragraph to this note, the English Act is an evolutionary effort by which all industries are completely or partially protected according to their need for and amenability to protection. In all such Acts, however, the difficulties of industries have been properly and effectively presented. Failing separate enactments, therefore, on all matters which might be the subject of claims for relief under Section 30, arrangements should be made so that the views of all interests may be brought to bear on all exemption claims. This obviously is an All-India matter, and should be brought into effect by powers conferred on the Governor-General in Council to make regulations appertaining to any industry. The framing of these separate regulations should be the work of bodies representative of the various industries throughout India. Regulations so framed would have a fair chance of being enforced with precision, and would eliminate the chaos of provisos, conditions and interpretations as between province and province.

23. *Section 32A.*—The subject of this section concerns particular industries and special classes of workers in any industry, and should be dealt with specially by regulations. The section, therefore, should be deleted, and be included in the treatment applicable to the subject matter of Section 30.

24. *Chapter VI, Section 34.*—The subject of accidents, their classification and recording, should be dealt with on an All-India basis for the purpose of inter-provincial as well as international comparison. As the Act stands, provinces have powers to make their own arrangements as to notification, recording and classification, so that there can be no reasonable analyses, from an All-India or international viewpoint, of the totals, severity and causes of accidents, statistics of which are presented annually to the Government of India by all provinces.

25. The position now is that a worker permanently losing the use of a limb or suffering permanent disablement, is classified in the same degree as a worker temporarily disabled to the extent of being absent from duty for more than twenty days and ultimately recovering full capacity for work. Similarly, a factory employing three thousand workers daily throughout the year and sustaining one fatal accident during a year is bracketed as being just as hazardous as a small concern employing twenty-five persons also sustaining one fatal accident during the same period. The same consideration applies to "serious" and "slight" accidents. Further, a factory working eleven hours per day and sustaining a certain number of accidents appears just as dangerous from the point of view of present statistics as another factory with the same number of accidents but working fewer hours per day, week or year. The degree of danger in different industries, factories, trades or occupations, or methods of employment, is not made apparent under the present system of compilation of statistics, so that devices and general measures for accident prevention cannot be

justified statistically. Furthermore, the effect of fencing and the general administration of the Act in accident prevention year after year, are not made evident in present statistics, on account of the nullifying effect of bringing new factories and newly discovered factories on the register.

26. Accidents should be classified according to the recommendations of the Conference of Labour statisticians at Geneva in 1924, viz., (a) according to industries, (b) according to causes, (c) location of injury, (d) nature of injury, (e) degree of disability, and (f) responsibility. "Degree of disability" should be further divided into (1) fatal, and (2) non-fatal, and the latter again into "temporary" and "permanent" disability.

27. "Temporary" disability should be estimated according to an "absence from work" schedule, and "permanent" by a schedule of percentages agreeing with the Workmen's Compensation Act schedules. Accidents thus classified according to "absence from employment," permanent and fatal being weighted in that respect by an arbitrary schedule, should then be reduced to a common basis of time exposure to risk. The two most influencing factors, viz., number of employees and hours of labour, are thus properly included in the latter expression. Accidents so classified would bring into proper relief all the matters outlined above, which are hidden in present statistics. As the result of a conference with the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay, a common classification as to "cause" has already been made, but the adoption of the remaining divisions of the proposed classification must be decided by the Central Government.

28. *Section 35 (Register of Workers).*—The difficulty of enforcing the maintenance of this register in jute mills has raised a doubt whether the register as at present prescribed in the rules meets the intention of the legislature. Provincial Governments have interpreted the section as referring to an "attendance register," wherein not only are the workers' names, occupations and specified hours of employment given but also their daily attendance, although the latter item has not been specifically included in the wording of the section. This use of the register of workers has arisen from the daily and weekly restrictions on hours of employment in Chapter IV of the Act; it was intended to be an instrument to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of that chapter. Apart from jute mills, the establishment of those provisions has given little anxiety where the rest intervals, working day, and limits are general throughout the factory, and applicable to all workers. As a matter of fact, in the latter case, the register in its extended form is redundant. The criterion of the form of register, and what it shall disclose, has been determined by the difficulties of the worst form of employment experienced, viz., jute mill employment. When the type of register for that class of industry was first considered, one of the first essentials put forward by the Factories Department was that there should be provided in the register columns showing the "entry" and "departure" of each person each day, to enable an inspector to check the actual hours worked by every employee against the prescribed hours of employment. This, however, was not accepted, and in consequence a type of register satisfying the views of employers but futile and inadequate for ensuring establishment of the provisions of Chapter IV of the Act was adopted. The difficulties of enforcement of such a register have arisen in applying the Act only to those mills which have adopted the multiple, overlapping or "relay" system of working. In such concerns the law permits a thirteen and a-half hour's working day for the machinery, and this, with a prescribed maximum day of eleven hours for adults and six for children, together with the enforced rest periods interspersed, and batches of adult males having different prescribed hours, and batches of adult females also having different prescribed hours, has produced chaos in so far as Chapter IV of the Act is concerned. No manager and no inspector with all the goodwill in the world and the maximum of co-operation can guarantee the provisions of the above chapter being established under such conditions. With the reliance on a defective instrument—the register—the position becomes more impossible. Experience has proved that an attendance register in any form is absolutely useless for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the employment provisions of the Act in jute mills. There is no doubt that the only way in which the working hours of jute mill employees can be controlled is by controlling the working hours of the mill. If the multiple or overlapping system of shifts is declared illegal or made impossible, either directly or indirectly, by either of the proposed methods suggested previously, the register difficulty for the majority of workers will be eliminated. It is obvious from the construction of Section 35 that a "register of workers," and not an "attendance register" was contemplated, as the legislature anticipated that the restriction on the employment of women and children would have the indirect effect of establishing a standard and simultaneous working day for all adult jute mill workers. Experience, however, has shown that it has not been effective in preventing a continuance of the complicated "relay" system in which machinery is maintained in continuous operation for the whole thirteen and a-half hours.

29. In the framing of Section 35 the equivalent section of the English Act has been a guide, but the English General Register for the latter only requires the following :—

*Part 1.*—(a) Name of occupier ; (b) Address ; (c) Nature of work ; (d) Special exceptions ; (e) Other miscellaneous matters.

*Part 2.*—(a) Names and addresses of young persons ; (b) Certificates of fitness.

*Part 3.*—(a) Particulars of accidents.

*Part 4.*—(a) Particulars of poisoning or disease.

*Part 5.*—(a) Particulars of limewashing of factory, etc.

*Part 6.*—(a) Particulars of extra employment of women and young persons in a shop, outside their hours of employment in a factory or workshop.

*Part 7.*—(a) Particulars of boilers.

30. Nowhere in the above register is anything in the nature of an attendance register required for adult males, whatever the employment ; there is nothing required for women and young persons wherever their hours of employment are normal, but whenever there is a departure from the normal with respect to the latter two classes as regards hours of employment, then a record of extra time is required. The principle is that whenever there is a departure from normal employment, a kind of attendance record is required, but even then only when the conditions of employment are reasonable and amenable to control, for under English conditions the control of adult males is not undertaken, the " relay " system has been made illegal by Act of Parliament by the simultaneous meal-time for women and children and the enforced adoption of the split-set system for the latter class.

31. In general, every factory should be made to maintain a register of workers as laid down in Section 35 of the Act and containing the following particulars, i.e., the original intention of the legislature :—(a) Names of all workers employed, with separate parts for men, women and children. (b) A declaration of the normal hours of employment for each of the above classes. (c) The occupation of each of the above classes.

There should, however, be a proviso to the section granting powers to the Governor General in Council to exempt a manager from maintaining such a register with respect to any factory or class of worker. Such exemptions might be considered at the time of framing regulations for different industries.

32. Further, wherever there is a departure from the normal working hours of any person in any industry or class of work, the manager should be made to maintain an overtime register in which any departure from the normal hours worked is recorded. This arrangement would serve as a check on the weekly limit of 55 hours which has been suggested, at the same time giving the benefit of elasticity accruing from an unlimited working day. The above remarks assume an effective abolition of the " relay " or overlapping system of shifts in jute mills.

33. *Chapter VII, Section 37.*—The proposed regulation making powers of the Governor-General in Council applicable to separate industries will have some effect on the rule-making powers of the local government since all industries throughout India will be treated alike with respect to certain matters. It is possible, therefore, that certain clauses in this section will become wholly or in part redundant.

34. *Chapter VIII, Section 41.*—The disparity of fines imposed by various magistrates for the same offences almost under identical conditions suggests that this section of the Act should include not only a maximum fine but a minimum. The difficulties of this proposal are admitted, for an effective minimum fine for a jute mill or large engineering concern would undoubtedly be too severe for a small concern committing the same offence.

35. *Section 42.*—This section is practically a reproduction of Section 141 of the English Factories Act, and has for its object the protection of the employer from culpability when some other person is responsible for the offence. English conditions of employment are so well understood by the court, and the workers as a class are so powerful, that such a provision can be applied with little doubt that the guilty person will be punished. In applying the same provision to India, however, the above conditions do not exist. The court procedure is English in form, the provision is English in principle, but the sustaining conditions mentioned above are absent. Employer and worker are not equal in the court, and when the protection of Section 42 is sought by the former the worker is in actual fact defenceless. Employers do not require any protection of this nature at present, and as interpreted under present conditions, it may be used to defeat the ends of justice. More rigidity in enforcing the provisions of the Act in future will no doubt lead employers to seek shelter to a greater extent under this section. The procedure of the court in proceedings in which the above section is involved resolves itself to this. The manager accuses the

assistant, the assistant the clerk, the clerk the sirdar, and the latter, not having anyone on whom to shift responsibility and depending on the manager for his livelihood, must needs plead guilty. Once the manager, therefore, has sought protection under this section, the trial becomes a farce, for the subordinate cannot oppose his master for fear of losing his job. The practice of applying Section 42 under present conditions is, therefore, inequitable, if not vicious, and should be abolished. It is a provision English in sentiment, and in advance of local conditions. The magistrate and the inspector are powerless to maintain equality of treatment within the court as between manager and subordinate, and powerless to convict the former within the limits of court procedure when the offence is the result of a system of employment only modifiable or alterable by the manager or his employer. The cause is too remote from the actual facts of infraction to be admissible as evidence against the manager or employer. The section should be abolished or modified so as to preserve the weight of the inspector's evidence as to where the guilt lies, i.e., evidence which is the result of very careful investigation of the infraction and conditions associated with it. As the matter now stands, once the offence has been proved, there is bound to be a conviction against the subordinate whether he is guilty or not. In other words there is a great possibility of miscarriage of justice, on the side of conviction, but if the section is abolished and reliance placed on the opinion of the inspector as regards the guilty person, the miscarriage of justice, if any, will be on the side of acquittal, which is a much more desirable result when evidence is considered insufficient or circumstances misunderstood by the court.

36. The following is a summary of the recommendations now proposed, all of which have been commented on above :—

(1) Widening of the definitions of " factory " and " employed " to give limited protection to workers at present outside the scope of the Act, and a declaration of the meaning of " managing agent."

(2) Granting of additional powers to the inspector to reduce excessive temperature, and the inclusion in municipal legislation of a provision to compel intending factory owners to observe certain structural rules.

(3) Amendment of the Act to restore the original intention of the legislature as regards the divided hours of rest for workers.

(4) A reduction in the working day for women and children together with an extra provision enforcing a simultaneous rest period for those two classes of workers.

(5) A reduction in the total weekly hours for adults.

(6) Abolition of the restricted working day for adult males.

(7) Restoration of the powers of the inspector to approve of a system of shifts, or a declaration in the Act that the multiple or overlapping shift-system of working is illegal.

(8) Substitution of the exemption section of the Act by powers conferred on the Governor-General in Council to frame sets of regulations to suit the conditions, processes and requirements of different industries or groups of industries or classes of workers.

(9) A declaration of the meaning of register of workers and what it shall contain when applied to (a) Factories generally ; (b) Textile factories if item (7) above is not included in the Act ; (c) Workers when employed beyond normal working hours.

(10) Withdrawal of the power of the manager to transfer guilt to a subordinate .

37. The above recommendations, if adopted, will have some effect on the remaining sections of the Act not commented upon, perhaps annulling some and necessitating modification of others. Proposal (8) particularly will have the effect of centralizing matters hitherto dealt with provincially in the rules, or covered by exemption notifications issued by local governments.

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#### I.—Recruitment.

7. *Unemployment.*—(ii) (a) Although children in the particular work for which they are employed in jute mills, are admitted to be 25 per cent. more efficient than adults, in spite of this a number of mills have discharged all their children, and employ only adult labour, much to the detriment of the working class. The underlying reason undoubtedly, is to avoid the trouble associated with the employment of children and the risk of prosecution if any are found illegally employed. This is all very well,



but if children are not employed by mills till they attain adult age it means an extra burden on their parents to feed and clothe them, which they cannot afford to do, and the natural result will probably be that very soon parents will demand extra wages and labour in general is likely to become discontented and cause trouble, and hence it is an important duty of employers of labour and all those in connection with labour to help in every possible way to keep them contented and happy and thus encourage recruitment and smooth working in our large industrial concerns in India.

(c) Match factories also have considerably reduced the number of children employees owing to the introduction of new machinery in the match industry.

### III.—Housing.

18. (i) Most of the large jute and cotton mills provide housing for their employees, other smaller factories provide no accommodation of any kind, principally as they cannot afford to do so, a few who desire to provide accommodation cannot acquire land adjoining their factories for the purpose.

18. (ii and iii) The accommodation provided for workmen by the large jute and cotton mills from health point of view is very good. The lines are sanitary, rooms freely ventilated, lighting, conservancy, and plenty of water for drinking and ablution purposes is provided, overcrowding of rooms is strictly prohibited.

19. Workers gladly accept all available accommodation in company coolie lines.

22. The morality of workers living in company coolie lines is much better than those living in bazaars and bustees, from force of circumstances, but worse than those in their own country villages; the reason for this is in coolie lines social ties and rigidity of customs is not observed.

### IV.—Health.

23. (v) There is an improvement in the physique of children, but at the same time it is unlikely that there will be any marked difference until parents are educated in and practise domestic hygiene and dietary, children are trained in and take part in sports and athletics, and the law in respect of the employment of children is amended in such a manner that the proper enforcement of the six hours per day limit is possible.

(viii) Comparing the health of children in their home village and those living in company coolie lines I have noticed that Madrassi and Bilaspuri children when they first arrive to take up employment, are usually emaciated and of poor physique, but within a short time they improve in general health. On the other hand up-country Muhammadan and Hindu children are healthier on first arrival, but, due principally to climatic conditions in Bengal, their general health and physique often deteriorates.

Comparing the health of children living in company coolie lines of the large jute and cotton mills, and those living in bazaars and bustees, from force of circumstances, the latter are a poorer lot as regards health, physique and stamina, as they live in congested and badly ventilated rooms, and are exposed to the dangers of epidemics of all kinds, whereas the former undoubtedly keep better health and improve generally because they are accommodated in sanitary lines with freely ventilated rooms and have plenty of water for drinking and ablution purposes, and the advantages of preventive measures such as vaccination and other prophylactic inoculations to protect them from epidemic diseases.

24. (i) All jute and cotton mills and a few smaller factories employ qualified doctors for the grant of general medical certificates as required by Section 23 of the Indian Factories Act, and for the care and treatment of their workmen.

(iv) At present there are no qualified lady doctors, trained midwives or dais, to attend to the medical requirements of women employees. They are in my opinion very necessary, and I strongly recommend that in areas where there are a large number of jute and cotton mills grouped together, the mills might be persuaded to appoint lady doctors as lady health visitors, and midwives and dais in proportion to the requirements of the areas. In the event of their refusal, municipalities or district boards might be asked to appoint them, and I feel confident that the mills would contribute liberally towards their salary.

25. (i) Most of the large jute and cotton mills provide good dispensaries fully equipped and liberally supplied with drugs for free treatment of their employees, who also have the advantages and facilities for preventive treatment such as vaccination and other prophylactic inoculations to protect them from epidemic diseases. These dispensaries being in charge of qualified doctors, they take advantage of every opportunity of advising workmen medically. The advice given by mill doctors of

several mills has had the beneficial effect, where previously there was not only apathy and indifference but hostility to anti-cholera and other protective inoculations, there is now in many cases a demand for this protection.

(ii) Women as a rule do not consult mill doctors except for very trivial complaints, and cannot be persuaded to do so. In mills where there is a baby clinic in charge of a qualified midwife, women seek advice and treatment for other than ante-natal and post-natal complaints, which cannot be given to them, hence the necessity arises for lady doctors.

26. (i) All the large jute and cotton mills provide septic tank latrines in the mills and coolie lines. In several mills the latrines not being convenient to workers in all departments for urinating purposes, several have put up urinals to prevent pollution of mill grounds and many are contemplating doing the same.

(ii) All jute and cotton mills supply sufficient good drinking water in both mills and coolie lines, some of them also supply drinking water to smaller factories adjoining them. In other factories in Calcutta and the suburbs, drinking water is supplied either by hydrants which draw water from the main Calcutta supply or by tube-wells.

(iii) All jute and cotton mills supply plenty of water in their coolie lines for bathing and washing purposes.

27. (iii) In my opinion young persons between the ages of 15 and 17 years employed in textile factories need official supervision and some degree of protection. The practice at present is that as soon as a half-time worker reaches the age of 15 years reckoned from his general medical certificate he is immediately put on to full-time work, regardless of whether he is physically fit or otherwise to undertake the extra hours of labour. This sudden change from 6 hours to 11 hours per day is a danger to the health of young persons who are not particularly robust.

As this class of persons, as a general rule, is not checked by the factory inspection staff, the evil is gradually on the increase of employing persons who are fairly big but under 15 years of age, as adult workers. I have observed a large number of young persons very obviously unfit for full-time work actually working, but I am unable to prevent it having no power to interfere in matters of this kind. Rule 55 of the Bengal Factories Rules empowers the inspector of factories to have young persons brought before the Certifying Surgeon to establish if he or she is of sufficient age and otherwise physically fit for full-time employment, but in the event of a young person of 15 years of age or over, being found to be physically unfit for full-time employment, the inspector has now no power to prevent such employment. I would therefore, suggest that the rule be amended in such a manner that the inspector would be empowered to have any young person between the ages of 15 and 17 years, regarding whom he is doubtful as to his or her physical fitness, brought before the certifying surgeon for examination, and if found physically unfit for full-time employment, to prohibit full-time employment until passed as fit. Certificates of fitness need not be in the form of the general medical certificate applicable to children. A register of all persons between 15 and 17 years of age could be maintained by the mill, and would be sufficient to meet the case. The mill doctor could examine all young persons of the above ages and if found to be physically fit, enter their names on the register which may be called a "full-time register for young persons," and order them to be produced before the certifying surgeon on his next visit. The certifying surgeon, if he concurs with the opinion of the mill doctor, should sign and date the register after each person's name, but, if he is of an opinion that any one of these persons are unfit, he should note "refused" against the name, assigning a reason for same. Registers of this kind are already in use in a number of jute mills. Managers are enforcing its maintenance as they realize that it is a safeguard against the employment of children as full-time workers.

In other industrial areas, particularly in the match industry, I have observed factories employing a large number of men, women and children of 7 and 8 years of age working unlimited hours. This they are able to do not being a registered factory. They are not registered under the Indian Factories Act as no steam or electric power is used to work the factory. In the interest of health of the labouring class, in general and in fairness to similar factories registered under the Indian Factories Act, I am of an opinion that all factories whether using power or not employing a certain number of persons should be registered in order to bring them under the control of the Factory Inspection Department.

29. (i) and (ii) The health statistics\* attached show no indication of any prevalence of industrial diseases among workers living in company coolie lines, beyond textile dermatitis and also give no proof of any marked prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm or other tropical diseases.

31. (i) As far as I am aware there is no organized maternity benefit scheme in my jurisdiction. Kelvin Jute Mill some years ago sanctioned the grant of leave

\* Not printed.

with full wages for 2 weeks before and 3 weeks after child-birth, as a maternity benefit, which is still being continued, although it is known to the mill authorities that this privilege in many cases is abused to the extent that women take up employment in an adjoining mill, hence some sort of a check is necessary.

Kankinarrah Jute Mills since January, 1927, have been granting women workers of over 12 months' service leave of absence from their work on full pay for 4 weeks before the birth of their child and for 4 weeks after as a maternity benefit.

According to mill records up to last month, 340 women have received this benefit.

The procedure adopted is as follows :—

Women about to become mothers are sent from their departments to their welfare centre where the lady worker in charge enters their names in a case book and decides the time for them to stop work. They are then given a printed form on which the compulsory bi-weekly attendances are recorded and signed. This form has to be produced before a pay ticket is issued in their favour.

I consider this scheme a good one. As it not only checks women taking up employment in an adjoining mill when on maternity leave and pay, but also affords an opportunity of instructing them in mother craft, sewing, etc., and I recommend its adoption in all mills granting maternity benefits.

37. *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*— I recommend the grant of a pension or gratuity to deserving workers for old age and premature retirement.

#### VI.—Education.

40. (i and ii) Owing to apathy and indifference of mill authorities and operatives no progress has been made for the education of factory children employed and not employed.

42. The establishment and gradual spread of education to both adults and children would lead to the working classes being educated to understand the benefits of harder work, thrift, and the dangers of acquiring the habit for alcohol and other intoxicant drugs, *ganja*, *charas* and *bhang*.

48. Most of the smaller factories have no provision for first aid and medical relief. I recommend that all registered factories be compelled by law to maintain a prescribed set of equipment for this purpose, and be required to summon the nearest qualified doctor in the event of a serious accident within the precincts of the factory or in cases of emergency, if the patient cannot immediately be removed to the closest hospital.

#### X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

81. Since the amendment of the Indian Factories Act in 1922, which raised the minimum age of employment of children from 9 years to 12 years, and reduced the working day from 7 hours to 6 hours, the general health of child operatives has definitely improved; the improvement would probably have been better if the daily limit of 6 hours had been strictly observed.

84. Regarding the certification of children, my experience is that a large number obtain three or more general medical certificates. As stated under (85), false names and particulars are given, and therefore the grant of additional certificates cannot be avoided. A medical certificate is actually the property of the child to whom it is granted, but the present practice is that all certificates are retained by the mill authorities, the reason being that if a child leaves the mill and returns again at a later date there is no necessity for re-certification. Certificates are filed in mill dispensaries for easy reference. On leaving a mill children never ask for their medical certificates because (1) it is not the practice of mill authorities to hand over certificates; (2) children are not aware that it is their own property, and that they can demand it; (3) they can easily procure a fresh one in the mill to which they are going. It is quite usual, therefore, for a child to have a certificate in each of a number of mills in a district. The principal reason why children migrate from mill to mill is, that they are forcibly turned out by sirdars for pecuniary gain. This is done systematically. Sirdars arrange among themselves for interchange of children, their purpose being to obtain the *baksheesh* which each child must pay to the sirdars before employment is obtained. It is practically impossible to stop this abuse as children, for fear of being beaten, will not and cannot be forced to make complaints to mill managers of the ways in which they are victimised. In my opinion, the only way to stop re-certification, migration from mill to mill, and the general exploitation of child labour by time-babus and sirdars, is for children to be allowed to retain their certificates in their possession and for the various firms to offer inducements to long service. If children carried their certificates while at work, suspended round the neck in a tin receptacle provided by

the mill, instead of being retained in the mill dispensary, they could be identified by the factory inspection staff with ease and certainty, and, also, the certificates could be used as a passport for employment in any mill. If by chance a child happens to lose the certificate the certifying surgeon of factories may be empowered to authorise the mill that originally granted the certificate to issue a duplicate. A charge of one rupee could be made for each duplicate certificate, and the fees thus collected credited to the fund which most mills maintain from fines, etc., and which is distributed to workmen in need of pecuniary assistance. It is a fact (although I cannot bring direct evidence to prove my statements) that children have paid as much as Rs. 8 for employment as a "full-time worker" and it is a common practice for a child between the ages of 12 and 13 years to pay Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 for employment as "half-time worker." The charge of Re. 1, therefore, for the replacement of a lost certificate, could not be considered an injustice or a hardship; its one purpose would be to train children to be careful of their certificates.

The following inducements to long service may be worthy of consideration:—

(i) The payment of an increment on wages after each year's continuous service—the increment might take the form of a bonus of 3 annas per week after one year and 6 annas per week after two years. Increased expenditure to a company on this account would probably work out at from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 per week per 100 children employed. There would be no need for mills to maintain separate records for this purpose; the medical certificate shows the original date of employment; in the case of a child leaving one mill to take up employment in another all that is necessary is for the mill to which he goes to enter on the reverse of the certificate the name of the mill and the date the child started work. (2) The introduction of a provident fund in respect of which a deduction of, say, one anna per rupee could be made from wages, and interest paid under Provident Fund Rules. (iii) The grant of a fixed period of leave every year on full or half wages.

I next desire to draw attention to rule 47 of the Bengal Factories Rules. This rule requires that the certifying surgeons shall forward to the inspector of factories the names, certificate numbers, and a notice of the action taken in respect of all children granted provisional certificates since his previous visit who are not produced at the time of his visit. My experience is that this rule serves no purpose. A child whose certificate is cancelled for not being produced can easily be re-certified under another name, and as detection by an Inspector of Factories is impossible, I recommend that the rule be deleted.

In place of the above rule I suggest the introduction of a rule to provide for the maintenance of a register of children rejected as under age and children, provisionally certified by the mill doctor but not produced before the certifying surgeon. I consider that a register of this nature would be very useful as, from the percentage of children rejected or not produced, it would give the inspector of factories a fair idea whether the provisions of the Act were being observed or otherwise.

**85. Double employment of Children (i.e., in more than one establishment on one day).**—The system of shifts in multiple-shift mills offer every opportunity for employment beyond legal limits and in some mills children are actually working as many as 11 and 12 hours per day. In single-shift mills, where two or more are adjoining, children have the opportunity of working the morning shift in one mill and the afternoon shift in another. Generally speaking, it may be stated that in my opinion approximately 25 per cent. of the children employed in jute mills work longer hours than the law permits, thereby affecting and jeopardizing their general health and physique.

Detection of double employment, without an informant, is exceedingly difficult as children give false names and particulars to obtain more than one medical certificate. Even if cases are detected prosecution would be futile as it is practically impossible to prove the consent or connivance of anyone concerned as it is a common practice for parents to disown their children, and children their parents, if they have the slightest suspicion that trouble may arise from the admission. Also sirdars and babus often boldly state that, so far as they are aware, the children serving under them do not work in the mill on another shift on the same day or in an adjoining mill on the same day.

The only solution to the problem appears to be the provision of elementary schools within the lines for half-time workers. Attendance to be compulsory and the hours of attendance to be not more than two hours and so arranged that it would not be possible for any child to work on two different shifts in the one mill or in two different mills on the same day. To ensure regular attendance of children at school, a school attendance register is necessary which must be correctly and regularly maintained and against each child's name, the medical certificate number and the number in mill attendance roll must be shown to facilitate check. It is advisable for this school attendance register to be checked at least once a week by the mill

manager and signed by him with the remark "Checked with mill attendance roll and found correct." If a child is found by the manager to be present on any one day on the mill attendance roll but absent on the school register and no reasonable excuse can be given for absence the child to forfeit his day's pay. The school attendance register must be open to check by the factory inspection staff and ruled to be one of their duties. This proposal I think would appeal to both employers and employees as it offers an additional educational training to the children of the industrial classes. If the above proposal does not meet with approval I recommend as an alternative the working hours of children be reduced from 6 hours to 5½ hours to conform to the working hours of single-shift mills, and the numerous shifts in multiple-shift mills be reduced to 4 shifts. I do not wish in any way to make the conditions of employment of children harder than it is at present, for fear of them being thrown out of employment altogether by the large jute and cotton mills, but at the same time I feel in their interest something must be done to check the abuses now prevalent.

88. The single-shift system as compared with double-shift, as far as children are concerned in particular, is undoubtedly better, in point of view of health, as in single-shift mills children are more nervous to work in 2 shifts in the one mill or in an adjoining mill for fear of detection by the factory inspection staff, therefore the greater majority work the authorized legal hours and consequently are in better health.

#### XVII.—Administration.

139 (iv) Certifying surgeons deal entirely with the certification of children; they naturally know better than anyone else the various ways and means adopted to evade the Factories Act, and often in the performance of their duties, without looking for fault, they have clear evidence of irregular employment of children, but can say or do nothing beyond making a note and reporting to the inspector. The note-taking is spotted by those who could be held responsible for the infringement of the Act and these persons immediately arrange to put their departments in order in such a way that at a later date no charge can be brought against them. This, in my opinion, is not satisfactory. It would be in the interest of the health of child operatives and of the Factory Inspection Department, if whole-time certifying surgeons of factories were given the powers of an inspector in so far as child labour alone is concerned. They would be of very much greater assistance in helping in the stamping out and prevention of irregular employment of children. Irregularities found by certifying surgeons to be reported to the Chief Inspector of Factories, who, if he thinks a prosecution is necessary, will order the inspector of factories of the jurisdiction in which the irregularity was found, to institute prosecution proceedings entirely on their evidence.

Dr. CHAS. A. BENTLEY, C.I.E., M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. AND H., DIRECTOR  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BENGAL.

#### Housing.

*Extent to which housing is provided by employers.*—In the case of the most important industries of the province, such as coal, tea and the manufacture of jute, respectively, employers provide housing accommodation for a large proportion of their labour. In the case of collieries and tea gardens, practically all workers who reside on the premises are housed. In the case of 53 jute mills, for which data have been collected, about 131,069 operatives are housed in approximately 40,685 dwellings provided by employers.

Approximately 42·5 per cent. of the working population are provided with dwellings by the employers, three operatives on a rough average being accommodated in each house.

2. *Nature of accommodation provided.*—Most of the houses are in rows of one-roomed back-to-back tenements, each provided with a verandah in which cooking and washing is done. In some cases, the lines are arranged in two storeys. Most of the houses are built of brick with cement flooring and tiled or masonry roofs. In a few cases, corrugated iron roofs are provided and in some sets of lines the floors are "kutchra." In the better lines, the space between the houses is paved with brick-on-edge and pucca drains are usually provided, with in many instances arrangements.

for flushing. In addition to the doorways opening into the verandahs, window spaces are often provided but the occupants generally close them up. Roof ventilation may be seen in some types of houses but the back-to-back type of tenement does not permit of arrangements for through ventilation. Artificial lighting of the compounds is generally the rule. The statement below gives some particulars of the floor space of the tenements attached to 31 mills, which mostly varies for single roomed quarters from 64 square feet to 120 square feet with an additional verandah space of from about 30 to 60 square feet. In a few mills some larger houses each consisting of two or more rooms are available.

*Statement showing the average floor space in certain mill tenements.*

| Mills.               | Floor space per house. | Floor space per worker. | Area of verandah. | Area of house and verandah. | Average total area available per worker. |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|
|                      | Sq. ft.                | Sq. ft.                 | Sq. ft.           | Sq. ft.                     | Sq. ft.                                  |
| Orient .. .. .       | 108                    | 43                      | 48                | 156                         | 62                                       |
| Albion .. .. .       | 108                    | 30                      | 60                | 168                         | 47                                       |
| Lothian .. .. .      | 108                    | 22                      | 48                | 156                         | 31                                       |
| Budge-Budge .. .. .  | 120                    | 30                      | 84                | 204                         | 51                                       |
| Caledonian .. .. .   | 108                    | 36                      | 48                | 156                         | 52                                       |
| Baranagore .. .. .   | 100                    | 29                      | 45                | 145                         | 42                                       |
| Khardah .. .. .      | 90                     | 30                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Titagarh (1) .. .. . | 75                     | 28                      | 45                | 120                         | 45                                       |
| Titagarh (2) .. .. . | 87                     | 36                      | 49                | 136                         | 57                                       |
|                      | 79                     | 33                      | 46                | 125                         | 52                                       |
| Standard .. .. .     | 67                     | 18                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Shamnagar .. .. .    | 95                     | 31                      | 44                | 139                         | 45                                       |
| Alexandria .. .. .   | 89                     | 39                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
|                      | 80                     | 35                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Reliance .. .. .     | 90                     | 20                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Nuddea .. .. .       | 100                    | 25                      | 45                | 145                         | 36.                                      |
|                      | 110                    | 28                      | 42                | 152                         | 38                                       |
|                      | 100                    | 25                      | 50                | 150                         | 38                                       |
| Gourepore .. .. .    | 106                    | 27                      | 50                | 156                         | 39                                       |
| Lawrence .. .. .     | 100                    | 36                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Ganges .. .. .       | 100                    | 25                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| New Central .. .. .  | 83                     | 42                      | 37                | 120                         | 60                                       |
| Bally .. .. .        | 77                     | 18                      | 41                | 138                         | 32                                       |
|                      | 80                     | 19                      | 43                | 123                         | 29                                       |
|                      | 81                     | 19                      | 40                | 121                         | 28                                       |
| Hastings .. .. .     | 100                    | 39                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Wellington .. .. .   | 80                     | 29                      | 36                | 116                         | 41                                       |
| Champdani .. .. .    | 64                     | 49                      | 39                | 103                         | 79                                       |
| Gondalpara .. .. .   | 90                     | 32                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Bansbaria .. .. .    | 100                    | 39                      | 45                | 145                         | 56                                       |
|                      | 92                     | 35                      | 33                | 125                         | 48                                       |
|                      | 90                     | 35                      | 41                | 131                         | 50                                       |
| India .. .. .        | 102                    | 26                      | 36                | 138                         | 34                                       |
|                      | 80                     | 20                      | 35                | 115                         | 29                                       |
| National .. .. .     | 90                     | 26                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
|                      | 81                     | 23                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
|                      | 100                    | 29                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
|                      | 120                    | 34                      | —                 | —                           | —  |
| Belvedere .. .. .    | 83                     | 28                      | 62                | 145                         | 48                                       |
|                      | 87                     | 29                      | 62                | 149                         | 49                                       |
| Birla .. .. .        | 100                    | 22                      | 50                | 150                         | 36                                       |
| Megna .. .. .        | 80                     | 30                      | 30                | 110                         | 41                                       |
| North Union .. .. .  | 92                     | 22                      | 29                | 121                         | 29                                       |
| Dalhousie .. .. .    | 100                    | 29                      | 50                | 150                         | 43                                       |
|                      | 83                     | 24                      | 35                | 118                         | 34                                       |
|                      | 74                     | 21                      | 38                | 112                         | 32                                       |

3. *Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.*—As already mentioned, mill compounds, including the vicinity of the operatives' tenements, are usually lighted with electric lights. In almost every instance septic tank latrines are provided for all mill workers and also in the lines. Altogether nearly 200 septic tank latrines are now in operation. All septic tank latrines attached to factories are periodically inspected and reported on by an inspector employed under the Director of Public Health for this special purpose. Any defect found in any installation or its method of working, including the condition of the effluent, is duly reported to the Chief Inspector of Factories, who takes necessary action. Comparison of these septic tank latrines with latrines of the hand service type will serve to show the immense sanitary improvement effected by the introduction of the former system into general use in mill compounds. There is no doubt that mill operatives housed by their employers are generally provided with much superior conservancy arrangements than the general population and enjoy greater advantages in this respect than workers in tea gardens and collieries respectively, where latrines are as yet rarely employed. Water-supplies provided by the jute mills in Bengal are also usually of a very high degree of excellence.

A large proportion of the mills provide for the chlorination as well as the sedimentation and filtration of their water supplies. Of the above mentioned 55 mills, no less than 50 have made special arrangements with the Director of Public Health for the chemical and bacteriological examination of their water supplies at monthly intervals. This arrangement has proved particularly fruitful in securing the efficient working of their installations thus providing that a very large aggregate industrial population is always in the enjoyment of abundant water possessing a high degree of purity. Arrangements are made by the mills for distributing water both for drinking and other domestic purposes throughout their lines by means of stand-pipes at frequent intervals. In the case of many of the mills also the supply of water is not confined to the mill compounds and quarters, but a considerable amount is also provided for the use of the people residing in the adjacent municipality. It will be readily grasped from what has just been stated that far more elaborate arrangements are made by the jute mill industry in Bengal for the supply of pure water for their employees than are as yet generally available for workers in the collieries and tea gardens of the province. Before closing this section relating to conservancy and water supply, I wish to incorporate with my evidence a brief note kindly supplied by Mr. F. C. Griffin, Chief Engineer to the Public Health Department of Bengal, on certain matters with which I have not had time to deal.

NOTE BY Mr. F. C. GRIFFIN, A.M.I.C.E., CHIEF ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, BENGAL.

In Bengal, as in other parts of India, the practice is followed of making grants to local bodies for specific sanitary works as well as loans which, it is believed, are alone given in the United Kingdom. The following are the principal sanitary works of which details will be found below carried on in the industrial areas in the vicinity of Calcutta with or without assistance from Government either by way of grant or loan :—(1) Tittaghar sewerage works; (2) Bhatpara Improvement Scheme; (3) Budge-Budge surface drainage; (4) Naihati water supply; (5) Raniganj water supply; (6) Asansol water supply.

(1) *Tittaghar sewerage works.*—The construction of these works was commenced in December, 1922, and was completed in August, 1927. A network of sewers has been laid in the town connecting to a pumping station where the sewage is lifted by centrifugal pumps driven by oil engines and is discharged to a treatment works situated on the east of the railway line. The effluent water of the various septic tanks in the mills is taken into the sewers and crude sewage passes into them through special flushing dumping depots, and through water carriage public latrines. The treatment works consisted at first of settlement tanks and an irrigation area of 40 acres. This method of disposal was, however, found inadequate, and since 1927, a purification plant on the simplex system has been added. There is now no difficulty in disposing of the whole of the sewage.

The cost of the scheme was Rs. 12,25,000 as detailed below, out of which Government contributed Rs. 3,30,000.

|  | Rs.       |
|--|-----------|
| Sewers .. .. .                               | 2,80,000  |
| Pumping station .. .. .                      | 2,16,000  |
| Surface drain, depots and public latrines .. | 98,000    |
| Treatment works .. .. .                      | 4,00,000  |
| Total including land, etc. .. .. .           | 12,25,000 |

A certain number of private house connections have been made and connected to the sewers. The latter form the main framework to which further branch sewers can be connected and to which more connections from private and public latrines can be made.

An extension scheme is about to be taken up, which includes further sewers, surface drains, and road improvements and an extension of the purification plant. The irrigation area presents a fine opportunity for intensive cultivation and production of fodder crops—an opportunity which up till now has not been fully utilised.

2. *Bhatpara improvement scheme.*—This is a comprehensive scheme estimated at Rs. 22 lakhs, comprising a complete sewerage scheme with purification works, town water supply, new road construction, provision of parks, surface drains, etc. A grant of Rs. 7 lakhs has been promised by Government towards the cost of the scheme.

Up to date, the laying of new water mains on the existing roads only has been carried out, and acquisition of land for new roads, sewage, pumping station and outfall works, etc., is in progress. The construction of sewers will commence before the end of the year.

These sewerage schemes will produce a great improvement in health, in the abolition of hookworm and other diseases. It is expected that, in time, the labourers will get accustomed to the use of public latrines and water closets, and will give up the habit of open air defaecation with a consequent improvement in the sanitary condition of the bastis.

3. *Budge-Budge surface drainage.*—This scheme was carried out in 1925 at a cost of Rs. 52,000 and much improved the surface drainage of the municipal area.

In 1927, a bathing ghat and landing stage was constructed at the north end of the town at a cost of Rs. 11,000.

4. *Naihati water supply.*—A water supply extension scheme was carried out by the municipality under the general supervision of the Public Health Department in 1927-28. The cost was Rs. 1,60,000. A grant of Rs. 37,645 was made towards the cost of the scheme.

## II.—Coal Mining Areas.

5. *Raniganj water supply.*—This scheme was completed in 1927, the total cost being Rs. 3,19,000 out of which Government contributed Rs. 1,17,500 in two instalments. Water is pumped from a large filtration well in the Damodar river at the rate of 12,500 gallons per hour through rising main 15,800 ft. long or about 3 miles. It falls into a reservoir of 1,50,000 gallons capacity, built at the highest part of the town, from whence it gravitates through the distribution system to street taps and private house connections. The commencement of supply was followed by a great improvement in the general health of the people.

6. *Asansol water supply.*—This scheme is estimated at Rs. 4,50,000, and construction is in progress. Government have promised a total grant of Rs. 1,50,000 towards the cost of the scheme out of which Rs. 75,000 has already been paid. It is proposed to pay another Rs. 25,000 this year and to provide the balance of Rs. 50,000 in the next year's budget. Water will be pumped from the river Damodar at the rate of 22,000 gallons per hour by pumps driven electrically with current supplied from the works of the Indian Iron and Steel Company. The rising main is 16,803 ft. or 3.18 miles long, and there will be an elevated reservoir and complete distribution system, etc.

## III.—Other Areas.

Many other schemes have been carried out by the department in various towns in Bengal to all of which Government has contributed at least one-third of the cost, sometimes more. Among these may be mentioned Suri waterworks, Rs. 2,32,000, Comilla waterworks, Rs. 3,94,500, Midnapore waterworks, Rs. 5,63,900, Faridpur waterworks, Rs. 1,53,500, Krishnagar waterworks, Rs. 4,07,500, Hooghly-Chinsura waterworks, Rs. 6,20,500, Uttarpara waterworks, Rs. 1,91,559, Dacca waterworks extension, Rs. 4,80,000. At Dacca a complete sewerage scheme has been carried out by the department at a cost of Rs. 25 lakhs, the whole of which amount was given by Government.



*Legal Powers for the Control of Housing.*

In Bengal legal powers controlling housing are provided for in the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884, the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, 1885, and the Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919. The Calcutta Municipal Act gives the following definitions :—

(7) "building" includes a house, outhouse, stable, privy, urinal shed, hut, wall (other than a boundary wall not exceeding 10 feet in height) and any other such structure whether of masonry, bricks, wood, mud, metal or any other material whatsoever, but does not include a *hogla* or other similar kind of temporary shed erected on ceremonial festive occasions ;

(10) "basti" means an area containing land occupied by, or for the purposes of, any collection of huts :—(a) standing on a plot of land not less than ten cottahs in area and bearing one number in the assessment book, or (b) standing on two or more plots of land which are adjacent to one another and exceed in the aggregate one bigha in area.

(27) "dwelling house" means a masonry building constructed, used or adapted to be used wholly or principally for human habitation.

(32) "habitable room" means a room constructed or adapted for human habitation.

(35) "house gully" means a passage or strip of land constructed, set apart or utilized for the purpose of serving as a drain or of affording access to a privy, urinal, cesspool or other receptacle for filthy or polluted matter to municipal servants or to persons employed in the cleansing thereof or in the removal of such matter therefrom, and includes the air space above such passage or land.

(36) "hut" means any building, no substantial part of which excluding the walls up to a height of eighteen inches above the floor or floor level, is constructed of masonry, steel, iron or other metal.

(37) "inhabited room" means a room in which some person passes the night, or which is used as a living room, and includes a room with respect to which there is a reasonable presumption (until the contrary is shown) that some person passes the night therein or that is used as a living room.

The Bengal Municipal Act gives the following definitions :—

(4) "house" includes any hut, shop, warehouse or building. The Act does not define either a hut or a bustee, but sections 245-248 relate to sanitary measures with regard to blocks of huts.

Chapters XXI (including sections 319 to 334) and XXII (including sections 335 to 362) of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, relate to buildings and bastis respectively. Under section 478 of the Act, powers are given to make by-laws and rules regarding the erection, alterations and addition to buildings. Schedule XVII of the Act contains rules as to buildings including dwelling houses and huts, etc.

Outside Calcutta, Howrah and Darjeeling, the powers vested in local authorities in connection with the regulation and control of buildings and dwellings are as follows : Section 241 of the Bengal Municipal Act gives power to the Municipal Commissioners to make rules regulating the erection of houses. But in clause 4 of this section it is expressly laid down that this section shall not take effect in a municipality until it has been specially extended thereto by the local Government at the request of the Commissioners at a meeting. In municipalities to which Part VI of the Act has been applied every person intending to erect a house, not being a hut, is requested under section 237 to give notice in writing to the Commissioners with a general description of the building he intends to erect and of the provision he intends to make in respect of drainage and latrine accommodation ; and if required to do so by any rule he must also forward a plan and specification of the house, not being a hut, which he intends to erect or re-erect. Section 238, clause (1), empowers the Commissioners to take action in case anyone commences building without giving notice or waiting six weeks for sanction : but clause (2) provides that if the Commissioners neglect for six weeks after receipt of a notice to serve any objection "they shall be deemed to have sanctioned the proposed house absolutely."

Section 242 gives power to the Municipal Commissioners to prohibit the letting of a house for occupation if it is unstable or if the drainage or latrine accommodation is defective.

Section 243 imposes the duty of giving one month's notice to the Commissioners by anyone wishing to erect a hut or range or block of huts and the Commissioners may require such huts or sheds to be built in regular lines with a free passage

between for ventilation and scavenging, and with such means of drainage and such number of privies as to them may seem necessary, and at such a level as will admit of such drainage and with a plinth at least 2 feet above the level of the nearest street.

*Section 244* empowers the Commissioners to take action in cases where huts are built without due notice, themselves removing the offending huts, if necessary.

*Sections 245 to 248* of the Act give special powers for dealing with insanitary blocks of huts and read as follows :—

*Section 245.*—Whenever the Commissioners at a meeting are satisfied, from inspection, or by report of competent persons, that any existing block of huts within the municipality is, by reason of the manner in which the huts are constructed or crowded together, or of the want of drainage and the impracticability of scavenging, attended with risk of disease to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, they may cause the locality to be inspected by two medical officers, who shall make a report in writing on the sanitary condition of the said block of huts ; and shall specify, if necessary, in the said report, the huts which should be removed, the roads, drains, and sewers which should be constructed, and the low lands which should be filled up with a view to the removal of the said risk of disease.

*Section 246.*—On receipt of the said report the Commissioners at a meeting may require the owners or occupiers of the huts, or at the option of the Commissioners, the owner of the land on which such huts are built, to carry out and execute within a reasonable time, to be fixed by the Commissioners for such purpose, all or any of the works specified in the aforesaid report or any portion thereof respectively, and if such owner, owners, or occupiers shall fail to comply with such requisition, the Commissioners themselves may execute all or any of such works.

*Section 247.*—The Commissioners at a meeting may order that any expenses payable in respect of any work done by them in consequence of the failure of the owners or occupiers to execute such work when required to do so under the last preceding section, shall be recovered by instalments from the person liable to pay the same ; or if it should appear to them that the said person is unable by reason of poverty to pay the same, or any portion thereof, to be paid out of the Municipal Fund.

*Section 248.*—If any of the said huts be pulled down, the Commissioners shall cause the materials of each hut to be sold separately, if such sale can be effected, and the proceeds shall be paid to the owner of the hut, or, if the owner be unknown or the title disputed, shall be held in deposit by the Commissioners until the person interested therein shall obtain the order of a civil court of competent jurisdiction for the payment of the same.

Limited powers for controlling housing are provided under the Local Self-Government Act in sections 116 and 118, and in the Village Self-Government Act in sections 27 and 29, respectively.

### Health.

*General Health Conditions of Workers:*—(i) *Figures of Mortality.* (ii) *Birthrates and Infant Mortality.*—I have provided printed statements giving data for 10 years relating to recorded deathrates, birthrates, infantile mortality and causes of death in (1) the province as a whole ; (2) towns ; (3) rural areas, together with similar figures for the individual districts, in which certain important industries, such as tea gardens, collieries and jute mills are situated. I have given similar data for each of what may be termed the industrial towns of the province. I have submitted graphs showing the deathrate, birthrate, infantile mortality and cholera deathrate of each district for a period of 20 years. These data give some indication of the health conditions of the province which industrial workers to a great extent share with the general population among whom they live.

The figures I give may be used to supplement the similar data relating particularly to the colliery and tea garden areas, respectively, which, I believe, has already been placed before the Royal Commission. Caution must be used, however, in making comparisons between the data for various communities, because the record of vital occurrences is probably nowhere wholly accurate and especially in many municipal areas is subject to gross error owing to the large number of omissions. There is, moreover, considerable variation in the amount of these errors in different places.

*Decennial average of recorded Birth and Deathrates.*

|                            | Calcutta. | Total towns. | Rural areas. | Province. | Mill towns. | Asansol Mining Settlement. | Duars Tea gardens. |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Deathrate ..               | 33.5      | 25.6         | 27.8         | 27.6      | 20.6        | 23.7                       | 28.0               |
| Birthrate ..               | 18.4      | 19.1         | 29.3         | 28.7      | 16.9        | 26.7                       | 40.2               |
| Infantile mortality        | 318.0     | 223.0        | 182.0        | 193.0     | 173.0       | 146.0                      | 96.0               |
| Cholera ..                 | 1.9       | 1.8          | 1.6          | 1.6       | 2.2         | 1.3                        | 0.9                |
| Smallpox ..                | 1.4       | 0.9          | 0.5          | 0.5       | 0.7         | 0.1                        | 0.1                |
| Plague ..                  | 0.09      | 0.02         | 0.0          | 0.002     | 0.01        | 0.0                        | 0.0                |
| Malaria ..                 | 1.4       | 2.3          | 11.6         | 11.0      | 2.3         | } Not available.           | —                  |
| Enteric ..                 | 0.6       | 0.3          | 0.1          | 0.1       | 0.2         |                            | Not available.     |
| Kala-azar ..               | 0.5       | 0.4          | 0.2          | 0.2       | 0.2         |                            | 0.1                |
| Measles ..                 | 0.2       | 0.1          | 0.02         | 0.03      | 0.05        |                            | Not available.     |
| Total fevers               | 4.9       | 7.2          | 21.2         | 20.3      | 7.3         | 3.1                        | 7.5                |
| Dysentery and Diarrhoea .. | 3.3       | 2.7          | 0.4          | 0.5       | 2.8         | 1.1                        | 3.5                |
| Phthisis ..                | 2.3       | 1.1          | 0.07         | 0.1       | 0.4         | Not available.             | 0.9                |
| Total respiratory diseases | 9.9       | 5.3          | 0.3          | 0.6       | 2.9         | 4.4                        | 5.3                |
| Injuries ..                | 0.7       | 0.5          | 0.4          | 0.4       | 0.3         | Not available.             | 0.2                |

*Methods of Registration of Vital Statistics.*—Every district in Bengal (with the exception of Darjeeling) is divided into a number of "registration districts." Each municipality is considered as a separate registration district for the purpose of registering births and deaths occurring within its area. In the rural areas, where the duty of registering vital occurrences has been transferred from the police to the union boards or chaukidari unions, each such union constitutes a district for registration purposes. In other rural areas, each thana or police-station forms a registration district. The railway areas lying outside the municipal towns are similarly constituted into different registration districts according to their respective limits.

Registrars are appointed for each such registration district. In large cities like Calcutta these registrars are whole-time salaried officers. But in most municipalities the work is usually entrusted to a clerk, who gets some allowance for it. In the union boards or chaukidari unions, the president of the union is the registrar; in thanas, it is the officer in charge, while in the railway areas the station masters perform this duty for their respective jurisdictions.

In municipalities it is compulsory under the law on the head of the family to report every occurrence of birth or death in his house within eight days after every such occurrence to the municipal registrar, and failure to do this may involve the defaulter in prosecution and a fine. The details of each reported vital occurrence

are recorded by the registrar in the daily register maintained by him, and after the close of every month, a monthly return of births and deaths is now furnished by all the municipalities to the health officer of the district for incorporation in the latter's district return. In addition to the monthly return, the municipalities having a population of 10,000 and over are required to submit a weekly summary of births and deaths direct to the Public Health Department.

In Union Board areas it is the duty of the village chaukidars to report all births and deaths occurring within their respective beats to the president of the union board, who is the registrar for these areas. For this purpose, each chaukidar is provided with a note book (birth hath chitta and death hath chitta). The registrar enters the details reported by the chaukidars in his daily register and submits a monthly summary for his union within a fixed time to the sub-divisional officer. The sub-divisional officer consolidates all the returns so received, and submits his consolidated return to the district health officer.

In thana areas, where there are no union boards, the vital occurrences are reported by the village chaukidars on the occasion of their periodical visits to the thana officer who enters the information in the daily registers, from which he prepares a monthly return for submission to the health officer of the district.

In railway areas within the municipal limits, procedure is practically the same as in the municipal area proper, except that the station masters act as registrars and furnish a weekly and monthly summary to the chairman of the municipality, who includes the figures in his monthly returns. In the railway areas outside municipal limits, the reporting agency is the chaukidar and the registering agency the station master. The monthly return is submitted to the sub-divisional officer.

In the Asansol Mining Settlement and the Duars Tea Gardens, special systems of registration are in operation, and in the latter area a special Act is in force—the Jalpaiguri Labour Act.

*Dietary.*—I have had some particulars collected in regard to the dietary of 724 workers in jute and cotton mills, 73 office peons and 86 sweepers. The jute mill workers include 211 Bengalis, 114 Hindustanis and 8 Oriyas. The cotton mill workers include 78 Bengalis, 167 Hindustanis, 98 Oriyas and 48 Madrasia. The particulars collected have been summarised in a brief statement giving average figures for the sake of clearness.

*Physique of workers.*—I have no data in regard to the physique of workers generally.

*Dist Survey of Industrial Labour in Bengal.*

*Average Quantity per head.*

| Foodstuffs.  | Bengalis.               |                          | Hindusthanis.           |                           | Oriyas.                 |                          | Madrasis.                | Office peons<br>(73).<br>(Hindusthanis). | Corporation<br>sweepers<br>(86).<br>(Hindusthanis). |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
|  | Jute<br>mills<br>(211). | Cotton<br>mills<br>(78). | Jute<br>mills<br>(114). | Cotton<br>mills<br>(167). | Jute<br>mills<br>(8).   | Cotton<br>mills<br>(98). | Cotton<br>mills<br>(48). |  |   |
|  | Chataks.                | Chataks.                 | Chataks.                | Chataks.                  | Chataks.                | Chataks.                 | Chataks.                 | Chataks.                                 | Chataks.  |
| Rice .. .. .   | 9                       | 9½                       | 8                       | 4½                        | 11½                     | 11                       | 11                       | 3  | 5½  |
| Atta .. .. .   | ½                       | 1½                       | 2½                      | 3½                        | nil.                    | nil.                     | nil.                     | 3½                                       | 8½  |
| Dal .. .. .  | ½                       | 1½                       | 2                       | 1                         | 1½                      | 1                        | ½                        | 2½                                       | 3   |
| Fish .. .. .   | ½                       | 1½                       | ½                       | ½                         | 1½                      | 1                        | ½                        | nil.                                     | nil.  |
| Meat .. .. .   | 1                       | ½                        | ½                       | 1                         | ½                       | ½                        | ½                        | nil.                                     | nil.  |
| Eggs .. .. .   | nil.                    | ½                        | ½                       | nil.                      | nil.                    | nil.                     | ½                        | nil.                                     | nil.  |
| Potatoes .. .. .                                     | 1½                      | 1½                       | nil.                    | 1                         | 2½                      | 2                        | 1                        | ½  | 2   |
| Other vegetables .. .. .                             | 2                       | 2                        | 1½                      | ½                         | 2½                      | 2½                       | 2                        | ½  | 2½  |
| Oil .. .. .  | ½                       | ½                        | 1½                      | ½                         | ½                       | ½                        | ½                        | ½  | 1   |
| Ghee .. .. .   | ½                       | ½                        | ½                       | ½                         | ½                       | nil.                     | ½                        | ½  | ½   |
| Sugar .. .. .  | ½                       | ½                        | ½                       | ½                         | ½                       | ½                        | ½                        | 1  | 2   |
| Muri .. .. .   | ½                       | 1                        | nil.                    | nil.                      | nil.                    | 1                        | nil.                     | nil.                                     | nil.  |
| Milk .. .. .   | 2                       | 1                        | ½                       | 1                         | 1                       | 1                        | 1                        | ½  | 2½  |
| Protein .. .. .                                      | 66 gm.                  | 82 gm.                   | 76 gm.                  | 68 gm.                    | 74 gm.                  | 68 gm.                   | 60 gm.                   | 74 gm.                                   | 111 gm.   |
| Fat .. .. .  | 10 per cent.<br>41 g.m. | 53 gm.                   | 39 gm.                  | 45 gm.                    | 55 gm.                  | 42 gm.                   | 46 gm.                   | 13 per cent.<br>29 gm.                   | 12 per cent.<br>87 gm.                              |
| Carbohydrate .. .. .                                 | 14 per cent.<br>526 gm. | 663 gm.                  | 12 per cent.<br>558 gm. | 18 per cent.<br>401 gm.   | 13 per cent.<br>714 gm. | 11 per cent.<br>652 gm.  | 14 per cent.<br>595 gm.  | 11 per cent.<br>428 gm.                  | 20 per cent.<br>749 gm.                             |
| Calories .. .. .                                     | 76 per cent.<br>2,752   | 3,526                    | 78 per cent.<br>2,963   | 70 per cent.<br>2,340     | 79 per cent.<br>3,868   | 81 per cent.<br>3,352    | 78 per cent.<br>3,111    | 76 per cent.<br>2,322                    | 78 per cent.<br>4,286*                              |
| Average income per head per month (Rs).              | 9 10 11                 | 12 7 3                   | 11 3 2                  | 21 4 0                    | 12 14 0                 | 22 7 9                   | 17 14 7                  | Not known.                               |   |
| Average expenditure on food per head per month (Rs). | 7 14 0                  | 8 11 7                   | 8 6 4                   | 9 4 3                     | 9 0 0                   | 10 4 5                   | 9 5 11                   | Not known.                               |   |

\* 2 chataks of soaked gram is also taken in the morning.

*Effects of disturbance of Sex Ratio in industrial cities.*—In industrial towns the disproportion between the sexes is very great as may be seen from the figures quoted below :—

| Towns.                  | Males.  | Females. | Proportion of males to 1,000 females. | Proportion of females to 1,000 males. |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Calcutta .. .. .        | 617,590 | 290,261  | 2,128                                 | 470                                   |
| Howrah .. .. .          | 128,472 | 66,829   | 1,922                                 | 520                                   |
| Bhatpara .. .. .        | 45,723  | 19,886   | 2,299                                 | 435                                   |
| Titagarh .. .. .        | 36,533  | 15,918   | 2,295                                 | 436                                   |
| Serampur .. .. .        | 20,210  | 12,987   | 1,556                                 | 642                                   |
| Baranagar .. .. .       | 19,989  | 12,095   | 1,653                                 | 605                                   |
| Budge-Budge .. .. .     | 17,883  | 7,840    | 2,281                                 | 438                                   |
| Champdani .. .. .       | 17,193  | 7,459    | 2,305                                 | 434                                   |
| Naihati .. .. .         | 15,464  | 7,822    | 1,977                                 | 506                                   |
| Bally .. .. .           | 15,264  | 7,945    | 1,921                                 | 520                                   |
| Rishra-Konnagar .. .. . | 15,030  | 8,229    | 1,826                                 | 547                                   |
| Kamarhati .. .. .       | 14,965  | 8,053    | 1,858                                 | 538                                   |
| Bhadreswar .. .. .      | 14,487  | 7,595    | 1,907                                 | 524                                   |
| Baidyabati .. .. .      | 9,174   | 7,297    | 1,257                                 | 795                                   |
| Garulia .. .. .         | 9,077   | 4,019    | 2,258                                 | 443                                   |
| Kanchrapara .. .. .     | 7,182   | 3,150    | 2,280                                 | 438                                   |
| Panihati .. .. .        | 6,148   | 4,013    | 1,532                                 | 652                                   |
| Halisahar .. .. .       | 4,654   | 2,664    | 1,747                                 | 572                                   |
| Kotrung .. .. .         | 4,330   | 2,516    | 1,721                                 | 581                                   |
| Bansbaria .. .. .       | 4,032   | 2,350    | 1,715                                 | 583                                   |
| Khardah .. .. .         | 3,112   | 2,374    | 1,311                                 | 763                                   |

The most obvious effect of this disturbance of the sex ratio is the abnormally low birthrate of industrial towns. But the recording of births in the majority of towns, industrial or otherwise, is very much neglected so that the birth rates of the two classes of towns do not show as great a difference as might ordinarily be expected. It might be anticipated that the abnormal proportion of the different sexes in industrial towns would also tend to increase the prevalence of venereal diseases in these areas above the general average but without special investigation on this point, data are not readily available to show whether this is so or not.

*Relation between Housing and Mortality.*—No exact data are available to show any special relation between housing and mortality in the several industrial areas of Bengal.

*Extent of Medical facilities provided :* (i) by Employers (ii) Government (iii) other agencies.—In the tea, coal and textile industries, it is customary for employers to provide medical attendance and medicines ; and dispensaries are usually to be found on each tea garden and colliery and attached to each mill where out-patients can secure treatment. Registered Indian medical graduates or licentiates are usually in charge of jute mill and colliery dispensaries. But unregistered practitioners are often employed on individual tea gardens working under the supervision of the European or highly qualified medical officers who hold charge of groups of gardens. Similar arrangements for securing specially skilled medical supervision of groups of mills and collieries are also customary. In recent years excellent hospital accommodation for in-patients is being provided on some Duars tea gardens. In addition to curative treatment, the medical staff of tea gardens and jute mills also usually carry out preventive measures against such epidemic diseases as small-pox and cholera by vaccination, cholera inoculation and disinfection. In some mill areas excellent public health work against malaria is carried on by a special staff engaged for this purpose.

In the Asansol Mining Settlement, the Mines Board of Health employs a considerable staff of sanitary inspectors and medical officers for safeguarding the public health of the colliery area. This staff is paid for by means of a special cess upon the collieries.

Railways, most of which are under State control, all possess their own medical staff, etc. Apart from this, Government does not provide medical facilities. On the other hand, it may be noted that in municipal areas municipal dispensaries exist, and in larger towns there are often hospitals of which many are either Government institutions or are under Government supervision. In a few areas there are excellent mission hospitals and dispensaries also.

#### IV.—Provision for Women Doctors, trained Midwives or Dais.

As far as I know, women doctors are not employed at present in industrial clinics in Bengal. But there are now a few trained nurses and women health workers to be found in connection with a small minority of jute mills. In the Asansol mining settlement three trained midwives are engaged under the Mines, Board of Health. An increasing number of women doctors and trained midwives are now to be found in private practice in the larger towns in Bengal and a few municipalities employ workers of this type. In recent years Government have allotted funds for the establishment of local classes for the training of dais and several hundreds of dais have taken this training and secured certificates. Some of these classes have been held in industrial areas.

*Sanitary arrangements at (a) Work Places (b) Home : (i) Latrines.*—In the rural areas and smaller towns throughout Bengal all but the wealthiest and most cultured of the population are accustomed to attend calls of nature in the open fields or on patches of waste land screened with undergrowth. The sides of tanks and the banks of rivers also are specially resorted to because of the vicinity of water for ablation purposes. As a result, hookworm and other intestinal parasites are widely prevalent ; and enteric fever, dysentery and especially cholera frequently become widespread and give rise to severe epidemics. Only in the larger towns and a few specially enlightened village communities is any attempt made at conservancy, and sewerage systems are at present conspicuous by their absence, Calcutta, Dacca and Titagarh being the only municipal areas at present provided with a water carriage system of sewage disposal. In these circumstances, it is not surprising to find in colliery and tea garden areas where the workers are living under semi-rural conditions, that the attempt to introduce latrines has so far met with little response. In the industrial towns bordering on the Hooghly, however, great advances have been made in the use of latrines since the introduction of the septic tank latrines, which have become immensely popular with mill workers. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that less than one half of the mill operatives are housed by the employers and the latrine arrangements provided in the bastis and bazaars are of the old fashioned hand service type, are insufficient in number, and rarely worked or maintained efficiently. Thus, it comes about that any open piece of waste land and long stretches of the foreshores of the river Hooghly are always polluted with nightsoil and still remain as a serious menace to the health of the community. Under the bye-laws of many municipalities action can be taken against anyone committing this sort of nuisance, but as yet public opinion in regard to sanitary matters of this sort is not sufficiently aroused to enforce a high degree of community cleanliness, and these bye-laws remain largely a dead letter.

(ii) I have already dealt with the question of water-supply provided by jute mills. In the colliery areas and tea gardens, wells are the principal source of supply, supplemented by tanks in the former area and rivers in the latter. A certain number of tea gardens, however, have been able to secure excellent supplies of pure water from springs in the foot hills. In some cases water-supplies of this sort have been brought by means of pipe-lines for long distances and distributed by means of stand-pipes in the coolie lines. In other places tube wells have proved successful and are largely made use of. Here and there where tube wells are used as sources of supply, the water is pumped up and distributed through pipes. But, generally speaking, both in collieries and tea gardens, open deep wells are employed, although occasionally a common bucket and rope or chain is provided for raising the water. Both in colliery areas and tea gardens, it is the usual practice to provide for the periodical treatment of wells with permanganate of potash or bleaching powder.

(iii) Where there are no piped water-supplies sufficiently abundant to provide for washing and bathing, tanks and rivers are largely resorted to for these purposes. In fact the use of tanks or streams for bathing and washing is universal in all the riparian mill municipalities as well as in the colliery areas. In tea gardens, the nearest rivers are largely used and where there is none, well water is employed.

1. *Extent and nature of Official Supervision.—Work of Boards of Health in special areas.*—In Bengal there is only one special Board of Health, viz., the Asansol Mines Board of Health. This Board is a special ad hoc authority for the care of the public

health of the colliery area, and I understand a special report on its work has been submitted. The Board employs a chief sanitary officer and a fairly large executive staff—in fact no similar area in Bengal is so well provided with the means for carrying out public health work.

All other parts of the province are under the control from the health point of view of municipalities or district boards. In recent years a large number of Union Boards have also been established in rural areas and given certain powers in respect of local sanitary needs, such as drainage, water-supply, registration of vital occurrences, etc.

### Public Health Administration in Bengal.

*Provincial administration.*—The provincial administration of public health in the Presidency of Bengal consists of two main divisions—central and local. Public health administration in general is included in the portfolio of the Minister-in-charge of Local Self-Government. The Local Self-Government Department controls the provincial Public Health Department and all business relating to general public health administration. The provincial Government is assisted by the Sanitary Board which advises on the various Sanitary Engineering schemes. The local administration of public health is in the hands of local statutory authorities—district boards and municipalities.

*Central administration.*—The various provincial sanitary departments created in India date from the year 1868, mainly modelled on the sanitary department created in England in consequence of the English Public Health Act of 1858. The Indian Sanitary Commissioners' duties closely resembled those originally prescribed for the Chief Medical Officer of Health of the Local Government Board of England, with this difference, that in Bengal beyond very limited responsibilities given in the rules issued under the Indian Factories Act the Director of Public Health has no statutory powers whatsoever. Statutory provisions for various aspects of public health were made by the Prevention of Inoculation Act (1867), Lodging House Act (1871), Registration of Births and Deaths (1873), Vaccination Act (1880), Municipal Act (1884) and Local Self-Government Act (1885). More recent provisions have been made in the Municipal Sanitary Officers' Act (1914), Village Self-Government Act (1919), Food Adulteration Act (1919) and Sanitary Improvement Act (1920). Under the reforms inaugurated by the Government of India Act (1919), public health was put in the category of transferred subjects and placed in charge of the Minister for Local Self-Government. The powers of Government under the various Acts mentioned above are mostly vested in District Magistrates and Divisional Commissioners.

*Sanitary Board.*—The provincial Sanitary Board was created in the year 1889 with the Sanitary Commissioner as its first secretary with whom was associated an expert in sanitary engineering science. After several changes in its constitution and function, the Sanitary Board is now under the control of the Minister for Local Self-Government. Its present constitution comprises the Local Self-Government Department Secretary as its President, the Surgeon-General as its Vice-President with four nominated official, and six nominated non-official members. The Director of Public Health and the Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, are joint secretaries in addition to being members.

*Local administration.*—In the year 1912 the Government of India inaugurated a far-reaching change of policy in regard to sanitary administration in India by the provision of qualified Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors, both for municipal and for rural areas. For this purpose, legislative provision was made by the enactment of the Municipal Sanitary Officers' Act (1914), making it obligatory on selected towns to employ a sanitary staff specifically prescribed by statutory order. For the most part, municipalities receive from the provincial Government half the cost of the health staff employed by them. The sanitation of rural areas was first definitely tackled by the appointment of qualified District Health Officers in the year 1920, followed by the gradual transformation of the vaccination Inspectors into Sanitary Inspectors. Only last year the Government of Bengal shouldered the heavy financial responsibility of providing the whole of rural Bengal with a regular health establishment. Every police-station has been provided with a uniform subordinate staff of an Assistant Health Officer or Sanitary Inspector, a health assistant and two servants. The province contains about 600 rural police-stations and the annual cost of the whole organization will amount to Rs. 12 lakhs. Public health in municipal and rural areas is administered by the respective local authorities (municipalities, district boards, local boards, union boards) in accordance with the provisions of the extant laws and rules. A few towns possess local public health laboratories maintained from local funds.



## Health Staffs of Industrial Towns.

| Municipalities.        | Areas.     | Populations. | Incomes.  | Health Officers.                       | Sanitary Inspectors. |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--|----------------------|
|                        | Sq. miles. |              | Rs.       |  |                      |
| Raniganj .. ..         | 1.9        | 14,536       | 53,357    | Included in Asansol Mining Settlement. | 1                    |
| Asansol .. ..          | 4.0        | 26,499       | 70,487    |  |                      |
| Hooghly-Chinsura .. .. | 6.0        | 29,938       | 1,30,994  | 2nd class                              | 2                    |
| Serampur .. ..         | 2.3        | 33,197       | 1,95,311  | 2nd class                              | 2                    |
| Bansberia .. ..        | 5.5        | 6,382        | 17,405    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Rishra-Konnagar .. ..  | 2.3        | 23,259       | 51,667    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Uttarpara .. ..        | 1.0        | 8,657        | 33,909    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Kotrung .. ..          | 2.0        | 6,846        | 15,470    | —                                      | —                    |
| Baidyabati .. ..       | 3.5        | 16,471       | 37,977    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Bhadreswar .. ..       | 2.0        | 22,081       | 32,237    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Champdani .. ..        | 2.5        | 24,652       | 41,108    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Howrah .. ..           | 9.8        | 195,301      | 25,95,042 | 1st class                              | 4*                   |
| Bally .. ..            | 3.1        | 23,209       | 73,067    | —                                      | 1                    |
| South Suburban .. ..   | 11.9       | 33,345       | 78,115    | 2nd class                              | 1                    |
| Tollygunge .. ..       | 6.2        | 21,637       | 75,543    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Budge-Budge .. ..      | 3.0        | 25,723       | 81,437    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Baranagar .. ..        | 3.5        | 32,084       | 1,12,494  | 2nd class                              | 1                    |
| Kamarhati .. ..        | 2.8        | 23,018       | 36,006    | —                                      | 1                    |
| North Dum Dum .. ..    | 5.7        | 8,224        | 7,139     | —                                      | —                    |
| South Dum Dum .. ..    | 4.9        | 14,030       | 36,712    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Khardah .. ..          | 1.5        | 5,486        | 10,480    | —                                      | —                    |
| Barrackpur .. ..       | 3.8        | 22,460       | 19,770    | —                                      | 1                    |
| North Barrackpur .. .. | 5.3        | 15,433       | 26,652    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Panihati .. ..         | 7.9        | 10,161       | 19,816    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Titagarh .. ..         | 1.0        | 52,451       | 73,522    | —                                      | 2                    |
| Garulia .. ..          | 0.8        | 13,096       | 25,520    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Naihati .. ..          | 2.3        | 23,286       | 57,213    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Halisahar .. ..        | 5.0        | 7,318        | 24,147    | —                                      | 1                    |
| Bhatpara .. ..         | 3.3        | 65,609       | 1,00,161  | 1st class                              | 2                    |
| Kanchrapara .. ..      | 3.0        | 10,332       | 13,234    | —                                      | 1                    |

\* In addition there are 2 Medical Inspectors, 1 Food Inspector and 3 Midwives.

The above statement gives particulars of the special health staffs employed by the town in industrial areas of Bengal, outside Calcutta. In addition to the above-mentioned towns 13 other towns employ health officers and all but the very small towns employ sanitary inspectors. The Asansol Mines Board of Health employ a chief sanitary officer, 7 sanitary inspectors, several medical men and three passed midwives.

The statement below gives particulars regarding the health staffs of local authorities (district board) in rural areas.

| Districts.        | Populations. | Areas in square miles. | Incomes.  | District Health Officers. | Sanitary Inspectors. |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|----------------------|
|                   |              |                        | Rs.       |                           |                      |
| Burdwan .. ..     | 1,438,926    | 2,703                  | 8,73,341  | 1                         | 16                   |
| Birbhum .. ..     | 847,570      | 1,753                  | 2,68,664  | 1                         | 14                   |
| Bankura .. ..     | 1,019,941    | 2,625                  | 3,25,363  | 1                         | 19                   |
| Midnapur .. ..    | 2,666,660    | 5,186                  | 9,72,938  | 1                         | 33                   |
| Hooghly .. ..     | 1,080,142    | 1,188                  | 3,81,307  | 1                         | 14                   |
| Howrah .. ..      | 997,403      | 530                    | 3,37,141  | 1                         | 10                   |
| 24-Parganas .. .. | 2,628,205    | 4,856                  | 9,73,729  | 1                         | 37                   |
| Nadia .. ..       | 1,487,572    | 2,778                  | 4,55,912  | 1                         | 25                   |
| Murshidabad .. .. | 1,262,514    | 2,121                  | 3,72,126  | 1                         | 20                   |
| Jessore .. ..     | 1,722,219    | 2,904                  | 5,45,581  | 1                         | 24                   |
| Khulna .. ..      | 1,453,034    | 4,730                  | 4,26,746  | 1                         | 22                   |
| Rajshahi .. ..    | 1,489,675    | 2,620                  | 5,47,505  | 1                         | 24                   |
| Dinajpur .. ..    | 1,705,353    | 3,946                  | 4,75,886  | 1                         | 30                   |
| Jalpaiguri .. ..  | 936,269      | 2,931                  | 4,41,183  | 1                         | 17                   |
| Darjeeling .. ..  | 282,748      | 1,164                  | 1,84,608  | —                         | —                    |
| Rangpur .. ..     | 2,507,854    | 3,496                  | 6,79,474  | 1                         | 30                   |
| Bogra .. ..       | 1,048,606    | 1,379                  | 2,70,234  | 1                         | 12                   |
| Pabna .. ..       | 1,389,494    | 1,678                  | 3,07,233  | 1                         | 17                   |
| Malda .. ..       | 985,665      | 1,833                  | 3,50,469  | 1                         | 15                   |
| Dacca .. ..       | 3,125,967    | 2,723                  | 5,81,578  | 1                         | 32                   |
| Mymensingh .. ..  | 4,837,730    | 6,238                  | 11,46,138 | 1                         | 51                   |
| Faridpur .. ..    | 2,249,858    | 2,371                  | 4,09,685  | 1                         | 25                   |
| Barkarganj .. ..  | 2,623,756    | 3,490                  | 7,99,224  | 1                         | 33                   |
| Chittagong .. ..  | 1,611,422    | 2,497                  | 4,59,374  | 1                         | 20                   |
| Noakhali .. ..    | 1,472,786    | 1,515                  | 4,22,350  | 1                         | 14                   |
| Tippera .. ..     | 2,743,073    | 2,560                  | 6,16,056  | 1                         | 20                   |

*Disease.*—(i) *Prevalence of industrial diseases.*—There is little or no data available to indicate the prevalence of industrial diseases. Very few investigations have as yet been undertaken into this question, and this sort of work cannot ordinarily be undertaken without special staff. Eight years ago the appointment of an Assistant Director of Public Health specially for work in connection with industrial hygiene was sanctioned, but six months later, owing to financial stringency, the post was retrenched. Had this not occurred much more data regarding the various aspect of industrial hygiene, including industrial diseases would have now been available.

(ii) *Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm and other tropical diseases.*—The detailed statements relating to the principal causes of death in the province generally and in various special areas in particular, give information regarding the prevalence of cholera, malaria and certain other tropical diseases.

*Notes.*—The Government of Bengal publications, "Hookworm Disease: its Cause, Treatment and Prevention" and "Dynamics of Public Health," both by Dr. Chas. A. Bentley, were submitted with the above memorandum.

Sir CHARLES STUART WILLIAMS, Kt., CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR THE PORT OF CALCUTTA.

#### Report on Dock Labour.

##### Port of Calcutta.

The questionnaire received is headed "Seamen and Dock Labourers," and this has been interpreted to mean that particulars are required under the various heads mentioned in respect of (1) marine staff employed in the port and port approaches, on the Port Commissioners' vessels and in their docks, (2) their workshop staff, and (3) their unskilled labour force. These three sections of the staff include the greater part of the Port Commissioners' employees who earn their living by some description

of manual labour, but they exclude the staff employed on railway or transportation work. This latter, the Port Commissioners' railway staff, is in most cases paid and treated on the same lines as those of the broad gauge railways in the Calcutta district, and it may be taken as a general principle that the replies received from these railways will cover the Port Commissioners' staff of similar grades.

As regards the three sections of the Port Commissioners' staff regarding which particulars are furnished, they have been divided into two groups, namely, (a) seamen and workshop labour, and (b) unskilled labour. This arrangement is convenient in itself and follows a more or less definite line of demarcation in that the seamen and workshop staff are skilled, or partially skilled men who have learned a definite trade, while the labour force dealt with under (b) is more of the nature of casual labour, not requiring any high degree of skill.

Two memoranda, marked "A.—Seamen and Workshop Labour," and "B.—Unskilled Labour" are attached, in which endeavour has been made to furnish the required particulars under all main heads.

A statement headed "Port of Chittagong—Seamen and Dock Labourers," is also attached giving the information required in respect of the labour condition under the Port Commissioners, Chittagong.

### Port of Calcutta.

#### A.—Seamen and Workshop Labour.

##### I.—Recruitment.

*Seamen.*—When vacancies occur the serangs, or other headmen, usually bring forward applicants for the post, who in most cases are relatives or friends of the men already in service. The actual appointment is made by the officer in charge. Light vessel crews were formerly engaged through the medium of a shipping broker, but the Port Commissioners have discontinued this practice and now recruit men direct. The Port Commissioners employ about 1,700 men afloat on different vessels and 300 ashore at the docks, or about 2,000 altogether of the seamen type. Workshop labour follows the same principle of direct application and selection, and this appears to be the most satisfactory method that could be employed. The strength of the workshop staff was 3,160 and 3,044 for the months of April and May, 1929, respectively, and the permanent strength may be taken in round figures at 3,000.

##### II.—Organization of Managing Staff.

In both the Deputy Conservator's Department and the workshops, competent men have every facility for promotion, and the every-day execution of work gives enough scope for practical training, especially as it is carried out under the supervision and guidance of qualified men. Where regulations require a certain qualification in the holder of a post, men without this qualification are, of course, debarred from the promotion. The relations between officers and men are good, and the personal touch accounts largely for the satisfactory manner in which work is performed.

##### III.—Housing.

The river staff of the Deputy Conservator's Department are all accommodated on board the various craft on which they work. The Dock Master's men have quarters at No. 13 and No. 24 berth, Kidderpore Docks—two large well-built, well-ventilated brick buildings. No rent is charged. It is possible that there are always a few outsiders in the quarters, but there are a serang and a tindal in charge to keep the number within limits. The workshop men do not get quarters but find their own accommodation.

##### IV.—Health.

The nature of the work and the open-air life keep the Deputy Conservator's staff in good health. The production of a medical certificate does not entitle a man to any more leave than is ordinarily allowed, (viz., above the grade of lascar, one month per year, cumulative to extent of three months; lascars, fourteen days per year, cumulative to extent of forty-two days), so that no records have been kept, but there is every reason to believe that beyond minor ailments the men keep excellent health. The workshop staff are not eligible for leave. The returns show 74 men absent in April, 1929, owing to illness, and 58 in May. Applications from relatives of deceased staff show that 9 of the Deputy Conservator's staff died during the period January to June, 1929, while the corresponding figures for the workshop were 21. Birth-rate and infant mortality cannot be ascertained.

Medical facilities are provided for all the staff. Each vessel carries a stock of medicines, and if a man should get seriously ill down the river every effort is made to place him under qualified medical attention. At the docks the Commissioners' dispensary attends to any cases needing assistance, while the various public hospitals treat those who find it more convenient to attend them. Some of the Dock Master's staff seem to prefer the Kidderpore Municipal Dispensary, but on the whole the dock dispensary is well patronised by all sections of the staff.

#### V.—Welfare.

Both sections of the staff are eligible for the provident fund (which, as a contributory fund, dates from April, 1924), and the fund seems to be growing in popularity, as many of the Deputy Conservator's staff, who previously held aloof from it, are now anxious to join. Senior ratings in the Deputy Conservator's Department drawing Rs. 45 per month or more are eligible for the Co-operative Credit Society. Workshop staff are debarred from the society but are eligible for the fund after three three years' continuous service.

#### VII.—Safety.

On board the various vessels the staff are protected from accidents by stringent Board of Trade regulations, which require definite precautions to be taken for the safety of staff. Similarly, the Factories and Electricity Acts look after the safety of workshop labourers. Where these statutory regulations do not apply it is constantly impressed on serangs and others in charge that all necessary precautions must be taken. Departmental enquiries which are held in all serious cases and their consequences also help to make the supervising staff more careful. As a result there were only 44 accident cases at the workshops from February to April, 1929, while the Deputy Conservator's Department report only one case in April, 1928, and two in April, 1929. The causes of accidents are almost invariably carelessness or clumsiness in the handling of tools and gear. First-aid appliances are kept on all the vessels at Tukta Ghat, in the Dock Master's office, and at the workshops, and any further treatment necessary is readily obtainable at the Dock Dispensary or the nearest hospital.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

As remarked in connection with the jetty labour, the Port Commissioners are more generous than the Workmen's Compensation Act. The staff under review are all eligible for injury leave on full pay as well as for compensation in cases of death or permanent disability.

#### IX.—Hours.

As regards the workshop the number of hours and days worked is watched by the Factories Act. Working hours are limited to a fixed maximum and a man who works on a Sunday must get a day off in lieu within three days of the Sunday. The normal working hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a break from noon to 1 p.m., and, except for special urgent work, the labour are not detained on duty after closing time. As reports must be made to the Inspector of Factories, showing the hours that the men are worked, it can be understood that too much cannot be demanded of the labour. Once away from the workshops the men are free and the very fact that they live where they choose renders it almost impossible to call them up out of working hours.

The Deputy Conservator's staff fall roughly into three main sections, (a) Dock Master's staff, (b) Harbour Master's staff, (c) staff working mainly on the lower reaches of the river. The duties and hours of the first two classes were fully reviewed in the beginning of 1928. The position may be summed up by saying that where it was found that the duties to be performed occasionally entailed long spells of arduous work, falling at abnormal hours, the staff were compensated by increases in pay and the grant of special allowances. The third class working down the river are usually on duty from daylight to dark, or on day and night ebb-tides. To this may be added the preliminaries occurring before the commencement of work and the various odd jobs to be done after work stops, while as a set-off men are given time off for meals and sleep as can be arranged. The net result would be about 12 to 14 hours' nominal duty a day for deck crew; engine-room crew work in watches. On Sundays practically half a day's work only is done, and when the vessel is in port the duties are necessarily much easier. As compensation the port approaches' men receive provisions or provision allowance while the dredging staff draw an overtime allowance of 25 per cent. of pay besides. Tides and the special conditions of shipping work make it difficult to regulate the hours of duty and prevent its being continuous.

X.—Women, young adults and children are not employed.

**XII.—Wages.**

The statements attached (Appendices X and Y)\* show in detail the salaries paid to the Deputy Conservator's staff and the workshop labour. In addition, overtime, Sunday and holiday allowances and bhatta allowances are paid as sanctioned by the Commissioners. Wages are more or less standard for each class of worker and variations can always be traced to special conditions attached to a post. It is believed that the rates paid by the Commissioners compare favourably with those of other employers, and this probably accounts for the readiness with which recruits are obtained. Fines are seldom imposed in the Deputy Conservator's department, but when inflicted are sufficient to impress the culprit. Offences are usually grave breaches of discipline or acts that might involve shipping in danger. The workshop staff are seldom fined more than a day's pay and the number of men fined monthly varies between 1 and 2 per cent. of the total strength. The only other deductions from salary are provident fund contributions and the repayment of loans to the Co-operative Credit Society (workshop staff cannot join the society). Fines all return to the staff in the shape of gratuities, mostly paid to the widows and children of deceased staff left with inadequate provision. The workshop staff bills are due for payment on the 7th of the month, and men draw pay for a period from the 22nd of one month to the 21st of the next. Payment of the Deputy Conservator's staff usually commences about the 4th, continuing till about the 16th, and the men are paid for the full previous calendar month. The scale of salaries is sufficient to enable staff to keep out of debt, especially as the cost of living has declined while wages have remained at peak level, and such cases of indebtedness that exist are usually due to special circumstances. Leave is taken by the Deputy Conservator's staff to the full extent allowed by the rules. On an average the staff must go to their homes at least every other year for about two months; senior ratings being allowed more leave, take longer spells at home. Workshop staff are not entitled to leave on pay, being classified as artisans under the Act.

**XIII.—Efficiency.**

Efficiency has not changed materially during recent years. Some authorities believe that the efficiency of the workshop labourer cannot advance far beyond the present stage, and this will probably be true until primary education at least is universal and free.

**XIV.—Trade Combinations.**

The marine labour started a body called the Calcutta Port Trust Marine Workers' Union, which applied for registration in December, 1927, but their application was not followed up and enquiries made do not show that it has been registered up to date. It is understood that membership was considerably reduced after the strike of the harbour and dock men in 1927. No registered union, therefore, exists among the labour, the only registered body being the Calcutta Port Trust Employees' Association, which represents the clerical staff.

**XV.—Strikes and Lock-outs.**

The Harbour Master's and Dock Master's men went on strike at the end of 1927 for 22 days over grievances which eventually centred round a demand for more pay. Resolution 270 (Appendix Z)\* of the 1995th meeting records the full history of the affair, and the terms of settlement were reached after the men had represented their case in full before two senior officers selected by the chairman. Workers have every opportunity to lay their grievances before the administration and disputes are always settled direct without any reference to outside parties. The workshop staff have worked smoothly for the past few years.

**B.—Unskilled Labour.**

At the outset it may be mentioned that beyond a small fraction of the labour at the coal berths and the coolie labour at the tea warehouse, the labour employed at both the Kidderpore and King George's Docks is contract labour supplied by Messrs. Bird & Co., and is not directly employed by the Port Commissioners. The largest body of coolies directly employed by the Commissioners is the day labour force of "monthly coolies," employed at the Calcutta jetties. The work which these men do is fundamentally the same as that done by the dock labour, but somewhat more difficult, as some imports are more varied in shape, heavier and more awkward than

\* Not printed.

most exports. Both groups of labour belong to the same class of men, with the same habits of life and the same characteristics and come from the same areas. The jetty labour therefore offers the most convenient material for investigation, and the substance of this note relates to the Commissioners' coolies employed at the jetty transit sheds and warehouses.

### I.—Recruitment.

At present the coolies offer themselves for employment, being generally either men who have worked previously with the Commissioners or men related to, or fellow-villagers of, those already in their service. The deputy jetty superintendent, an officer on pay on Rs. 1,000-50-1,350 per mensem, selects the recruits after personal inspection. It is doubtful whether this method can be improved upon. The number of applicants far exceeds the Commissioners' requirements. The labour strength is fixed at 1,844 posts for the current year, all permanent posts, but the average number of men in employ may be taken at 1,745. Employment agencies would not be an improvement on the present method of direct application and selection, and in practice the men in service are themselves employment agents for relatives or fellow villagers looking for work.

### II.—Organization of Managing Staff.

Coolies with intelligence, ambition, and a desire for long service with the Commissioners do actually rise to the higher posts of leading hand, tindal and serang. There is, from the nature of the case, no training beyond the opportunities offered by the practical execution of work; when a man feels himself competent to fill a higher post he usually applies for promotion and the selection for vacancies is made by his superior officers after examination of the candidates. The relations between the labour and the supervising staff are quite good. Altercations are rare and no serious outbreak has occurred for years.

### III.—Housing.

The housing accommodation provided for this labour force consists of one type, viz., single-storied blocks with brick walls and corrugated iron roofs. Each block contains 12 rooms, each room measuring 11 ft. by 9 ft., being intended to house three men. As 114 rooms have been allotted to the jetty coolies, accommodation on this scale is provided for 342 men, but the actual number now in occupation is 284. There are no rent charges. Those who do not live in the coolie lines receive a house allowance of Re. 1-8 per mensem for coolies and Rs. 2 per month for serangs, tindals and leading hands. Outsiders sometimes find their way into the quarters, but the line durwans bring these cases to notice and the intruders are evicted without any difficulty.

### IV.—Health.

The assistant surgeon, Kidderpore Docks, describes the health of the jetty coolies as "fair." Judged by Calcutta standards there is reason to describe the average health of these men as good; taking the number of leave applications supported by medical certificate, it is found that in September, 1928 (August-September is the fever season) there were 61 and in May, 1929, only 23. Reliable figures of mortality are not available, but the assistant surgeon estimates the number of deaths in the coolie lines among the jetty men as not more than six to eight annually. In 1928, 19 applications for wages due were received from the relatives of deceased coolies and 12 up to the end of June, 1929. Figures of birth-rate and infant mortality cannot be given as the men generally leave their families in their native villages. The Dock Dispensary provides medical aid for the labour staff, and there is also a branch dispensary in the coolie lines for cases that cannot conveniently attend the dock dispensary. The labour take full advantage of the medical facilities provided.

### V.—Welfare.

Beyond the arrangements for housing, leave and medical attendance, there is little which can be described under this head. There are coolie sports held once every year with suitable prizes.

### VII.—Safety.

A copy of Jetty Order No. 17 of 22nd May, 1923, is attached. The standing orders laid down therein have had the effect of keeping down accidents; thus, in September, 1928, there were only 25 injury leave cases and 13 in May, 1929. The

causes of accidents are mainly the careless handling of awkward or heavy cargo by the coolies themselves and even the constant vigilance of the supervising staff cannot entirely counteract the want of a "safety sense" among the coolies. Men who are injured are sent to the nearest hospital (two of which, viz., the Mayo Hospital in the north and the Sambhu Nath Pandit Hospital in the south receive subscriptions from the Commissioners), or to the Dock Dispensary, and are granted full pay for the period of incapacity. First-aid appliances are kept handy in the assistant superintendent's office.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

Compensation is granted to disabled men. In fact, the Commissioners allow their staff greater concessions than are provided for in the Workmen's Compensation Act, e.g., injury leave is paid at full pay instead of half pay, and in four cases, affecting other sections of the staff, the Commissioners have paid larger compensation under Section 31 (i) (A) than they need have done under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Compensation has been paid in the cases of five jetty coolies since the Act was passed.

#### IX.—Hours.

The labour work to the same hours as the shipping, viz., 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with two intervals of half an hour each at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. It is very seldom that the staff are required to work overtime, and once off duty they are never called up for work till the next day.

Two Sundays a month would about represent the average of Sunday working. Probably the coolie himself would be the first to resent any enforced stoppage on Sundays and holidays, as he would miss the extra allowances paid for work on those days.

#### X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

Except in the conservancy section, the Commissioners do not employ women. Young adults and children are also physically unsuitable for cargo work, and are not employed.

#### XII.—Wages.

The men are monthly rated, but are paid according to the number of days worked. The rates of wages are shown below :—

|                         | 1918. | 1920.       | 1921<br>(current). |
|-------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------------|
| Serangs .. .. .         | 20    | 25, 30, 35, | 29, 34, 40,        |
|                         |       | 45          | 51                 |
| Tindals .. .. .         | —     | 20          | 23, 29             |
| Leading hands .. ..     | 15    | 20          | 23                 |
| Transit shed porters .. | 13    | 15          | 18                 |
| Warehouse porters ..    | 12    | 14          | 17, 18             |

Serangs earn overtime at 3 annas an hour, and other classes at 2 annas an hour, while Sunday and holiday allowance is paid at Re. 1-4 a day for serangs, Re. 1 a day for tindals and leading hands, and 12 annas a day for porters (coolies). House allowance is paid at Re. 1-8 a month for porters and Rs. 2 a month for other classes, when men do not care to live in Commissioners' quarters. Wages are normally fixed to cover the cost of living and if the staff find that their wages do not cover expenses they are not slow to represent matters. The increases granted in recent years probably account for the large number of men seeking employment with the Commissioners. Fining is seldom resorted to, and when a fine has to be imposed it seldom exceeds 8 annas. The only other deduction from a man's pay is his contribution to the provident fund, and this only if he elects to join. All fines return to the staff in the shape of gratuities and other benefits. Wages are paid about the middle of a month for the previous calendar month. There are individual cases of indebtedness, but the average coolie can save about Rs. 5 per month, or 25 per cent. of his income. No bonus or profit-sharing scheme exists, but coolies are eligible to join the contributory provident fund.

The question of leave is a difficult one. A copy of the leave rules for labour (General Order No. 31, dated the 17th November, 1922) is attached. The amount of leave allowed is not sufficient for the average coolie who, when he goes home, seldom returns for a considerable period, and under departmental orders he is struck off if he fails to resume at the end of the term of leave applied for. Leave salary is billed for on a man's return on the due date. About 20 per cent. of the men leave

before rendering a year's service, the home ties or crop operations drawing them back to their villages, and during their service they do not avail themselves of the leave concessions unless they fall ill. Another 20 per cent. work into the second year usually without leave (except on medical certificate) and then go to their villages to stay away for months. Most of the remainder take all leave allowed by the rules.

#### XIII.—Efficiency.

The coolies are unskilled labour and the level of efficiency remains about the same.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The jetty labour do not seem to have any labour union or organization. They are too nomadic in their habits for any such movement.

#### XV.—Strikes and Lock-outs.

Strikes are few and far between, and are generally due to one cause, viz., wages and allowances. The last strike, at the end of 1927, lasted 25 days, the men returning to work after being granted certain concessions. Any hardships felt by the staff can be and are readily laid before the authorities, and all disputes are settled directly between the men and their employers.

#### XVII.—Administration.

The work is constantly under inspection by the senior officers of the department.

##### *Jetty Order No. 17 of 22nd May, 1923.*

Accidents resulting in injuries to coolies are becoming far too frequent at the jetties, and it is felt that these would be reduced to a minimum if more care was exercised by the supervising staff. It is the duty of supercargoes, serangs, and tindals to at all times anxiously watch the working of their men and teach them how to avoid sustaining injuries whilst handling goods. Shed masters and assistant shed masters will please assemble their serangs and tindals and see that the supercargo in charge makes these orders clear to them.

Accident reports should in future give the name of the serang or tindal who was supervising the work.

##### *General Order No. 31 of 17th November, 1922.*

1. *Leave Rules.*—The following leave may be granted to the menial and labour staff in the traffic department (designations noted in Appendix A) from 1st January, 1922, in any calendar year on the understanding that no additional expense is incurred by the appointment of substitutes.

| Particulars of Staff.           | Leave on Full Pay.  | Leave on Half Pay.  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Under Rs. 20 per mensem—</b> |   |   |
| Under one year's service ..     | 7 days on medical certificate.                            | Nil.  |
| Over one year's service ..      | 14 days' casual leave and 7 days on medical certificate.  | 7 days on medical certificate.                            |
| <b>Rs. 20 and over—</b>         |   |   |
| Under one year's service ..     | 7 days on medical certificate.                            | Nil.  |
| Over one year's service ..      | 15 days' casual leave and 15 days on medical certificate. | 15 days' casual leave and 15 days on medical certificate. |

N.B.—(1) Medical certificates should be obtained from the Assistant Surgeon, K. P. Docks (in cases of menial staff working at Kidderpore Docks, labour staff, tea warehouse and jetties) and from the officers-in-charge of public hospitals (in cases of menial staff working in traffic manager's office, jetties, I. V. wharves, Petroleum Wharf and Moyapur Magazine) or if obtained from private practitioners countersigned by these officers in all cases.

(2) If not taken casual leave may be allowed to accumulate to the extent of one month on full pay after two years' approved service.

Full pay will be given to the above-mentioned staff injured whilst on duty for the period they are under medical treatment subject to the resolution passed by the



Commissioners at their meeting held on 9th March, 1903. Each case should be reported to this office separately, medical certificates in such cases should be obtained from or countersigned by the Commissioners' medical officer.

*Grant of Holiday Allowance.*—The following holiday allowances are sanctioned in favour of the mental and labour staff in the Traffic Department (designations noted in Appendix B) from 1st January, 1921 :—

*Hindus.*—Half a day's pay on "Hindu" holidays recognized by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

*Muhammadans.*—Half a day's pay on "Muhammadan" gazetted holidays.

### Port of Chittagong.

*Seamen and Dock Labourers.*—As the deep-water jetties and sheds at Chittagong are under the administration of the Assam-Bengal Railway Company, the Chittagong Port Trust has no dock labourers in the ordinary meaning of the term in its employ.

For the purposes of the questionnaire the term "dock labourers" is taken as embracing manual workers employed on land which almost wholly consist of the port workshops' staff, who number about 120.

The term "seamen" is taken to apply to all employees engaged afloat, as on dredgers, launches, heave-up boats, etc., and who number about 300.

### I.—Recruitment.

As all "seamen" employed by the Port Trust are included in the schedule of permanent staff the number of the establishment is fixed, and very little recruitment is necessary. Such vacancies as arise from time to time are advertised by word of mouth, which method usually produces sufficient applicants from which to select a suitable candidate. The vacancies generally occur in the lower grades, as, if a higher grade appointment becomes vacant promotion is made from amongst the employees and newcomers have to commence duties in the lower grades.

A similar method to above is employed for recruitment of workshops' staff, and as it appears fully to answer the purpose the question of improvement has not been considered.

The workshop employees number about 120, of which only about 12 are on the schedule of permanent staff, the remainder being engaged on daily wages. The number of the daily paid staff, however, remains sensibly constant, though occasionally a sudden access of work may necessitate an extra 20 men being temporarily engaged.

The supply of labour being at all times equal to the small demands of the Port Trust the establishment of employment agencies is not considered necessary as far as the Port Trust is concerned.

### II.—Organisation of Managing Staff.

It is the aim of the Port Trust to train and promote men on their staff rather than to bring in qualified outsiders and to this end facilities are given to enable suitable men on lower grades to become qualified for promotion. Deck hands in the "Afloat" establishment are able to qualify as seacunnies, serangs, and in some cases first-class inland masters. Coal-trimmers and firemen are able to rise by stages of greasers, tindals, etc., to qualified engine-drivers.

In the workshops selected boys are taken on and given a five years' apprenticeship course, at the satisfactory termination of which they are either retained on the tradesmen's scale of pay or given certificates testifying that they are qualified as tradesmen.

From the workshops' unskilled staff of labourers are recruited the semi-skilled workers such as riveters, hammermen, etc.

As the total number of the "Afloat" establishment is only about 300, and inspection of work in all its phases regularly maintained by the departmental heads there is a great deal of personal contact with the workers whereby relations are well maintained.

### VII.—Workmen's Compensation.

This has had no application in Port Trust. The Port Commissioners have recently recommended that their "Afloat" establishment be brought within the scope of Workmen's Compensation Act.

Workshop employees come within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

### IX.—Hours.

| Dredgers.  | Launches, etc.   | Boats in attendance on shipping, viz., Heave-up and Hawser Boats.                       | Workshops.   |
|--|--|---|--|
| Eight hours per day constitutes normal day's work.<br><br>Hours worked in excess of this are reckoned as overtime. | 200 duty hours per month constitutes the normal working month, hours in excess of this amount being treated as overtime. | Regular hours on duty are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.   | 46 hours worked per week 8 hours per day for 5 days and 6 hour on Saturdays.   |
| Actual time worked varies from 8-10 hours per day, the average hours worked being about 9 hours per day.           | Total working hours per month average about 280, which includes 80 hours overtime.                                       | Practically no overtime work, i.e., work performed outside the above period, is worked. | Approximately 10 hours overtime is worked per week.  |
| Dredging is carried out as tides permit any time during daylight hours.  | The working of launches is normally confined to daylight hours.  | The heave-up boats, etc., are liable to be called on for duty at any time day or night. | No spread over.  |
| Six days worked per week.  | Six days worked per week normally. One or two launches kept under steam during week-ends in case of urgent requisition.  | Are liable for service on all days of the week.   | Six days per week normally worked. A small proportion of men have to work occasionally on Sundays on urgent repair work. |

The general Port Work, depending as it does on tides, renders the regulation of hours a difficult matter.

### XII.—Wages.

The prevailing rates of wages of permanent staff are given in Appendices I and II to this note.\*

Deductions on account of fines may be taken as negligible.

No other deductions from pay are made, though when the new Provident Fund comes into force, a deduction of one-twelfth will be made from wages from all employees in receipt of Rs. 30 per mensem and over.

Fines are not utilized for any particular purpose, but are returned to the Port Fund.

Wages in all cases are paid monthly. Payment is made during the first week of the month to all except the daily paid staff of the workshops, whose wages for the month are paid on the 15th of the following month.

No information is to hand regarding the amount of indebtedness existing amongst the employees.

A retiring bonus scheme has recently been sanctioned whereby all employees on schedule of permanent staff eligible for the provident fund are entitled after 15 years' service to draw half a month's pay for each year of service.

Employees on the schedule of permanent staff who are in receipt of more than Rs. 20 per mensem are eligible for leave on pay in accordance with the Fundamental Rules of Government. Those drawing Rs. 20 per mensem and less can only have leave with pay if arrangements can be made to carry on their work without extra expenditure, i.e., without having to appoint a substitute, otherwise leave without pay granted.

The daily paid staff of the workshops are not paid for any leave they may take.

Leave is freely availed of by the employees.

\* Not printed.

## BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

2. The Royal Commission has not issued a questionnaire, but instead there has been published a schedule of the subjects falling within the terms of reference which appear to the Commission likely to engage their attention in the course of the enquiry. The schedule has been examined by important representative interests connected with the Chamber, and Memoranda with reference to it have been submitted in respect of the following bodies or interests, namely: The Indian Tea Association, the Indian Jute Mills Association, the Indian Mining Association, Inland Steamers, Ocean Steamers, Gas, Electric Supply and Tramways undertakings, the Engineering Industry, Jute Presses, and Workmen's Compensation. In these circumstances, and as the headings in the schedule issued by the Commission call for information that can more suitably be furnished in respect of individual industries, there is perhaps no necessity for the Chamber to submit a Note to the Commission. As, indeed, the ground has been fully covered by the interests mentioned, it would be superfluous for them to add a Memorandum dealing with the different headings, but it may possibly be of service if the Chamber endeavours to call attention in a very general way to a few important matters relating to labour conditions in this country, and particularly in the province of Bengal. This Note is accordingly submitted by way of a general preface to the detailed memoranda furnished on behalf of specific industries, and endeavours to set out the point of view of the European employer, as represented by the Chamber.

3. The European visiting India for the first time is often surprised on first acquaintance with various aspects in the lives of the people, and there have been many enthusiasts who have set to work to better conditions from the European point of view. In many cases, however, they have found that what seems to the European eye suggestive of poverty and distress is only the result of natural adaptation to the necessities of the climate and the country, and these reformers have realized that, without going gently and taking infinite pains to show full consideration for the habits and customs of many generations, more harm than good may be done by antagonizing where their anxiety is to help.

4. To make a proper comparison between Indian labour and labour in Western countries it is necessary first to make full allowance for the independence of the Indian labourer and the easy conditions under which he insists on working. If he wants to take a day off he takes it. If he wants a holiday he practically insists on getting it in his own time, no matter how inconvenient his absence may be to his employer. In a factory a man may sit down for a rest beside his loom or machine, and no one thinks anything of it, even although the machine has to stop working while he is resting. As compared with the home labourer, who probably lives in the same house and works in the same factory all his life with a week or two's holiday every year, the labourer in this country in many cases lives practically rent free in a house provided for him of a far better quality than people of his class can have in their own villages. He gets free water and light in the urban districts. On the tea gardens he gets free fuel, land to cultivate and time to cultivate it, free doctoring and medicine, and in the case of most enlightened employers the shopkeepers who supply his daily wants in the way of food, etc., are under control to see that they do not profiteer unduly. In the majority of cases the labourer still owns land in his own village which is probably cultivated by other members of his family, and the industrious and thrifty worker can usually afford to take a holiday of a month or so on his own land every year and retire to it in his old age with the knowledge that his savings have purchased him sufficient cattle and land to support him in his closing years.

5. Perhaps the most important feature of Indian labour is that it is primarily agricultural, and industrial only, as it were, by adoption. To a certain extent this may be said of every country in the early stages of its industrial development, and no doubt it is because India is industrially such a young country that the feature is so noticeable here. It is a striking fact that, according to the Government of India's publication, "Large Industrial Establishments in India, 1927," the number of persons employed during that year in such establishments in the whole of India, including Indian States, totalled only 1,680,702 or .5 per cent. of the total population; and of this number nearly two-thirds was accounted for by cotton mills and factories (including ginning and baling), jute mills, and railway and tramway workshops. These figures refer, as is stated, to industrial establishments and do not include, for example, employees on the railways other than those employed in the workshops, employees on tea plantations other than those employed in the factories, labour employed in the coal mines, and so on, but they are indicative of the small proportion of India's vast population that depends on employment in large industries. In Great Britain the number of persons employed in factories alone amounts to over 5,000,000, out of a total population of less than 50,000,000 persons, that is to say, 10 per cent. And, as has already been stated, unlike the factory worker in England,

those who are employed in industry in this country still remain, whenever they can, primarily agriculturists. They retain their interest in and their connection with the land. They work in industry for the greater portion of the year, but they return regularly to their country.

6. This feature is, of course, more noticeable in some industries than it is in others, and as an industry develops the tendency is, as is natural, for the workers in it to become more and more industrialized. This is the case with the labour in the jute mills of Calcutta and its vicinity, where the development is in the direction of the formation of a community whose main interest is in the industry. On the other hand, the Indian Mining Association explains that apart from the skilled labour employed at the collieries there is little settled labour, and the Association estimates that the miner stays on the collieries on the average for only about eight months out of the twelve; for the rest of the time he is on his land. Labour employed on the tea gardens is different from both jute mill and colliery labour. The work is agricultural in its nature, and the tea garden labourer in most cases has a plot of his own to cultivate. The Indian Tea Association points out that a fairly large percentage of their labour has permanently settled on the tea gardens and more or less lost touch with their country; particularly in Assam, many thousands of labourers have voluntarily settled permanently on Government land, and large areas of the province have been opened out entirely by labourers originally recruited for work on the tea gardens who have now become prosperous yeomen farmers. The point is that industrial labour in India is agricultural in its origin, and subject to the qualification stated at the beginning of this paragraph, to a large extent remains so in its character. It will be noted by the Commission with interest that this condition applies even in the case of Indian seamen, and the memorandum that has been submitted with reference to Ocean Steamer Labour explains that even the lascar remains primarily an agriculturist.

7. It will be of interest also to note, when considering this feature, the particulars which have been given in respect of a number of industries in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, regarding the province of origin of the bulk of the labour force. It is a striking fact that such a large proportion of the labour comes from outside the province of Bengal. In the case of the jute mills, the Indian Jute Mills Association puts the proportion of its labour originating outside Bengal as 83 per cent.; the agent of the Calcutta Tramways Co., Ltd., estimates that considerably less than half his labour comes from Bengal, while only about 25 per cent. belongs to Calcutta and its immediate vicinity. Of the labour employed by the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation only about 17 per cent., the agent estimates, comes from Bengal; and the general manager of the Oriental Gas Co., Ltd., puts the percentage of his labour force originating in Bengal at a little less than 25. These figures afford convincing proof of the statement that industrial labour is essentially agricultural in its origin and character.

8. The Chamber has no doubt that the Royal Commission will keep this important consideration in view, and will give due regard, when examining the conditions in the industrial areas, to the conditions in the areas from which the labour comes. If a right perspective is to be arrived at it is essential, in the opinion of the Chamber, that the matter concerning, for instance, the standard of living in industrial areas should be viewed from the standpoint of the conditions in the workers' own villages rather than from the standpoint of the conditions prevailing in highly industrialized countries. This statement should not be misunderstood. The Chamber is most certainly not suggesting that there is no reason to advance the standard, that conditions in industry are universally perfect. But they do think that possibly comparisons may be made on the wrong level, and that this possibility should be kept in view. To compare a money wage in India with a money wage at home without taking anything else into consideration would be entirely misleading. On the other side of the account, efficiency, as tested by the out-turn per unit, is on a much lower scale, and speaking broadly it is hardly possible that things can be otherwise in view of the climatic conditions; for these must always be a brake on the rapidity with which industries in a tropical country can expect to accommodate themselves to world conditions of output. On the other side of the account, it is the exception for the industrialist's earnings to be limited to a money payment. Whether or no the tea garden labourer can be regarded as an industrialist does not for the moment matter, because he is definitely included in the terms of reference to the Commission; so far as he is concerned, he is invariably supplied with housing accommodation. In the case of jute mills and collieries, a considerable proportion of the employees are similarly furnished with quarters, and the Indian Jute Mills Association explains that the labourer not uncommonly prefers to live in the *bustees* rather than in the sanitary pucca house provided by the mill. Such industries as engineering, gas, electric supply, and tranway undertakings, and similar industries are, so far as Calcutta is concerned, at the other end of the line from the tea industry; being purely city industries, housing accommodation is not provided other than in

exceptional cases. It should be said, too, that there are other additions to money wages besides housing. The Chamber is able to speak mainly with reference to European managed industries, and speaking generally with regard to these it is, as has already been stated, the practice to provide free medical attendance and free medicines, and there is a gradual development in the direction of schemes of welfare work. The Indian Jute Mills Association has explained the endeavours that have been made in this direction by some of the jute mills, and what they have to say shows that progress can be made only gradually.

9. Housing conditions, wages, welfare work, they are all factors in the problem. And that it is a problem has been brought home many a time to employers who have endeavoured to improve the conditions for their employees. The endeavour to persuade the labourer to adopt more hygienic and sanitary systems of living according to western ideas is a continuous one, but it is necessary to proceed slowly, and age-old beliefs and susceptibilities are inclined to be opposed to progress, so that it is frequently found that some new improvement that has been installed at considerable cost for the benefit of the labourer is looked upon by the labourer with distrust and dislike; for the natural conservatism of the Indian worker and his family is not easy to overcome, and is a factor that must be taken into account. One has only to examine the houses provided by up-to-date employers who appreciate the advantage of sufficient access for air and light to see how the labourer, once he gets in possession of the house, prefers to shut out the air and light that have been provided for him. There is an instance of a planter who provided large and airy pucca built houses for his coolies in place of the low thatched houses they had been occupying, and who found that his labour refused to move into these new houses because the height of the roof over their heads provided room for evil spirits to congregate above. And a number of years ago a member of one of the legislative councils had something to say about the conditions in which the miners lived on the collieries, instancing the case of dhowras which did not possess anything in the way of a door. To the suggestion that the colliery owners did not provide the dwellings with doors, another member of the council replied that experience had shown it to be impossible to prevent the labour from using the doors for firewood. The instance is typical. When wages were increased in the collieries some years ago the immediate result was, not that the miner did the same amount of work as before and improved his standard of living, but that he worked shorter periods and was content with the same amount as he had been able to make previously. This is quite a usual experience and employers have not found it easy to meet the attitude, an attitude which confronts them in other directions as well.

10. It is a curious anomaly that, conservative as he is in many ways, the Indian worker is easily impressionable; his conservatism relates to his habits and his prejudices, but he is easily impressed—too frequently imposed on—by those who put themselves forward to lead him. The Chamber has only to point to the disastrous strikes that have been features of recent industrial history in Bombay and in Calcutta. Speaking for the jute mill strike in Calcutta, it is true that the strike was settled on a basis which provided for adjustments of wages, but it is notorious that the strike was largely instigated by, and kept going by, political agitators with no real interest either in the industry or in the welfare of the worker. It may be remarked that most employers would be glad to encourage the formation of registered trade unions controlled by and composed of workers. Unfortunately, so far most of the so-called unions that employers have had to deal with have sprung up at the time of a strike, and are controlled very largely by people other than the workers, whose interests are frequently not those of the labourer. It is a most frequent occurrence to find, when a strike occurs, that the labourers themselves when they can be interrogated are unaware of the reason for which they are supposed to be striking; indeed, a large majority usually express the desire to return to work, but confess that they are afraid to do so because of the threats that have been made as to what will happen to their houses and families while they are away at their employment. And in addition to the political agitator who stirs up labour trouble for his own ends, there is another influence affecting the striker which is peculiar to Bengal, namely, the speculator in the Calcutta jute and gunny markets who will finance strike leaders and even provide the strikers with funds to keep the strike going until he can make his profits out of the market fluctuations caused by the strike. When this aim is achieved he removes his support from the strikers, and is totally indifferent to what then happens to these people. A readiness to listen to the political demagogue or the selfish speculator may be deplored, but it is an unfortunate fact that should not be overlooked. The remedy is, of course, the better education of the worker so that he may be in a fitter position to reason things out for himself and to appreciate when he is being used as a pawn in someone else's game. General experience has shown that there is as yet no very strong desire to benefit from the educational facilities provided by employers, but the process must necessarily be a slow one, and it would be a pity to force the pace unduly.

11. The Chamber's object, in this short note, is to show that the improvement of conditions for the industrial employee—and in this category for the purpose of the Royal Commission the worker on the plantation is included—must be a slow matter, and that it will not be accomplished by the application of any universal panacea. Progress must be not only slow, but it must be regulated and controlled if it is to be on the right lines. There is a noticeable tendency within recent years to endeavour to apply to conditions in India conditions which work well enough in industrially developed countries. The International Labour Conference has done work that it may well be proud of, and that has been of lasting good to India and other countries. But the Conference wisely appreciates that it is necessary to proceed with caution. Conventions and recommendations regarding schemes of sickness insurance—the subject has recently been before the Chamber—are as yet in advance of possible achievement in this country; the time has not yet arrived when the Indian worker would take kindly to an enforced deduction from his pay for the purpose of a benefit, the need for which might never materialize. The instance is noteworthy, because the attitude it reflects is typical of the different point of view from which it is possible to regard such matters in this country as compared, say, with England.

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Mr. F. B. MAITLAND AND Mr. G. EUTHYMOPULO.

We have been nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to give to the Royal Commission on Labour in India evidence regarding the jute pressing industry in Calcutta and beg to append certain observations of a general character on the subject in question as well as a series of replies to the questionnaire of the schedule submitted.

As a general rule, press houses are rented out by owners to jute balers who pay the owners a fixed rate per bale exported. This rate covers all rents for godowns in which loose jute may be stored and assorted, and all charges for pressing into bales and export. Press house owners are usually only responsible for the working of the presses and maintain them as well as all godowns in good order and condition.

There are, however, several large balers in Calcutta who work in their own press houses.

Labour employed is practically entirely for the purpose of carrying jute from one point to another except when jute is assorted into qualities and when the actual pressing operation is in hand.

Labour is thus divided into three distinct classes as follows:—(1) The sorters for whom the balers are responsible; (2) The labour who carry from one point to another and for whom press house owners employ a contractor; (3) The labour to run the presses and maintain press house precincts in good order and repair, who are usually on the press house establishment and on fixed monthly wages.

For each class skilled labour is required to carry out the work efficiently.

Our replies to the questionnaire include and refer to all three classes.

Although in the strict sense of the word the major portion of the press house labour should be termed "casual labour" because of the nature of their employment, we have not treated them as such in our replies. The reason for this is that in actual fact they all have permanent steady work if they wish, except for a number who are employed for a period of about three months per annum during rush periods. These are female and unskilled workers and amount to about 10 per cent. of the total employees and the only ones treated as "casual labour."

We have given in our replies what we consider a correct estimate of extent of leave taken by workers to proceed to their homes. It is, however, very difficult to gauge this correctly because the labour come and go as they please although they usually adhere to the dates we have given. There is no question of their obtaining leave from press house owners or contractors.

## CONDITION IN CALCUTTA JUTE PRESS HOUSES.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. *Origin of Labour*—(i) *Extent of migration*.—About 90 per cent. migrate from Orissa, Behar, and the Punjab.

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of migration*.—The lack of employment at home, attractive wages and amenities obtainable in Calcutta are the main causes.

(iii) *Changes in recent years*.—We do not consider there has been any radical change.

2. *Contact with Villages*—(i) *Extent and frequency of return*.—Labour returns at least once in three years for a period of two to three months.

(ii) Sixty per cent. in the press house 40 per cent. away on leave.

3. *Methods of Recruitment*.—(i) Present labour recruits fresh labour.

(ii) Present method very satisfactory.

(iii) Are considered most undesirable, as present method tends naturally to produce the most suitable types and classes. Employment agencies would entail expense and undoubtedly become a centre of bribery and corruption.

7. *Unemployment*.—There is no unemployment in the usual sense of the word. In our busy season there is always a shortage of labour. In the slack season labour naturally returns to plough and sow fresh crops.

8. *Labour " Turnover "*.—(i) Two years before taking leave.

(ii) Ten per cent. of total employees for about three months September–November chiefly women and unskilled men.

(iii) Press houses are at times seriously affected by labour returning to their homes when sowing of crops overlaps the jute season, and also slightly absentees in case of sickness.

There is no loss of wages in the usual sense of the word. (See reply question 7.)

## II.—Staff Organization.

10. Jute is imported into the press house godowns by cart, boat or railway wagon in kutchha bales or drums or bundles and assorted according to quality by the balers. The assorted loose jute is then brought to the presses and screwed into pucca bales. These bales are then exported or else taken to the storing godowns and exported later.

Balers, who are actually tenants, are responsible for qualities and quantities of all imports including the labour for this work until assorted and ready to be taken to the press house. Labour for carrying out the import of jute from cart, boat or railway wagon is given out by the balers to a contractor who is paid according to the number of bales handled. The contractor in turn employs sirdars who have their own gangs usually from their own country village or district. The sirdars are paid a fixed sum per day according to the number of men in the gang. A separate sirdar is employed for weighing jute but the same organizations hold. The sorters now take charge of the jute to be assorted in accordance with instructions received from the baler's head-office. The balers have one general manager who gives direct instructions to the workers at the press house. Under him we have several systems of working, the usual one is as follows :—

Each set of godowns has a supervisor, under him are sirdars to each godown and each gang of five to ten men have their own head-man. The head-men are chosen for their skill and experience in classifying qualities of jute. Their work is to carry the jute from storage for assorting into bundles according to quality. A man from each gang is at the press house when his jute is being baled and the jute assorted by his gang is piled in one place near the press. When completed the baler's representative signs the gangman's book confirming the number of bales packed *ex* the jute brought by him. The head gangman is paid according to the number of bales packed.

The press house owners are responsible for the labour to bring the assorted jute from the godowns to the press, pressing into bales, storing and/or exporting by boat or rail.

The labour is given to a contractor who is paid at a fixed rate per bale exported. The same system is adopted in this case as in importing, the men being paid a daily wage by the contractor. The actual working of the presses is carried out by the press house owners' own labour, who are on the establishment and receive a monthly wage.

13. (i) The relations between the staff, European and Indian, and the rank and file of the workers are harmonious without being intimate.

(iii) We have no works committees and from experience of these committees in similar circumstances we consider they would be a hindrance to the welfare of our labour through consequent agitation and the moral surety of bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head. The hard worker does not trouble his head over committees but only the slackers and agitators who see a possibility of personal gain without work.

(iv) In our opinion the same remarks apply as to the last para.

14. (a) *Baler's Labour*.—(i) Piece-work register kept by jasildar and signed regularly by baler's manager at the press house.

(ii) Vouchers are given for work done and cashed at any time from cashier on the spot.

(b) *Contractor's Labour*.—(i) A timekeeper with register is responsible to contractor for checking daily attendance.

(ii) Head-man or sirdar advances cash to workers daily or when required and settles with the contractor fortnightly.

(c) *Press House Staff*.—(i) Press house establishment attendance register kept by manager.

(ii) Wages paid monthly.

15. This has been fully replied to under paras 10-13. In our opinion the contractors as intermediaries are essential and most beneficial to workers.

*Generally*.—All replies under the heading "staff organization" only aim at giving a general outline, as conditions may vary in the case of different press houses.

#### IX.—Hours.

55. Hours worked per week from 40 to 60; per day (i) normal, 6 to 8; (ii) actual, 8 to 11. The regulations set by the Factory Act are always observed.

56. Five to six days per week, sometimes seven days.

57. In some cases it is appreciated. In piece work it is not.

59. We cannot protest too strongly against any legislation which would curtail present working hours and it is to be hoped that no action in this connection will be taken at the present time.

60. Workmen get one or more hours after working from three to five hours. Never work more than five hours between meals. Holidays given on Sundays when opportunity offers and on all Mohammedan holidays.

61. At times we have to work on Sundays during the busy season, but the workers get one day off at least every fortnight. During the busy months it is necessary at times to work every Sunday to deal with urgent work or business.

#### XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average wage Rs. 19 to Rs. 150 per month.

97. Wages increased 60 per cent. since the war due to higher cost of living.

99. No payments made in kind.

100. Seventy-five per cent. of workers are paid through contractors.

101. Wages paid according to skill at fixed rates for the class.

102. Overtime is paid for by the quarter-day or part of the quarter-day: more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  but less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  =  $\frac{1}{4}$  day; more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  but less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  =  $\frac{1}{4}$  day. Sunday  $1\frac{1}{2}$  days.

Captain R. LIDDLE, MARINE SUPERINTENDENT, BRITISH INDIA  
STEAM NAVIGATION CO., LTD., CALCUTTA.

#### *Ocean Steamer Labour.*

##### Recruitment.

The employment bureau for the recruitment of seamen was started in December, 1924, with the intention of abolishing the system of recruitment by brokers, ghat serangs, and ghat butlers, and was the outcome of the many recommendations embodied in the draft convention of the Labour Conference held at Genoa in 1920. Although it was not until December, 1924, that an officer was actually appointed as shipping master and officer in charge, seamen's recruitment bureau, any delay by the Government in making an appointment was due to the difficulty of obtaining the services of an officer with the necessary experience, as it was felt that unless the officer who was appointed was conversant with the conditions existing amongst Indian seamen and also with local conditions generally, more harm than good would be the outcome. The opinion amongst the Indian seafaring community during the first few months after the employment bureau was started was that the Government were about to embark on a scheme that would find employment for all. During 1924, 8,605 persons were granted continuous discharge certificates, with the result that an unnecessary supply of seamen was created. When it was made clear that the employment bureau could not find employment for all, there was a noticeable falling away of applicants for first issue certificates, and I have been given to understand that in 1925 there were only 6,000 new certificates granted.



I think it can be safely estimated that only about 50 per cent. of the men who obtain first issue continuous discharges can hope to find employment. There are probably about 100,000 lascar seamen available, and of these, probably about 50,000 circulate in employment. The employment bureau has since its inception, done much to further the interests of the seamen and the officer in charge of the bureau has worked sympathetically with shipowners, ships' officers, and men, but the organization in India cannot be compared with a similar organization in the United Kingdom. The Indian seaman cannot be viewed in the same light as the European sailor, who is a seaman pure and simple and has no other means of livelihood beyond the sea. The Indian seaman in addition to following the sea for a livelihood, is an agriculturist, and this naturally means that a big proportion periodically leave the sea-ports and go up-country to look after their crops; any figures giving the number of men out of employment must therefore be misleading.

I think any Government organization in India controlling the recruitment and supply of seamen will be faced with great difficulty because it is a proved fact that the village system is the only one which is really acceptable to the men themselves. Amongst the European seamen this does not exist, and crews can be appointed on a roster system, but in India this is almost impossible, and when tried, has proved disastrous from a disciplinary point of view, as the men are not amenable to control by their serangs, unless they come from the same district; and the serangs have truly stated that unless they can bring their own men they cannot guarantee them.

I think the introduction of the employment bureau was a mistake, and it is doubtful to my mind whether it will ever succeed. It is impossible to introduce amongst Eastern seamen the methods adopted in European countries. The men themselves do not want it, and the only interest which pressed for the bureau to be formed was the Indian Seamen's Union, who are not in any way representative of the men. The serangs and tindals are the only people who can get effective crews together, and the serangs alone can bridge the gaps and complete the formation of a workable crew which a State organization has utterly failed to accomplish. It has been argued by the unions that the brokers and ghat serangs accept bribes and generally exploit the men, but this is not the case, and most of the accusations which have been made have broken down under investigation and proved to be the outcome of a lively imagination on the part of the professional letter writer.

The system which is adopted by the B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd., who employ about 50 per cent of the total crews sailing from Calcutta is as follows:—

When a crew is required for a vessel all serangs (meaning the company's serangs available) out of employment are mustered, and a suitable serang for the particular class of ship is chosen.

In this respect the actual time a man has been out of employment has a distinctive bearing on the choice, but the company are at times forced also to consider the applicant and type of vessel to which he will be appointed, as the mail and passenger steamers must have men in every way suitable for that employment; for the well running of these vessels, besides being a company's affair, is also of very great importance from the point of view of the travelling public. Should any one be in doubt regarding this, they have only to watch the arrival and departure of such a steamer, when it will immediately be obvious to them that any men, otherwise than those specialized in this class of vessel, would mean utter confusion to all concerned.

On the serang being chosen, he is told to bring suitable men to the office, where the deputy marine superintendent examines their discharges. Preference is given to the men longest out of employment for cargo vessels, but for the mail and passenger steamers, although this is a consideration never forgotten, the company are for the reasons given forced also to consider the suitability of the men. After final selection, the men are medically examined by the company's doctor and, if passed as fit, are sent to the vessel to which they are to be appointed.

Secunnies are chosen separately, and in their cases the selection is made entirely by the deputy marine superintendent, the serang having no voice in the matter.

All selections are done in consultation with the captains where such is possible.

The ghat serangs have no influence in the matter of choice, and in no way interfere with selections.

The object is to work as near the roster system as possible, and, to alleviate unemployment as far as possible amongst the men, instructions have been given that, where crews have been for some considerable period in a cargo ship, they should, all things being equal, be signed off and a crew who have been for a long period out of employment signed on in their places. It is hoped by this method that unemployment will be reduced.

The only part ghat serangs, who are not brokers but company's servants, take, is to see the men on board, arrange for payment of advances, and supply men at the last moment should desertion take place.

This system has been proved to be a perfectly fair method of selecting men and has given satisfaction both to owners, commanders of steamers, and the men themselves. The Government of Bengal sanctioned this system in March, 1929, as it did not require the use of licensed brokers owing to the recruitment being effected through the owner or master of the ship or by persons who are *bona fide* the servants and in the constant employment of the owner.

Another method adopted in the Port of Calcutta is by selection at an open muster in the shipping office. The second method has been devised to meet the convenience of shipowners or agents who for various reasons may not find it possible to make the internal arrangements required by the first method.

### Wages.

The wages of seamen sailing from the Port of Calcutta are under two headings—(a) *Home line voyages* and (b) *Coasting voyages*.

#### (a) Home line voyages.

|               |    |    |    | <i>Deck Crew.</i> |          |    |    |       |
|---------------|----|----|----|-------------------|----------|----|----|-------|
|               |    |    |    | Rs.               |          |    |    | Rs.   |
| Serang        | .. | .. | .. | 60                | Winchman | .. | .. | 28    |
| Seacunnie     | .. | .. | .. | 55                | Lascar   | .. | .. | 18-25 |
| Tindal        | .. | .. | .. | 37                | Bhandary | .. | .. | 25    |
| Second Tindal | .. | .. | .. | 30                | Topas    | .. | .. | 22    |
| Cassab        | .. | .. | .. | 30                |          |    |    |       |

#### *Engine Room Crew.*

|               |    |    |    | Rs. |              |    |    | Rs. |
|---------------|----|----|----|-----|--------------|----|----|-----|
| Serang        | .. | .. | .. | 60  | Ice Freezer  | .. | .. | 31  |
| First Tindal  | .. | .. | .. | 35  | Hydraulicman | .. | .. | 31  |
| Second Tindal | .. | .. | .. | 30  | Oilman       | .. | .. | 26  |
| Third Tindal  | .. | .. | .. | 28  | Fireman      | .. | .. | 23  |
| Cassab        | .. | .. | .. | 28  | Trimmer      | .. | .. | 18  |
| Donkeyman     | .. | .. | .. | 28  | Bhandary     | .. | .. | 25  |
| Lampman       | .. | .. | .. | 26  | Topas        | .. | .. | 22  |

#### *Saloon Crew.*

|                      |    |    |    | Rs. |                     |    |    | Rs.   |
|----------------------|----|----|----|-----|---------------------|----|----|-------|
| Butler in charge     | .. | .. | .. | 80  | Officer's boy       | .. | .. | 30    |
| Butler under steward | .. | .. | .. | 75  | Marconi boy         | .. | .. | 10    |
| Baker                | .. | .. | .. | 70  | Messroom boy        | .. | .. | 33    |
| Baker's mate         | .. | .. | .. | 30  | Messroom mate       | .. | .. | 16    |
| Chief Cook           | .. | .. | .. | 70  | Butcher             | .. | .. | 45-50 |
| Second Cook          | .. | .. | .. | 40  | Butcher's mate      | .. | .. | 25    |
| Third Cook           | .. | .. | .. | 25  | Scullion            | .. | .. | 24    |
| Fourth Cook          | .. | .. | .. | 20  | Topas               | .. | .. | 22    |
| Chief Cook and Baker | .. | .. | .. | 75  | Pantry first class  | .. | .. | 40    |
| Saloon boy           | .. | .. | .. | 30  | Pantry second class | .. | .. | 35    |
| Half Saloon boy      | .. | .. | .. | 15  | Pantryman mate      | .. | .. | 20    |
| Captain's boy        | .. | .. | .. | 30  | Second class Butler | .. | .. | 50    |
| Chief Engineer's boy | .. | .. | .. | 30  |                     |    |    |       |

#### (b) Coasting voyages.

|               |    |    |    | <i>Deck Crew.</i> |               |    |    |     |
|---------------|----|----|----|-------------------|---------------|----|----|-----|
|               |    |    |    | Rs.               |               |    |    | Rs. |
| Serang        | .. | .. | .. | 50                | Seacunnie     | .. | .. | 45  |
| First Tindal  | .. | .. | .. | 35                | Bhandary      | .. | .. | 22  |
| Second Tindal | .. | .. | .. | 27                | Bhandary mate | .. | .. | 10  |
| Cassab        | .. | .. | .. | 25                | Lascar        | .. | .. | 22  |
| Winchman      | .. | .. | .. | 24                | Topas         | .. | .. | 18  |

#### *Engine Room Crew.*

|               |    |    |    | Rs. |               |    |    | Rs. |
|---------------|----|----|----|-----|---------------|----|----|-----|
| Serang        | .. | .. | .. | 50  | Lampman       | .. | .. | 26  |
| First Tindal  | .. | .. | .. | 32  | Fireman       | .. | .. | 23  |
| Second Tindal | .. | .. | .. | 30  | Coal Trimmer  | .. | .. | 17  |
| Third Tindal  | .. | .. | .. | 27  | Bhandary      | .. | .. | 24  |
| Cassab        | .. | .. | .. | 28  | Bhandary mate | .. | .. | 10  |
| Donkeyman     | .. | .. | .. | 27  |               |    |    |     |

*(b) Coasting Voyages—contd.*

|                |    |    |    | <i>Saloon Crew.</i> |                        |    |    |     |  |
|----------------|----|----|----|---------------------|------------------------|----|----|-----|--|
|                |    |    |    | Rs.                 |                        |    |    | Rs. |  |
| Butler         | .. | .. | .. | 75                  | Saloon boy             | .. | .. | 25  |  |
| Baker          | .. | .. | .. | 60                  | Captain's boy          | .. | .. | 25  |  |
| Chief Cook     | .. | .. | .. | 60                  | Chief Engineer's boy   | .. | .. | 25  |  |
| Second Cook    | .. | .. | .. | 35                  | Messroom boy           | .. | .. | 28  |  |
| Third Cook     | .. | .. | .. | 23                  | Marconi Operator's boy | .. | .. | 8   |  |
| Pantryman      | .. | .. | .. | 30                  | Topas                  | .. | .. | 20  |  |
| Pantryman mate | .. | .. | .. | 18                  | Butcher                | .. | .. | 45  |  |

The men have from time to time claimed increases of wages on the grounds that their pay is too low in comparison to the wages earned by European seamen, but I do not think this is a fair comparison. The cost of living in India is very much lower than in the United Kingdom, and vessels have to carry much bigger crews when manned by Indians. In 1919, there was a strike amongst the seamen of Bengal, and it was claimed that the rise in price of all the necessaries of life combined with the low rate of wages was causing widespread discontent in the ranks of the men. On representations being made to the shipping companies, the matter was closely investigated and substantial increases were made. The increases which were given represented from 60 per cent. to 80 per cent. rises in pay. The cost of living in India since 1914 has not gone up in proportion, and to-day an Indian can live quite easily on 8 annas per day. That this figure is a correct one is proved by the fact that the commissioner for workmen's compensation recently summoned a meeting of shipping representatives with a view to discussing the question as to the amount that should be allowed as the cash value of the lascars board and lodging. After carefully investigating the matter the commissioner agreed to fix the allowance for coast vessels at Rs. 13-8annas per month, which is equivalent to rather less than 7 annas 3 pies per day.

**General.**

Deck crews are also paid a bonus of 4 annas per ton when employed shifting coal from holds to bunkers. In port, in order to give employment most of the companies employ extra lascars to assist in scaling and painting. These men are paid at the rate of 10 annas per day, and are also supplied with food on the same scale as the ship's lascars. It is an invariable rule in all companies carrying lascar seamen, that during winter months in home waters the men work during hours of daylight only. The relations between the shipowner and the lascar seamen are of the best, and the proof of this lies in the fact that most of the men remain with the companies all their lives. The directors of the B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd., have for many years paid pensions or gratuities to men who by reason of old age or failing health, have been unable to work. It has to be admitted that employment and poverty amongst seamen are a serious matter, but the reason for so much unemployment is that these men are not seafaring men by habit, tradition, or taste, they become seamen only because they are not able to secure other employment. The maritime market in Calcutta has thus become congested, and the supply of labour has exceeded the demand. The poverty amongst the Indian seamen is largely the outcome of the usury which is practised by the boarding house keepers who advance money at an extortionate rate of interest, and also to the professional moneylenders who charge interest at rates sometimes as high as 150 per cent. Social customs in the shape of marriage dowries also play an important part in keeping the men in a state of indebtedness. The first step to remedy this state of affairs is for the Government to institute proceedings against anybody who imposes on the seamen on the lines of the legislation that was framed in the United Kingdom to protect the European seamen from imposition.

**BENGAL NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.**

In forwarding to you the memorandum of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, with regard to the information required by the Commission, I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber to make the following statement:—

2. The Committee of the Chamber would mention at the outset, that they have every sympathy with the healthy growth and development of trade unions in India, and will support the Government in any measure they may adopt for the amelioration of the conditions of Indian labour. Their attitude towards the organization of labour has been actuated by the belief that the industrial progress of India, and for

the matter of that of any other country, depends on the most cordial co-operation between capital and labour, and that while capital must be assured of its legitimate earnings, before it can be diverted to industrial operations, from less enterprising investments, it is no less true that a discontented labour force cannot be impelled to strive hand in hand with the former in the attainment of what may be truly said to be the end of both.

3. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the factors which contribute to the discontent of labour in India. The chief complaints of labourers seem to be that they do not get fair and adequate wages and that they are overworked and ill housed. It is quite possible that in some cases these grievances may not be quite unfounded. But the methods so far adopted by them to redress these grievances are, in the opinion of the committee, very much detrimental to the interests of the particular industries concerned, and naturally to the employers and the employees as well. Strikes, have of late become a regular feature of the industrial life of the country, and, as has been recently said by His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, "a disturbing feature of these strikes in our midst was that they started before any definite or ostensible grievance had been put forward or any serious effort made to find a solution by negotiations."

4. The reason for such a procedure, the committee think, is the absence of a large number of well-organized trade unions and the domination of the few that are working by outsiders having no direct or indirect touch with the mass of labourers. The committee cannot over-rate the importance of having such unions of labourers for all industries; for, in their opinion, it is always convenient for the employers to understand the grievances of their employees, if they deal with organized and intelligent unions of a large number of disciplined labourers than with a body of disaffected individuals having no well formulated opinions and prone to succumb to outside influence.

While there have been a large number of trade unions in the country, most of them have been dominated by outsiders who, in the opinion of the committee, do not always guide the labourers along such path as may lead to their genuine welfare. The latter have, so far, produced a very small number of leaders from amongst themselves, and have consequently, failed to control the policy of the unions, effectively.

5. The committee of the Chamber are definitely of opinion that this anomalous situation has been due to the deplorable illiteracy of the labourers, which is also at the root of so many other troubles at the present moment. It is but natural that a group of illiterate and ignorant labourers will depend solely on the initiative and guidance of more enlightened persons and the result has been that these so-called labour leaders, wholly unconnected with labour and ignorant of actual labour conditions have been leading labour down a precipice and in some cases exploiting it for their own advantage, causing irreparable loss to the capitalist and immense suffering to labour.

While conceding that such outside control is but inevitable in the infant stage of the labour movement as in that of other movements, the Committee of the Chamber consider it necessary to express the view that a sufficient advancement of education among these people would have completely obviated its necessity. In this connection, the committee would painfully refer to the lukewarm response which the Government have so far made to the demands of the leaders of public opinion to introduce free and compulsory primary education in the country.

The illiteracy of the mass of workers has, besides making them an easy prey to the agitation and propaganda of their co-called leaders, been at the root of many other troubles. Labour in India has no sufficient knowledge of its rights and responsibilities and it is idle to expect this from it unless education is made available to every one of the workers free of charge. Then again, there is no denying the fact that labour in this country can hardly be called skilled, but the committee hope that the commission will agree with them in their view that efficiency and skill are not a monopoly of any one nation, and that sufficient general education and technical training can make labourers in India as much skilled as in any other country. The committee would like the commission to realize that the inefficiency which, unfortunately, characterises Indian labour at the present moment, is not inherent in it and they would further like to impress on the commission, as well as on the Government, the vast potentialities of the expansion of education throughout the country in improving the efficiency of labour and consequently the condition of industry as well.

It may, however, be pointed out that illiteracy and ignorance are not synonymous and convertible terms, and a mere removal of illiteracy may, at best, be only the

first step towards making Indian labour more efficient and skilled. A proper scheme of education should aim at liberalising the general outlook of the masses, and imparting a sense of civic consciousness in them. The committee also realize that a scheme for a free compulsory primary education such as is under the consideration of the Bengal Legislative Council, at the present moment would take a very long time to consummate, and they are of opinion that better results would be obtained if such a scheme be supplemented by means of motion pictures, distribution of bulletins and literature, popular lectures and talks on various subjects of general interest to the labourers.

The Committee do not, of course, shirk their responsibility in this respect, but they emphatically state that the primary responsibility in the matter rests with the Government, who, the committee regret to say, have not so far made any attempt whatsoever to remove not only the illiteracy but the ignorance also of the mass of Indian population, from which the workers are recruited. The committee will refer at a later stage to the conditions under which it would be possible for the employers in India to share in such welfare schemes.

6. The next point which the committee would like to stress here relates to the lack of thrift and foresight and the prevalence of the drink evil among the workers in India. Whatever weight may be attached to the complaints of labour regarding inadequate wage, the evils of extravagance and drink habit are responsible, to no small extent, for the admittedly miserable condition of the working classes. Here again, one of the causes seems to be the appalling ignorance of the labourers. A complete eradication of these evils would require, in the opinion of the committee, a radical improvement of the vicious environment in which labour has got to live, besides the introduction of primary education as previously suggested. A visit to the *bustees* of Calcutta would at once convince one that in many cases poor labourers live like hogs in a sty. The *bustees* are not only full of filth and dirt but have also an atmosphere about them, which has a very baneful effect on the morals of the occupants.

The housing of labour in a congested city like Calcutta is a difficult problem which can be solved only by sympathetic treatment on the part of the Government and capital. The committee are aware what laudable endeavours have been, and are being made, by the Calcutta Improvement Trust, in providing more building sites. But transport facilities, hitherto available, have not been such as to encourage the creation of new colonies outside, but within easy reach of Calcutta. The congestion, therefore, has been continuing as before. Sporadic attempts have now and then been made by individuals and the trust to provide better housing facilities for labour, but they have not been able to touch even the fringe of the problem. A serious and systematic attempt should be made to provide better and cheaper houses for labourers, due consideration being paid to the special social conditions of Bengal. The *chawl* system of Bombay, where the *purdah* is non-existent, cannot be adopted in Bengal at the present time. The special social conditions prevalent in Bengal call for special treatment. Welfare activities, too, should be guided by this consideration.

The insanitary condition of the slums together with the fact that the workers often do not get proper nutrition, and are also ignorant of elementary hygiene have been responsible for the prevalence of various diseases in the rank and file of the workers. The industrial progress of a country is intimately connected with the existence of well-nourished, well-developed and disease-free workers, and the committee take this opportunity of assuring the commission of their cordial sympathy with any measure, calculated to improve the efficiency of labourers, which it may recommend.

7. But, here, the committee would like to draw the attention of the commission to the fact that the problem has not so far been approached by the Government from the proper angle of vision. Industrial progress of a country, involving as it does the apparently conflicting interests of both capital and labour, requires a bold and comprehensive policy, but the committee regret to point out that as in other respects, the attitude of the Government to this problem has been characterized by a lack of statesmanship and farsightedness.

The Government have all along been very much indifferent to the promotion of industries in the country, and their policy hitherto has not been such as to encourage the starting of new industrial enterprises. But while adopting a sort of *laissez-faire* policy towards industrial growth, the Government have, in recent times, been adopting various measures which are designed to benefit labour at the sacrifice of the interests of capital. The ratifications of the Convention of the International Labour Conference have not always been made with proper discrimination, and in

some cases these have very adversely affected the industries inasmuch as the consequent increased cost of production has handicapped the local industries as compared with their foreign rivals. While recognizing the necessity and desirability of adopting the conventions of the International Labour Conference, the committee are convinced that the burdens of these conventions should, in all fairness, be shared by the Government, and the community as well, so that it may not have any distinctive prejudicial effect on the Indian industries. While the national governments in other countries are adopting various measures to stimulate the progress of industries minimizing the burdens of the conventions, it is most unfair and unjust that the same should in this country be laid exclusively on the capitalists alone. The committee believe that they are voicing the opinion of the whole mercantile community of the country, when they say that they would most willingly contribute their quota if they are "protected" by the Government from the unequal and unfair fight of the foreign competitors, either by means of a grant of subsidies or by the erection of sufficiently high tariff walls.

8. The committee would mention in this connection that the attitude of labour also as expressed through their unions and leaders has not been conducive to the best interests of capital, which, as the committee have already pointed out, are ultimately identical with those of labour as well. While recognizing that the condition of the labourers is capable of much improvement, the claims which have been and are being put forward by their leaders are in some cases, in the opinion of the Committee, extravagant. Industries in this country work under various limitations. The indifference of the Government, as mentioned before, has been partially responsible for the very unsatisfactory condition, and in some cases, even disappearance of indigenous industrial concerns. India, being a late-comer, finds almost all the fields of industrial activity very much overcrowded, and it is with much difficulty that Indian industries have managed to hold their own. There is no doubt that such difficulties are but inevitable in a country whose industries are not only young but also uncared for by the Government.

The Committee think that the cost of production which is already high in India will be higher still if all the extravagant claims of the workers have to be met by capital at the present state of its condition. The committee would, however, assure the labour leaders that as soon as capital in India be on a par with its foreign competitors, it will lose no time in meeting all the reasonable demands of labour, including higher wages, better housing and other welfare schemes. In the existing conditions there is admittedly a very limited scope for such provisions as may conduce to the welfare of labourers, except in the case of a few thriving industries, whose financial capacity may enable them to undertake such responsibilities. The committee would, however, agree to a scheme under which a certain percentage of the excess profits beyond a prescribed maximum may be compulsorily appropriated to a fund started for welfare works. But they would point out at the same time that such contribution will be conceded to by the employers only if the Government contribute their share to such a fund.

9. In concluding, the committee would refer to the settlement of disputes between capital and labour. The committee think that most of the grievances of labour are such as can be settled by means of negotiation as between the employers and the employees through their recognized trade unions and leaders. But they would refer to the tardiness with which Industrial Disputes Conciliation Panels have been taken advantage of. Strikes, sympathetic and otherwise, have at times seriously inconvenienced the public utility services. But these panels, specially formed to deal with such cases, have been practically ignored, their services being scarcely requisitioned. In such circumstances the committee would urge that a standing judicial machinery should be set up with powers to enforce arbitration before a strike or a lockout is actually declared.

## [MEMORANDUM.

### I.—Recruitment.

3. (i) *Jute*.—Workers are recruited by and employed under sirdars, who are generally of the same class as the labourers they supply.

*Tea*.—The planters have a special machinery for recruitment controlled by the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association. The actual recruitment is carried out by sirdars working under local agents. The system of recruitment by contractors was abolished by the Assam Labour and Emigration (Amendment) Act of 1919.

*Coal*.—Recruitment differs in the various collieries. Each colliery makes its special arrangement for the recruitment of labour. Recruiting sardars are sent out to likely places for recruiting miners to whom travelling expenses and costs to be incurred during the journey are paid in advance.

(ii) The sardari and contractor systems are fruitful sources of abuse. The only sure means of improvement is to educate and organize labour sufficiently to eliminate the recruiting agent. In the coal industry the establishment of direct relations between the collieries and villages would ensure a steadier flow of labour.

(iii) There can be no doubt that the establishment of public employment agencies would improve the conditions attendant on the recruitment of labour.

7. (i) Jute workers have frequently suffered from unemployment, due to the restriction of working hours and the introduction of the single shift system. In the tea and coal industries there is practically no unemployment.

(ii) (a) (b) These causes have rarely been responsible for unemployment.

(iii) Unemployment is too irregular to call for permanent ameliorative measures.

(iv) Need for unemployment insurance is not imperative at present.

(v) The application of International Conventions would be premature at present.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) One-third of the total number of workers in the jute mills are housed by their employers. Tea garden labour is entirely housed by its employers, generally in coolie lines. Some workers are provided with land and building materials to construct their own houses. Imported colliery labourers are provided with free quarters by their employers.

(ii) In some cases Government provide free quarters in their own factories. Improvement Trusts in Bombay and Calcutta have considered the question of providing quarters for labourers, but the results have not been satisfactory.

(iii) In the industrial areas round Calcutta, accommodation for labourers is generally found in single-storied huts in groups known as bustees; constructed by private owners and let out to mill hands on reasonable terms.

(iv) The workers practically never provide housing facilities for themselves, since they have no capital and no co-operative facilities.

17. The signatories to the Industrial Commission's Report have referred to the fact that industries are considerably handicapped by difficulties in obtaining sites for factories and other industrial concerns and surface rights of mines in cases where mineral rights are not the property of the Government. In the absence of a more uniform interpretation of the expression in Section 40 (1) (b) of the Land Acquisition Act, which refers to the acquisition of land for a company whose "work is likely to prove useful to the public" this difficulty cannot be obviated. In the interest of industries a more generous interpretation is desirable. Moreover, when necessary, the benefit of acquisition should be made available to individual proprietors.

18. (i) Jute workers generally prefer to live in bustees, as this enables them to maintain a certain amount of privacy in their domestic lives. Tea labourers belonging to aboriginal tribes prefer to live in dwellings built by themselves. Colliery workers are generally housed in barracks belonging to the collieries. This has no relation to the workers' demands.

(ii) The bustee is the worst and most insanitary type of dwelling. Many mills possess "lines" of an antiquated type, the rooms being placed back to back in a line without any adequate provision for ventilation. A few are continuing to erect lines of this type, but on the whole newly built quarters are more satisfactory. The quarters provided by collieries are more satisfactory, sanitary conditions having considerably improved in recent years. In the Jharia Fields the Jharia Mines Board of Health provides detailed regulations regarding the construction of houses and has a staff to supervise housing conditions. Similar arrangements prevail in the Ranee-gunj fields. In the matter of quarters, the arrangements in the tea gardens are comparatively most satisfactory, heavy financial losses in previous years having taught the planters the value of providing their labour with sanitary and moderately comfortable quarters.

(iii) The supply of drinking water for jute, tea and colliery labourers is generally adequate. In the Jharia fields the previous deficiency in water supply has been removed by the Jharia Water Board. In the tea gardens water is obtained from wells sunk by the garden authorities or from hill streams.

#### IV.—Health.

23. (i) The death-rate in collieries does not appear to be unduly high. In the Jharia Fields 1,346 persons died in 1927 out of a total population of 126,000.

There is no adequate system of registering births and deaths.

(iii) Working conditions in the three industries are not always satisfactory or congenial.

(iv) The workers' diet in all cases is confined to what is considered to be the barest necessities, the choice of selection being generally left to themselves. It is entirely unscientific and possesses serious nutritional defects. The chemical elements in it are mostly carbohydrates and fats, the protein and other essential contents being low, and the vitamins lacking, unless secured by accident. The proper nutrition of Indian labour is one of the most serious problems before the country, and urgently calls for remedy by increasing the supplies and decreasing the costs of essential foods, such as fish and milk, and by simple health propaganda among the workers.

(v) The physique of labourers is often poor, largely on account of the reasons given above. Their physical condition is further aggravated by the attacks of such diseases as malaria, hookworm, kala-azar, cholera and influenza, to which they are very susceptible, not only on account of generally unsatisfactory sanitary conditions but also on account of their own ignorance.

(vi) In tea and colliery labour the sex ratio is fairly well balanced, but their moral conditions remain rather low on account of the primitive nature of the persons concerned. In the jute mills women form less than 20 per cent. of the labour population, a condition which has even greater effect on the morality of the workers. Drunkenness and illicit, and even unnatural, relations are consequently very prevalent.

(vii) Housing conditions must naturally have an indirect influence on the mortality rate in labour employed in these three industries.

24. (i) The tea gardens provide the best medical facilities for labour. Almost every garden is equipped with a dispensary, and employs a qualified medical staff. In the jute mills dispensaries are also usually provided, which are under the charge of a medical licentiate or graduate, usually the former. The provision for medical relief in the mills is often unsatisfactory. The collieries seem to provide adequate facilities for medical aid.

(iii) Practically no medical relief is provided by other agencies for labour employed in three industries.

(iv) There is little or no provision for women doctors and trained midwives or dhais, though in a few mines trained midwives have been appointed.

25. (i) Medical facilities are generally utilized to the full by the male workers, but there is room for much improvement both by providing more doctors, particularly more enthusiastic and sympathetic doctors, and by propaganda calculated to teach the workers to obey and carry out medical advice properly.

(ii) The inherent prejudices and ignorance of Indian labouring women prevents them from taking the fullest advantage of medical relief. Trust in quacks is consequently rampant among them. This attitude is accentuated by the absence of doctors and nurses of their own sex.

26. (i) Latrine arrangements in the tea-gardens are on the whole up-to-date. The arrangements vary in various gardens. In some, the limed bucket system or aqua privy is used; in others, trench latrines or septic tanks are employed. Easing themselves, in the open fields, is however, still persisted in by labourers, this fact being directly responsible for the high incidence of hookworm—one of the principal causes of anaemia among labourers.

(ii) Provision for drinking water, as already stated above, is on the whole satisfactory. The ignorance of the labourers, however, still causes them to drink from contaminated sources.

(iii) Bathing facilities of a sort are provided for labour in the three industries dealt with here, but they are by no means ideal. Privacy is not ensured, and common taps have to be used. What is known as "personal hygiene" is practically unknown among Indian labouring women, this being largely due to inadequate bathing arrangements. Hygienic propaganda on these matters is necessary.

#### V.—Welfare.

34. (i) The committee consider that urgent attention should be paid to the provision of proper refreshments, shelters and creches for the labourers in the three industries referred to. There is no doubt at all that special arrangements should be



made for the protection of infants, especially in the mills and collieries, but no arrangement in this direction has yet been made either by employers or other agencies. In the tea gardens the usual practice for women pluckers is to carry their children in a basket thrown over the shoulder. No serious consequences seem to have resulted from this practice, but it is not a habit which the committee can commend.

(ii) In the tea gardens the authorities are trying to encourage various athletic games, and sometimes engage touring theatrical parties and cinema shows to entertain the labourers. The committee have not heard of any facilities for physical culture and recreation being specially provided for their workers by the jute mills and collieries.

36. In some tea gardens primary schools have been started. A few mill owners have also provided small schools, but as a rule they are not in favour of providing such facilities adequately as they conflict with the employment of half-timers. On the whole the provision of educational facilities by employers leaves much to be desired. Where schools have been provided, the workers have not shown any particular desire to give their children the benefit of primary education.

37. Provisions for old age pensions are not found in any of the three industries. A few tea gardens, however, grant small pensions to workers credited with long and faithful service. In the collieries the introduction of pensions is not considered feasible, as the miners generally serve more than one employer.

39. In view of the depressed state of the industry at present it does not seem possible to start a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund.

#### VI.—Education.

40. The only facilities for general education open to children not in employment are afforded by the existing primary schools which are in every way inadequate. In the jute mill areas, the municipalities do not encourage expenditure on education, as this would increase taxes within their jurisdiction.

#### VII.—Safety.

49. The coal mines are under the strict supervision of the department of mines, but in the case of factories, especially in the tea gardens, a more frequent inspection should be enforced. The committee of the chamber understand that the problem of reducing the number of uninspected factories has been engaging the attention of the Government.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) The benefits of workmen's compensation are becoming more widely known and workers are taking increasing advantage of them.

(ii) Under the Act, as it stands at present, the extent of possible claims cannot be estimated. The administrative defects of the Act have been engaging the attention of the Legislative Assembly recently.

(iii) It has made those in authority over labourers more careful, especially in the collieries.

(iv) The premiums being high such insurance facilities as exist have not been utilized except by a small section of the larger collieries.

(v) The introduction of compulsory insurance cannot be endorsed in all industries at present. This would unduly increase the responsibilities of the employers who are already hard pressed by such legislation as the Workmen's Compensation Act.

52. *Possibility of providing against insolvency of employers.*—This does not seem to be necessary at present, as lump sum payments are more usual than payment by instalments.

53. The provisions contained in the Act of 1923 are adequate. The committee opposed, on this ground, the provision of clause (4) of the Workmen's Compensation Amendment Bill of 1928, referring to the computation of wages of a workman in service of the employer during a continuous period of less than one month. The Act of 1923 has set up a competent administrative machinery for dealing with relevant cases.

54. *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers Liability Act, 1880.*—The committee do not think this desirable at present.

**IX.—Hours.****A.—Factories.**

57 and 58. *Effect of 60 hours restriction. Effect of daily limit.*—It determines the number of workers to be employed. In the jute industry the effect has been beneficial rather than adverse.

59. The reduction in maxima is uncalled for in the case of the jute industry, and is not favoured by the tea planters.

**B.—Mines.**

63. (i) The Indian Mines Act, 1923, restricts the maximum hours of work per week to 60 for surface labourers and 54 for underground labourers. At present the total hours of work vary in different mines, some having two shifts of 8 hours each, others one shift of 12 hours—the daily maximum fixed by the Indian Mines (Amendment) Act, 1928, for both surface and underground labourers.

(ii) Though the miners working underground remain there for 8 to 12 hours per day, the time during which they actually work does not usually extend beyond 4 or 5 hours. The surface labourers also do not actually work for more than about 6 hours per day.

65. *Effect of restriction of hours.*—The effect of restriction of hours is negligible either on the workers or the industry, as the actual number of working days has always been below the permissible limit.

66. Reduction of maxima seems to be desirable, particularly in view of the facts given in answer to (63 (ii)) but it cannot be effected without introducing a system of short shifts, which may be resented by the miners.

67. Section 3 of the Indian Mines (Amendment) Act, 1928, provides for the introduction of a system of shifts. It has been laid down in that section that a colliery cannot be worked more than 12 continuous hours unless a system of shifts be introduced in all the mines. The introduction of the scheme will not, however, prove a success until the employers are better organized to enforce uniformity of action. At present the labourers themselves would possibly resent the introduction of the scheme, as they are used to intermittent work spread over long hours.

68. *Possibility of introducing any effective daily limitation.*—It is difficult to express any definite opinion, as the attitude of indolent labourers regarding such measures is likely to be hostile.

71. The existing provisions have proved quite satisfactory.

**X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.**

88. In jute mills where women and children are irregularly employed, the needs of family life require the introduction of a single shift with fixed intervals.

**B.—Mines.**

91. (i) The Government's notification published in the "Calcutta Gazette," 21st March, 1929, announces that the number of female labourers in exempted coal mines (i.e., in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the C.P.) will have to be gradually reduced every year in such a manner that no women will remain employed in the exempted coal mines on 30th June, 1939.

(ii) This order may have an adverse effect on the industry, as it will raise the rate of wages to be paid by the industry, which is passing through a period of depression. What is more if sex parity is not maintained it will have an adverse effect on the morality of the worker leading to disruption of family life. It will also strike at the root of the economic independence of women of the working classes.

(iii) It will lower the total income of the family unit.

(iv) The speed of withdrawal will remain an unimportant factor till the decision remains unchanged.

**XII.—Wages.**

97. Among the jute mills there have been some variations in the rate of wages in the upward direction, but such increase has not been remarkable. Between mills worked on the single and those on the multiple system of shifts, the former class of mills is worked at an appreciable monetary advantage to the workers. The wage movements are related to the cost of living; the profits earned in the industry

have hardly any bearing on them. The tea industry having attained prosperity for some years, wages have been enhanced and greater amenities of life have been provided for the labourers. In the coal industry wages were considerably increased during the boom years, commencing from 1919. The increases, however, were due, to some extent also, to the high cost of living. In recent years the industry has been passing through a depression and in 1927 the wages had to be brought down by 25 per cent.

105. The fixation of minimum wages can be urged only in case of those industries which have attained sufficient solidarity and in which employers are thoroughly organized. Even with reference to these the success of any scheme relating to minimum wages in a poor country like India, will depend entirely upon the extent to which labour is organized. In the present condition of labour in India such fixation cannot be recommended.

106. The practice of imposing fines or making deductions in wages is not so prevalent in the Province of Bengal as to call for attention.

107. (i) As a rule, wages are paid on a weekly basis. The monthly system, however, is not unknown. In some cases even daily wages are paid.

(iii) The question of weekly payment of wages was the subject of a recent non-official Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly, evidently to check the habit of paying wages in arrears. But such legislation is unnecessary. A more frequent inspection and a better organization of labour will do away with the evil, if there be any.

(iv) "Unclaimed wages" are almost unheard of.

108. Indebtedness is prevalent among mill workers and colliery labourers, loans being generally obtained from Peshawaris at high rates of interest, usually 2 annas on the rupee per mensem. For this reason indebted labourers can seldom manage to free themselves from the hands of these moneylenders.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. In all the three industries there has been a slight improvement in the efficiency of workers but the committee of the chamber do not think that the improvement has introduced any appreciable change in the position of the industries concerned.

114. The periodical return of the workers to their homes may be said to have a restorative effect on their health. It does not impair their efficiency, except when the retirement is unduly prolonged. The type of machinery used as well as the nature of the plant, certainly exert some influence on the productive efficiency of the workers, and this is palpable in the coal industry, in which the use of coal cutting machinery is being increasingly appreciated. The sanitary requirements of factory establishments enforced by various Acts of Legislature and rules framed thereunder, have yielded positive results with regard to the health and physique of the workers. The management of factories and mines is also becoming alive to the responsibility of maintaining and developing the efficiency of workers. The various arrangements made in the three industries for medical help and recreation as well as the amenities voluntarily provided in some industries, especially tea, have already been referred to. But the facilities hitherto provided have not yielded any results commensurate with the expectations raised in the prevalent atmosphere of colossal ignorance and illiteracy. Having no education the workers have not bestirred themselves to do anything which may improve their economic position, and the propaganda hitherto carried to infuse in them a sense of enlightened self-interest has often been of no avail. Consequently, they have felt no urge to raise their standard of living, and if any monetary advantage is conferred on them they are not disposed to turn it to very good account. It often serves only to stimulate their extravagant habits and their miserable standard of living remains generally unaffected. The committee of the chamber have, therefore, definitely come to the conclusion that no measure for improving the condition of labour will prove so effective as the enforcement of a free elementary education among the rank and file of workers. The climatic conditions of the places in which the three industries have been localised do not seem to have a deteriorating effect on the labourers except that in Tea the efficiency has been considerably impaired by the ravages of kalazar and malaria.

115. The changes in working hours in jute mills and coal mines have not borne any appreciable effect on the productive efficiency of labourers. In the jute mills the actual working hours having been always shorter than the statutory maximum, the recent increase in hours of work from 54 to 60 is not likely to tell on the efficiency

of workers who would still be able to enjoy ample leisure. The per capita output in these circumstances will undoubtedly increase. Similarly, in the coal mines the restriction of working hours will not affect the total output as the restriction will not curtail the actual hours of work. The changes in the working conditions and better provisions for housing and sanitation have imparted a steady tone to the volume of production in the three industries by attracting labour and maintaining the continuity of their respective operations. A check on further progress has however been put by the upward movement in wage levels, especially in the coal industry, synchronising with the imposition of various statutory obligations on the employers of labour. Besides the poor food value of the dietary consumed by the labourers as also their addiction to the consumption of alcohol and drugs have thrown another obstacle in the way of their productive efficiency being raised to its maximum. This is manifest in the case of colliery labourers, and is to some extent palpable in the case of labourers in the sister industries of jute and tea.

116. The committee of the chamber are of opinion that the method of securing increased efficiency in the present conditions of labour in India lies in the way of enforcing a scheme of free and compulsory education among the mass of workers, and a vigorous and sustained propaganda for the eradication of the drink evil.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

119. The trade unions are in most cases very recent institutions, and they have not been able hitherto to disseminate such ideas among the labourers as would enable the latter to accept any scheme of insurance, or such measures as would minimise the troubles of unemployment, etc. In cases where they have been responsible for the outbreak of strikes, as in the jute mills, they have urged for strike pay, but without any appreciable success.

121. The Trade Union Act, 1926, has not been worked for sufficient time to yield any appreciable results. An amendment was moved in the Legislative Assembly last year in a non-official bill to extend the privileges of registered unions to unregistered bodies. The Committee of the Chamber then expressed the opinion that such indiscriminate extension of privileges would be detrimental to the interests of a healthy development of labour organization in India. The committee consider any amendment designed for the recognition of irresponsible labour groups to be undesirable.

122. (i) Negotiations are carried on directly between the employers and the union which champions the cause of labour.

(ii) Attempts at co-operation between employers and the employed to increase efficiency of production have been followed with little success at present, chiefly because such attempts have not been thorough enough.

(iii) The resolution between employees in State industrial concerns and the General Trade Union Movement is growing intimate as is evidenced by sympathetic strikes.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

124. Although a conciliation machinery has been made available in the form of the Conciliation Board, selected from the panel referred to, no advantage has actually been taken of this machinery, except on a few occasions, when, however, the machinery was found useful. Prominent public men have played rather a more important part than officials in settling disputes. Little use has been made of the Act of 1860. There is hardly any joint standing machinery set up for the regulation of relations between employers and workpeople. The Committee of the Chamber consider that *ad hoc* committees, as proposed to be set up by the Trades Disputes Act, are better suited to deal with labour disputes in India. But a standing judicial machinery may serve some useful purpose for some time.

125. It is too early to comment on the usefulness or otherwise of the new law. But the committee are of opinion that the making of provisions in it for sympathetic strikes has been premature.

#### XVII.—Administration.

133. The industries are under the divided control of the central and provincial governments. This has been responsible for the lack of care with which questions affecting labour have been considered. The central government, which have reserved to themselves the determination of all vital questions pertaining to industries, have suffered from inadequate representation of industrial interests. The Committee

of the Chamber have urged several times for a permanent seat for the nominee of the Chamber in the Assembly, putting forward its claim as being the premier Indian commercial and industrial body of a major province like Bengal. But hitherto this claim has gone unheeded. The result of such a policy has been that the fate of legislation affecting industries has been decided chiefly by people who have no adequate local knowledge of the subject dealt with. The local government on the other hand, being conscious of the limited extent of their responsibility, have refrained from giving such attention to industrial questions as they rightly deserve.

134. The International Labour Organization has been responsible for a crop of labour legislation in India. It has been instrumental in stimulating public interest in labour questions and in initiating measures which might not otherwise have been adopted.

The conventions so far ratified are the following :—(a) Conventions limiting the hours of work in industrial undertakings ; (b) Conventions concerning unemployment ; (c) Conventions concerning employment of women during night ; (d) Conventions concerning the rights of association and combination of agricultural workers ; (e) Conventions concerning the application of weekly rest in industrial undertakings ; (f) Conventions fixing the minimum age for the admission of young persons to employment as trimmers and stokers ; (g) Conventions concerning the compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea ; (h) Conventions concerning workmen's compensation for occupational diseases ; (i) Conventions concerning equality of treatment for national and foreign workers as regards workmen's compensation for accidents ; (j) Conventions concerning the simplification of the inspection of emigrants on board ships.

The result of the new legislation has been to put in almost every case an additional burden on the employers, and it may be apprehended that such legislation will in time have its natural repercussions on the employment of labour.

135. The relation between central and provincial governments requires to be adjusted on a new basis. Either a larger representation in the Legislative Assembly should be secured for the representation of industry and commerce from the province or a higher degree of control should be vested in the Provincial Legislatures with a wider basis of the representation of commercial and industrial interests.

136. There are no special officers to investigate the problems of labour, except the chief inspector of factories and his staff.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. Regarding coal, the statistics available may be considered satisfactory. The information about jute mills is not illuminating, as the amount of stock is not given. The tea statistics should be more elaborate, with special reference to the labour employed. More detailed statistics regarding industrial establishments run on an individual proprietary basis are also called for. The committee consider that such statistics should be made available to a larger section of the community even by free distribution, if necessary.

144. At present the need for an easily intelligible and at the same time elaborate system of statistics is keenly felt. The committee consider that the other provinces should follow the example of Bombay in setting up labour offices.

145. No such statistics have been compiled in Bengal, except by special committees appointed from time to time. The committee would, in this connection, observe that an index of the cost of living of labourers, similar to that prepared by the Bombay Labour Office and the Labour Statistics Bureau of Burma, should be prepared for all the provinces. The results obtained are sure to be helpful in more than one way.

146. Greater co-operation between the Government and the Associations of Employers for the collection of accurate statistics is necessary.

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#### MANAGING AGENTS, THE MOHINI MILLS, LIMITED, KUSHTIA, BENGAL.

The mill employs 1,065 hands (including 61 under contractor), 976 adults, 11 females, 89 boys, besides the office staff, peons, durwans and others.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) When the mill, which is the only one in the district and far away from other industrial centres, was started with 10 looms (and gradually increased to 425 looms) some trained hands as weavers, jobbers and sizers were imported, and gradually local hands recruited mostly from the farmer class were trained up. Now the whole of the weaving section is run with local labour. To work the spinning section, which was started in May, 1929, some trained hands have been imported and local labour is being trained.

(ii) and (iii) The boys of the farmer class have most willingly taken up this work, as the average earning here is a good deal more than what it is if they worked in the field or as day labourers. In the beginning we used to pay the apprentices a sum to meet the food expenses, but this has been discontinued and apprentices still come to work. We have created a sort of labour population.

2. (i) and (ii) Most of our labourers attend work from their homes and those who have their homesteads at a distance live in the pucca-built houses built by us, go home week end and return on Monday morning. Those who do not belong to this district, the number of which is very few, go home once or twice a year for a few days.

8. (i) Employment with us is continuous.

(iii) (a) The percentage of absentees is 17 per cent., and it is sometimes due to sickness, but mostly to indolence. This year, on account of malaria in virulent type and an epidemic form of cholera, the number of absentees due to sickness is greater.

(b) The absenteeism is not seasonal, but occasionally rather regular; the number of absentees increases during the malarial and epidemic season.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) We have isolated pucca-built blocks with separate and independent rooms in an open maidan, admitting a good deal of air and light. There are quarters for single and family men.

20. We charge Re. 1-12 annas monthly per room of 10 ft. by 8 ft., with a 5 ft. wide verandah, and these rooms are occupied by two men. The charge for family quarters, comprising a room 11 ft. by 9 ft., with 5 ft. wide verandah on each side, a separate cook room, and a courtyard, complete by itself, is Rs. 2-4 annas a month.

### IV.—Health.

24. (i) We have a medical officer (a graduate of Calcutta university) attached to the mill, who attends daily to the sick, and with him there is one who passed from one of the medical schools of Calcutta. Free medicine and medical advice are supplied to the officers and operatives alike; we spend over Rs. 3,500 for medical help every year.

25. The operatives, both male and female, generally take medical aid, unless sometimes through ignorance they seek the aid of *ojhas*, etc.

30. Not necessary.

(iii) It is not necessary that western medicine should be administered in all cases, indigenous medicine is found very beneficial in many cases.

31. The few female workers we have as pickers in the spinning section are old prostitutes; so no step is necessary.

### V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

32 and 34. (i) We help the operatives to improve their physique; they have formed a sort of circus party, and for amusement they show plays; we encourage them to play football and some Indian outdoor games; we spend a large sum on their amusement by bringing theatrical parties, etc., from Calcutta from time to time. There are two small shops within the compound, where tea and light refreshment can be had, and there is a shelter where the workmen can have their meals. There is a library and a club.

36. We tried to introduce education among the workmen and erected a building for the purpose, but that was not taken advantage of. The workmen, whether adults or boys, will not take to education unless law compels them to do so.

37. It is desirable that some provision should be made for old age or premature retirement. We have the provident fund system in our mill; all officers and operatives are to subscribe to it at the rate of 1 anna per rupee earned by them. We contribute 12½ per cent. of their contribution and pay 6 per cent. interest on the amount.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories.

55. The weaving section actually works 60 hours a week or 10 hours a day, and the spinning section works 16 hours in two shifts. We do not work overtime.

56. We work six days in the week.

57 and 58. The workmen are greatly benefitted; they could easily work another hour daily without injuring their health, because in factories there is little or no manual labour; the attendants, especially weavers or spinners, have to keep an eye only and the work is practically done by the machine. With the 60 hours' restriction the industry had to pay more wages to the workmen. Before 1922, the weekly hours were 72 and it was reduced to 60 hours suddenly, the drop being too much; the rates and wages were increased consequently. To quote an instance, our rate for a 52 pick 10 yards dhoti was As. 1-9 per pair before the drop, and to-day it is As. 2-9 per pair. There has been an all round increase.

59. Further reduction is unnecessary because we have to face heavy foreign competition, especially of Japan, and reduction in working hours means increase in wages and necessary increase of overhead charges on account of less production. In Japan, the labour is most efficient, and the hours of work not below 11 hours.

60. In the morning the workers of the weaving section take their breakfast here, in which about half an hour is spent (the mill is not closed but workmen go out in batches), and the mid-day rest for their bath and principal meal is two hours. In the spinning section, where shift-system is worked, the rest for each batch is for five hours at a stretch.

(iii) We change the starting hour in the morning according to the season.

(iv) One day every week is given as holiday, generally Sundays are holidays; but if the mill is closed on a weekday for a festival, the Sunday preceding or following is worked according to the Factory Act.

### -XII.—Wages.

96. (i) The wages earned monthly by workers of different sections in our mill are given below:—

|  | 1929.    |          | 1919.    |          | per month |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
|  | Maximum. | Average. | Maximum. | Average. |           |
|  | Rs. a.   | Rs. a.   | Rs. a.   | Rs. a.   |           |
| Jobbers .. .. .                                | 100 0    | 57 11    | 40 0     | 34 0     | ..        |
| Electric mistris .. .. .                       | 70 0     | 49 0     | 19 0     | 17 0     | ..        |
| Drivers and firemen .. .. .                    | 90 0     | 42 0     | 22 0     | 18 0     | ..        |
| Weavers .. .. .                                | 62 0     | 40 4     | 25 0     | 21 4     | ..        |
| Fitters .. .. .                                | 49 0     | 38 0     | 30 0     | 23 8     | ..        |
| Folders .. .. .                                | 40 0     | 32 8     | 30 0     | 26 0     | ..        |
| Sizers .. .. .                                 | 47 0     | 29 0     | 30 0     | 23 0     | ..        |
| Carpenters .. .. .                             | 30 0     | 26 0     | 24 0     | 19 0     | ..        |
| Blacksmiths .. .. .                            | 27 0     | 25 0     | 17 0     | 14 0     | ..        |
| Warpers, including apprentices.                | 42 0     | 22 0     | 30 0     | 18 0     | ..        |
| Engineering department—men doing outdoor work. | 45 0     | 26 0     | 23 0     | 11 8     | ..        |
| Spinners .. .. .                               | 30 0     | 20 0     | Nil      | Nil      | ..        |
| .. half time .. .. .                           | 18 0     | 11 0     | Nil      | Nil      | ..        |
| Winders .. .. .                                | 30 0     | 20 0     | 25 0     | 11 0     | ..        |
| .. half time .. .. .                           | 25 0     | 15 0     | 12 0     | 5 0      | ..        |
| Female workers .. .. .                         | 18 0     | 12 8     | Nil      | Nil      | ..        |

(ii) The wage as a day labourer or in the agricultural field is 10 to 12 annas per day, but it is not certain that the labourer will get the work every day.

106. (i), (ii) and (iii) Workmen are fined a nominal sum for absence without leave, etc., but not much. The amount is utilized in the general fund of the company. Contribution for provident fund is deducted.

(iv) No legislation is necessary.

107. (i) Weavers, winders and other piece-workers are paid fortnightly, and monthly paid servants (men of the spinning section and engineering department) are paid monthly. The workmen prefer this system.

(ii) Fifteen days' wages is always kept in hand, and that is absolutely necessary for calculation and for the good of the workers.

(iii) None is necessary.

(iv) The wages are paid promptly, but if any one leaves the service without notice it is kept unadjusted for six months or more, and if the workman does not return the wage is forfeited.

108. Some of the workmen, especially those of loose morality, are in debt, paying high rate of interest. The agriculturists and day labourers are more in debt than the mill hands, especially those who are of economic habit.

109. Bonus or reward is given to the weavers if they can turn out a definite quantity of pairs per loom per week. In 1921, when the company made a decent profit, bonus was paid to the workmen.

110. Paid workmen are granted privilege and sick leave with full or half-pay, depending on the circumstances.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. We have none here. Trade combinations or unions are healthy signs among the workers when they are guided by the workmen themselves and not by outsiders, as is the case generally at present in many places; it is always preferable to lead organized and intelligent labour than a crowd of uneducated labour who can be easily led by others. The workmen being ignorant, outsiders with selfish motives behind their back very often put imaginary grievances before them and make them go on strike. In many cases the strikers do not know what the strike is for, and they lay down their tools without putting their grievances before their employers. Outsiders should not be allowed to handle these unions. There are many among the workmen who are very intelligent and can well put their case before their superiors.

Mr. L. M. SNELGROVE, GENERAL MANAGER, THE ORIENTAL GAS COMPANY, LIMITED, CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH.

#### I.—Recruitment.

*General Note.*—The number of workers varies very slightly with the hot weather and cold weather seasons; the following figures give an average of the permanent labour force, viz :—

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <i>Engaged in manufacture of gas, including all work ancillary thereto, viz. :</i>   |       |
| Repairs and maintenance of works, plant, machinery, buildings, etc. . .  | 760   |
| <i>Engaged in the sale and distribution of gas, including all work ancillary thereto, viz. : repairs and maintenance of mains and services, meters, fittings, appliances, public lighting and the general requirements of consumers of gas . . . . .</i> | 500   |
|  | 1,260 |

(N.B.—The above figures are exclusive of our covenanted managerial staff, numbering 10 Europeans).

(i) A general census of the permanent labour force gives the following figures as to province of origin :—Out of 1,260 workers 310 hail from Bengal; 827 hail from Bihar and Orissa; 109 hail from United Provinces; 14 hail from Santhal Pergannas.

2. (i) An examination of a period of one year (1928) shows that out of a total of 1,260 workers 473 left for their villages, due to causes such as have been enumerated above, the largest number being 71 and the lowest number being 18 in February and August respectively.



Periods of absence are entirely beyond our control, and may be taken at from one month to six months.

(ii) Extent of permanent labour force has already been given above.

3. We have never experienced any difficulty in obtaining all the labour we require.

(i) Whenever a worker leaves for his village, the general practice is for him to bring along a "substitute" who, if judged satisfactory, is temporarily recruited for the period of absence. Whenever additional labour is required, the existing employees have always produced (and can always produce) any number of extra workers.

(ii) So far as we are concerned, existing methods have proved satisfactory.

(iii) So far as we are concerned, no such agencies are necessary.

## XII.—Wages.

*General Note.*—In India there are only two undertakings supplying gas for street lighting and industrial and domestic requirements.

Therefore amongst gas workers there is no set standard of wages for any particular district, and comparisons are impossible and cannot lead to any useful issue. A variety of labour is necessary from that of the coolie class to that of artisan or craftsman, but it must be remembered that any degree of skilled labour as applied to gas manufacture and supply (in India) cannot be recruited as having had training (in most of the work required) at any other gas works as is the case in Europe, and progress in the degree of skill can only be attained by the workers "working alongside" older employees, in other words by "learning the work" which in actual fact amounts to "training" during the course of their employ.

96. The present monthly pay roll of approximately 1,260 employees shows an increase of 85 per cent., as compared with the monthly roll of approximately 1,100 employees 10 years ago. The sale of gas as compared with 10 years ago shows an increase of approximately 90 per cent.

## XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. *Comparative changes in efficiency of Indian workers in recent years.*—This is not an easy question to make any pronouncement upon. Those of our employees who by comparatively long service have had close association with the various items of gas manufacturing plant and machinery, and new and up-to-date types of such plant, etc., as have been from time to time installed and brought into use, do undoubtedly display an increasing knowledge and interest in the operating and maintenance and repairing of such plant.

The same may be said of those engaged in the fixing and working of gas consuming appliances, etc., but it is quite safe to say that satisfactory continuity of operations would be impossible and progress arrested, were it not for the continued watchfulness and supervision of our European staff.

In the lower classes of labour it must be agreed that little or no change in efficiency is discernable, and the tendency towards malingering appears to us to be just as pronounced as it has been for many years past.

113. *Comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers.* If by this is meant a comparison between Indian and foreign workers working in India, we are not in a position to make any statement, as all our workers are Indians. If the comparison is meant to be between Indian gas workers and gas workers in other countries, we have no compiled statistics to refer to. The following comparison is, however, such as may be taken as typical. As already stated, we employ about 1,260 workmen. At a gasworks in England with an annual output of gas about 50 per cent. in excess of ours, the number of workmen employed is 258 only, showing a man power ratio of at least seven Indian workmen to one British workman, for an equal output of gas.

116. *Possible means of securing increased efficiency.*—We have no comment to make beyond stating that as far as our experience goes, increased efficiency of Indian workers, whatever efforts and assistance be given them, can necessarily only come about very slowly and by transitory stages, through each of which a higher standard must be aimed at by wider education and improved intelligence, continued and ceaseless improvement in conditions of health, sanitation, living and environment, judiciously taking into account the complications arising from religious differences, customs and habits, all of which are inseparably dependant on a real display of genuine effort and determination to improve themselves from within, without expecting to attain such ends, except through steady and progressive stages, and patience extending over still many generations.

Mr. F. T. HOMAN, AGENT, THE CALCUTTA ELECTRIC SUPPLY CORPORATION, LTD., CALCUTTA.

I.—Recruitment.

1. Our total number of workers is about 3,500; of these some 575 come from Bengal, including skilled men employed in sub-stations and power stations; 400 from Behar and Orissa, 2,450 from the United Provinces, and the remainder from other Provinces, including Punjab and Nepal. The coolie labour comes from Behar, Orissa and the United Provinces.

2. During the months from April to August many of the coolies return to their villages for periods of about two months. They are temporarily replaced by others.

8. Except in the case of mains coolies employed on construction work, which is variable, the maximum number being 2,715 and the minimum 1,571, our labour is permanently employed. No definite figure can be given. In many cases employees stay with the company until they are too old for further work. The average must be well over 10 years.

XII.—Wages.

96. *Prevailing rates of wages and earnings* :—

|                           |         |  |
|---------------------------|---------|--|
| Power Stations—           |         |  |
| Shift Engineers           | .. .. . | Rs. 410-20-510<br>265-18-355                         |
| Boiler Fitters            | .. .. . | 90- 9-162<br>75- 5- 90<br>20- 5- 70                  |
| Firemen                   | .. .. . | 20- 5- 70  |
| Turbine or Engine Drivers | .. .. . | 20- 5- 70  |
| Engine Fitters            | .. .. . | 90- 9-162<br>75- 5- 90<br>20- 5- 70                  |
| Electric Fitters          | .. .. . | 20- 5- 70  |
| Switchboard Operators     | .. .. . | 117- 9-171<br>82- 8-114<br>50- 8- 82                 |
| Pump Attendants           | .. .. . | 28 - 31  |
| Coolies                   | .. .. . | 16 - 20  |
| Substations—              |         |  |
| Substation Engineers      | .. .. . | 320-15-395<br>220-15-280                             |
| Switchboard Operators     | .. .. . | 117- 9-171<br>82- 8-114<br>50- 8- 82                 |
| Electric Fitters          | .. .. . | 20- 5- 70  |
| Coolies                   | .. .. . | 16 - 20  |
| Distribution System—      |         |  |
| Cable Jointers (European) | .. .. . | 535-35-685   |
| Estimators or Inspectors  | .. .. . | 320-15-395<br>220-15-280<br>130-10-180<br>100- 6-124 |
| Linesmen                  | .. .. . | 70- 5- 90<br>20- 5- 70                               |
| Masons                    | .. .. . | 20- 5- 70  |
| Coolies                   | .. .. . | 16 - 20  |

Overtime is paid as follows:—Weekdays, Ordinary time; Saturdays after 2 p.m., time and a half; Sundays and holidays, double time.

Allowances.—The staff in the power stations are granted allowances ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per month, depending on their work.

97. *Movements in recent years.*—In 1919 the wage for coolie labour was Rs. 12 plus an allowance of Rs. 2. The wages since then have been raised to the figures given above, and corresponding increases have been made in all wages.

During the years 1919 to 1924, allowances were made, depending on the rate of wages, owing to the high cost of living. When these allowances were discontinued in 1924, the present scales of wages were introduced.

## Supplementary Statement.

*The Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation, Limited.—Hours of Work.*

|                                | Power Stations.                  |                |                              |                                   | Sub-stations.                                |           |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|
|                                | Mains Dept.                      | Shift-workers. | Mistries.                    | Coolies.                          | Shift-workers.<br>Switchboard<br>Attendants. | Cleaners. |
| Hours worked per week :—       |                                  |                |                              |                                   |  |           |
| Normal .. .. .                 | 46                               | 45             | 45                           | 45                                | 48   | 56        |
| Actual (including overtime) .. | 51 and extra if<br>required.     | 56             | 45 overtime in<br>emergency. | 60                                | 48   | 56        |
| Hours worked per day :—        |                                  |                |                              |                                   |  |           |
| Normal .. .. .                 | 8 and 6 on<br>Saturdays.         | 8              | 8                            | 8                                 | 8  | 8         |
| Actual (including overtime) .. | 9 and 6 on<br>Saturdays.         | 8<br>(average) | 8                            | 10                                | 8  | 8         |
| Spreadover .. .. .             | Nil.*                            | Nil.           | Nil.                         | Nil.                              | Nil.   | Nil.      |
| Days worked per week .. .. .   | 5½                               | 6              | 5½                           | 6                                 | 6  | 7         |
| Intervals .. .. .              | Nil.                             | Nil.           | ½-hour daily.                | 1½-hours daily in<br>2 intervals. | Nil.   | Nil.      |
| Days of rest .. .. .           | 1½, unless over-<br>time worked. | 1              | 1½                           | 1                                 | 1  | Nil.      |

\* Except in the case of a few Mistries who are on call in the case of emergency at all times.

Mr. C. W. LEESON, RIVERS STEAM NAVIGATION CO., LTD., CALCUTTA.

#### IX.—Hours.

On inland steamers and flats work is irregular and spasmodic, the working hours depending upon conditions of service, tides, fogs and channels. Statistics show, however, that the average running time of the majority of inland steamers is 10 hours daily and with two sets of men employed, as at present, this gives each man 5 hours work daily, provided the work is evenly allotted. In addition to the above the engine room crew and the navigating staff work about 2 hours daily doing necessary petty repairs and other odd jobs, making a 7-hour day or 49 hours per week. As regards lascars not engaged upon the navigation of the ship their working hours are difficult to calculate being dependent on whether the steamer is on a passenger or cargo service, and in many cases they do practically no work for days on end. Our opinion is that in no case do the actual working hours of lascars approach an average of 60 hours weekly.

#### XII.—Wages.

96. *Serangs*, Rs. 46 to Rs. 150 per month; *drivers* Rs. 46 to Rs. 120 per month. In addition to the above, bonuses are paid for good work. *Lowest ratings*, generally speaking the minimum pay is Rs. 20 per month.

97. Increased by approximately 20 per cent. since 1920.

Mr. J. DONALD, MANAGER OF MESSRS. SONAKUNDA BALING CO., LTD.,  
NARAINGUNGE.

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Seventy-five per cent. of the workers employed in baling concerns of this district is drawn from surrounding villages. The other 25 per cent. is drawn from Behar and United Provinces. The percentage employed by the various firms varies considerably, the pucca baling firms employing about 50 per cent. labour recruited locally, and about 50 per cent. recruited from Behar and United Provinces, while the Kutcha baling firms employ about 80 per cent. local labour, and about 20 per cent. from up-country.

(ii) The cause of the recruitment of labour from Behar and United Provinces is that in the early days of the baling industry great difficulty was experienced in getting local labour to do this work.

(iii) Of recent years, however, the local people have taken more kindly to the work, with the result that the number of up-country people brought into the district is becoming less and less yearly.

2. (i) The workers drawn from local sources go to and from their village homes daily. They come to work in the early morning and go back to their village homes in the evenings. The up-country labour is housed in coolie lines built by the various firms, and at least 60 per cent. of these labourers bring their wives and families to live with them.

The jute baling industry is entirely seasonal, and extends from July to December yearly.

At the end of each season the up-country labourers go back to their up-country homes to attend to the cultivation of their own lands.

The local labourers at the end of each baling season employ themselves in the cultivation of their own lands, which, owing to the subsiding of the yearly floods, are then ready for sowing further crops.

(ii) The extent of the permanent labour force employed by the baling firms varies, but does not exceed 10 per cent. to 15 per cent.

3. (i) In the jute baling industry, the firms do not directly employ labour. This is done through contractors and sub-contractors, who take on the work of supplying labour to do the work of importing, assorting, baling and exporting at a fixed rate per bale.

In the case of local labourers these are approached by the contractor direct, who advances them small sums of money to secure their consent to work.

In the case of the recruitment of upcountry labour this is done by the contractor through sirdars, who go to Behar and United Provinces annually and advance money to secure the number of labourers they require.

(ii) Cannot suggest any improvement.

(iii) Do not think the establishing of public employment agencies is desirable, as the present system works quite satisfactorily.

4. Do not consider there is any disturbance in the family life of the workers, as in the case of the local labourers they go home daily, while in the case of the upcountry workers the majority of them bring their wives and families with them and have good housing accommodation provided them by the firms.

8. (i) The average duration of employment is six months, i.e., from July to December yearly.

As it so happens this is the time when the rivers are in full flood and most of the countryside is under water.

From January to June the labour go back to their own homes and attend to their own crops and cultivation of their own lands.

#### II.—Staff Organisation.

14. There are certain specified hours laid down for working, but the time of the workers is not kept, as they are paid on piece-work.

(i) Contract and attendance registers are kept by contractor, and accounts kept by Indian Office Staff and checked by manager.

(ii) Paid by contractors direct.

15. (i) All work is done on contract.

(ii) All work is divided under sub-contractors in the different departments.

(iii) This is controlled by the manager and his assistants and supervisory staff.

(iv) These are quite satisfactory.

#### III.—Housing.

16. Housing is provided by the various firms for all imported labour.

18. Practically all the big European firms have pucca built lines to house their labour.

(i) Housing accommodation is supplied according to the workers' requirements.

(ii) The nature of the accommodation is satisfactory from a health point of view.

(iii) No provision for lighting is made, but there are proper filtered water supplies available, and also proper standard type latrines (separate from females).

20. All housing is provided by firms rent free.

#### IV.—Health.

24. (i) Doctor Babus are employed to look after the medical needs of the workers, and fully equipped dispensaries are kept by most of the European firms, who also supply free medicine.

(ii) No facilities provided by Government.

(iii) Dispensaries and hospitals are also kept by municipal authorities, and these facilities are available for very serious cases which cannot be adequately dealt with by the firm's doctors. Firms contribute to the upkeep of these municipal institutions also.

(iv) A lady doctor and midwife are always available from the local municipal hospital.

25. (i) and (ii) These facilities are taken full advantage of by both men and women workers alike.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. There are extremely few occasions in our industry on which there is any necessity for claims under this Act, as the nature of the employment is not dangerous, and accidents are almost unknown.

**IX.—Hours.**

55. As our industry is seasonal it is exempt from the usual working hours as laid down in the Factory Act. The hours of work generally are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an hour off at mid-day for meals.

56. Six days per week.

59. No reduction is desirable, as the industry is entirely seasonal.

60. (i) There are no restrictions, and workers can go to and from their work as they desire.

(ii) and (iii) Quite suitable.

(iv) One day per week, and all Pujah holidays.

61. (i) Sundays are generally observed as days of rest, but in some cases other days during the week are allocated according to the weekly market days of the locality.

(ii) This is quite suitable.

62. Full use is made of the exempting provisions relating to the industry.

**XII.—Wages.**

96. (i) Average daily wages of time-workers are 10 to 12 annas daily. In the cases of piece-workers the average is from 12 annas to Re. 1-4 daily.

(ii) About 8 annas daily.

(iii) Very little if any.

97. (i) About 40 per cent. increase during the past few years.

(ii) Increased cost of living.

(iii) The cost of living has gone up about 40 to 50 per cent. since pre-war days.

(iv) Profits have decreased to some extent.

98. This does not arise in the case of local workers, but upcountry workers save probably 25 per cent. of their income and send same to their villages.

99. Payment in kind is not in existence to any extent.

100. Eighty per cent. of payments are made by the contractors, who take approximately 10 per cent. as their commission.

110. Permanent workers have one month's leave per year generally on full pay.

**XIV.—Trade Combinations.**

117. There are no trade combinations or union in this part of the country, and the result is that there is implicit confidence and harmony between labour and employer.

**XV.—Industrial Disputes.**

123. There have been no strikes or lock-outs in the industry for very many years, and none during the writer's experience of sixteen years in the trade.

**Messrs. BURN & COMPANY, LIMITED, HOWRAH.***Introductory Particulars.*

We beg to submit the following particulars regarding the Howrah Ironworks of Messrs. Burn & Company, Limited :—

*Nature of Business*—(1) Rolling stock builders, (2) Iron and brass founders, (3) Bridge builders, (4) Shipbuilders, (5) Permanent way manufacturers, (6) General engineers.

*Output*—(1) 2,000 wagons per annum, (2) 50,000 tons per annum, (3) 10,000 tons per annum, (4) 1,500 tons per annum, (5) 3,000 sets points and crossings per annum.

*Period of Operation*.—The firm has been in existence rather over 100 years, and has been located in Howrah since about 1850.

*Number of Employees*.—Males—7,500 (of whom half are daily and half contractor's men); females—nil; juveniles—100.

**I.—Recruitment.**

1. to 3. There is no recruitment of labour for this works owing to (a) the large employment of the contract system; (b) the long establishment of the business; (c) The residence in the district of a large body of skilled and unskilled labour.

Our daily labour is divided approximately as follows:—Bengali, 25 per cent.; Hindustani, 53 per cent.; Oriya, 16 per cent.; Others, 6 per cent. We have no figures regarding contract labour.

7. (i) Unemployment is largely determined by the amount of work in hand, and is to some extent seasonal, the number of men employed being generally at its lowest during April and May. This hardship is to some extent mitigated by the fact that a fair proportion of this labour always wishes to return to the villages at about this time to assist in the ploughing of the Kharif crops.

8. (i) and (ii) We can only give information here regarding "daily" labour. Skilled labour is generally stable, and we have many cases of men being employed for 20 years and more. Unskilled and coolie labour is much more unsettled. It must be understood that to a considerable extent our requirements of unskilled and coolie labour vary with the amount of work in hand. Further a lot of the labour classed in India as skilled would be termed elsewhere unskilled or semi-skilled.

(iii) (a) The most serious case of absenteeism to us is the large number of men who are absent on Mondays and Saturdays. This is and has for years been a serious inconvenience. Over a period of eight weeks during June and July of this year this amounted to 5 per cent. on Mondays as compared with the best day of the week, the other days not varying more than 1½ per cent. The relative figures were as follows:—

|                  | Monday.     | Tuesday.    | Wednesday.  | Thursday.   | Friday.    | Saturday.   |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Daily men ..     | 97.2        | 100.3       | 98.3        | 98.9        | 100        | 97.1        |
| Contractor's men | 92.3        | 98.2        | 99.1        | 99.6        | 100        | 99.6        |
| <b>Total ..</b>  | <b>94.6</b> | <b>99.2</b> | <b>98.7</b> | <b>99.3</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>98.5</b> |

It will be noted that there is a drop in daily men on both Mondays and Saturdays, and that contract labour drops nearly 8 per cent. on Mondays.

An analysis of the daily men shows that the percentage of absentees is greater among the skilled than the unskilled labour, and we believe the same to hold good regarding contract labour. The percentages for daily men were as follows:—

|                  | Monday. | Tuesday. | Wednesday. | Thursday. | Friday. | Saturday. |
|------------------|---------|----------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Daily skilled .. | 96      | 100      | 98.4       | 98        | 99.5    | 93        |
| „ unskilled ..   | 97.3    | 99.7     | 97.9       | 98.7      | 99.6    | 100       |

In all the above figures the numbers are taken as percentages of the best day of the week, below we give the number of daily men attending work expressed as a percentage of the number of men on the books:—

|                 | Monday. | Tuesday. | Wednesday. | Thursday. | Friday. | Saturday. |
|-----------------|---------|----------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Mean attendance | 85.9    | 88.9     | 87.0       | 87.7      | 88.3    | 85.9      |
| Best ..         | 88.3    | 91.8     | 89.9       | 89.1      | 90.3    | 88.5      |
| Worst ..        | 83.3    | 85.5     | 84.0       | 84.6      | 85.1    | 82.5      |

Attendance during each week:—Best—On Tuesday, 5 times; on Friday, twice; and Tuesday and Friday equal, once. Worst—On Monday, 5 times; on Saturday, twice; on Thursday and Saturday equal, once. Average attendance for the period 87.2 per cent.

(b) Absenteeism is not seasonal as if our men wish to help with ploughing, etc., it is generally necessary for them to go to a considerable distance, and they therefore ask for leave or resign.

(c) The time lost during eight weeks of June and July amounted to 196,863 man-hours or 24,483 man-hours per week equal to nearly 12.8 per cent. of the total possible man-hours. We have been unable to determine exactly the wages lost, but it may be taken as not less than Rs. 2,700 per week. The amount is probably appreciably higher for as stated in the previous paragraph absenteeism is greater amongst the skilled, and higher paid, men than amongst the unskilled workers. This refers to daily men only.

**II.—Staff Organization.**

11 and 12. The bulk of the managers and foremen are covenanted Europeans. Apprentices, however, frequently remain with us after completing their training, and rise to the position of foremen. There is nothing to prevent Anglo-Indians and Indians rising to responsible positions, and every effort is made to encourage this. Promotion of workmen has so far proved impracticable owing to their lack of education.

13. Relations between staff and rank and file are generally good. Daily labour is in close touch with foremen and managers, mainly through informal channels but a committee exists which can ask for a meeting with the executive at any time they desire. Contractors are represented by a committee elected mainly by themselves, which meets the executive monthly to control the contractors' provident fund. This fund is made up of contributions from the contractors and the firm, and is used to assist men too old for further work or suffering from illness, etc. These meetings though primarily for the management of the fund, provide adequate opportunities for the smaller contractors to put forward any proposals they may wish to make. The nature of their work brings the larger contractors into very close touch with the management.

14. (i) Time-keeping and attendance of daily workmen is kept by means of checks distributed to each man as he enters the works. These are placed by the men on a board in the shop. The vacant places on the gate board are noted by one of the time-clerks, and compared jointly by him and the shop-clerk with the checks hung in the shop. A record is also kept of the work on which each man is engaged for cost purposes, and this is also compared with the muster roll. Should any mistake occur it is readily detected and rectified as men are paid weekly.

Contract and piece-work is checked by the production of a challan receipted by the receiving department in support of the contractors' bill.

(ii) Wages are paid to daily men by one of the cashiers' staff in the presence of the shop-foreman (usually the foreman makes the actual payment). Payment is made in sealed transparent envelopes, and every care is taken to see that no extortion takes place. Any complaints regarding hours worked or short payment of any sort is always attended to by the foreman, who takes the question up with the accounts department. We find our foremen very keen to see that their men are fairly treated and that any mistakes which may occur are rectified.

Wages of contractors' men are paid to the men by the contractors, but we are confident that the rates paid compare favourably with those of similar daily labour employed by us.

15. (i) Almost half the total number of workers are working under contractors. The work given on contract is work of such a nature that it would present difficulty to us in apportioning the value of the work of several men all engaged on the same job. Such work as wagon erection, working of moulding machines, etc., which are essentially gang work, are given on contract.

(iii) The working conditions of contractors' men are exactly the same as those under which our own daily men work, the contractors' men working under our foremen.

(iv) Effects of contract work :—(a) Working costs can be more easily standardized (b) Less detailed supervision is required as it is to be the interest of contractors working on a piecework basis to see that a good output is obtained ; (c) The contractor being generally a skilled man provides considerable skilled supervision in himself ; (d) It is to the contractors' interest to employ good men, and to train them, whilst it is often difficult to get skilled daily men to train others for fear of losing their jobs ; (e) Owing to the conditions under which the work is done the contractor must pay wages at least equal to those paid to daily men in order to retain his labour.

#### IV.—Health.

24. First-aid appliances are provided in all shops, and all cases of a serious nature are sent to the Howrah General Hospital which adjoins the works. We have always contributed towards the upkeep of the hospital, and our men have been treated free and have been able to attend there at any time if unwell ; but with the increasing number of men now employed we have found it desirable to take further steps, and to have a dispensary in the works and a regular medical officer attending for the purpose of looking after our staff and our workmen.

25. We find that a very large proportion of the men strongly object to attending the hospital. They are very ready to avail themselves as a rule of the first-aid facilities offered.

#### V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

37. It is customary in deserving cases to give pensions to old employees when they retire up to a maximum, new names being added to the pension list as the older ones drop out. We think it would be difficult to induce the majority of our labour to insure, and owing to the little we can know of their life we do not think that the employer should be involved in any provision for old age, etc.



## VI.—Education.

41. There is a scheme of apprenticeship in operation in the larger engineering works round Calcutta, which is run in conjunction with the Calcutta Technical School. This scheme trains men rather as overseers than as workmen. See our remarks *re* section (86).

42. Our experience generally is that literate men will not undertake manual work. Many of our mistris can read and write to a limited extent in the vernacular, and are capable of reading dimensions on drawings, etc., but they are very rarely literate in English. We are unable to offer any opinion as to the effect of education on the standard of living. There is no doubt that it would be of the greatest advantage to industry if men with greater education could be induced to take up manual work.

## IX.—Hours.

55. (i) 8 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on five days a week and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

N.B.—The Indian Factory Act specifies a break of one hour for all men working more than six hours. When the Act was introduced our labour objected to this as they prefer the shorter break and earlier finish.

This variation from the standard hours was agreed to by the factory inspection Department. We consider the break adequate under the conditions existing in our works.

(ii) The working hours are as stated in (i) and overtime is only worked when unavoidable. Only in cases of breakdowns, etc., are men worked more than 11 hours in any one day or more than 60 hours in any one week.

57. *Effects of 60 hours restriction.*—(i) As we have not for many years worked hours appreciably longer than those now legalized, we have noted no effect save that men would prefer to work longer hours at rush periods rather than have second shifts started, which have to be discontinued when the rush is over.

(ii) We have no objection to the restriction which does not affect us save at rush times. Any further restriction owing to the very low output of Indian labour would not be welcomed.

58. *Effect of daily limit.*—The effects are similar to those of the weekly restriction, but we would like some further latitude at rush times.

59. We do not think that this can be done until the workers' efficiency is greatly increased. A reduced maximum would not allow of appreciably lower wages being paid and would not, in our opinion, be compensated for by a proportionately increased output. Thus it would only result in increased cost and increased overhead charges, unless double shift working were introduced. We have always found this unsatisfactory and difficult to organize owing to the men's reluctance to leave their homes at night, and to the difficulty of adequate supervision.

60. (i) (a) As stated earlier the rest interval in our works is only half an hour, which we find adequate, and the strong preference expressed for it by our men confirms that it is in accordance with their habits.

(b) As our men make their principal meals in the morning and night, the half-hour interval suits them better than a longer one by allowing them to return home earlier.

(ii) We consider that the chief inspector of factories for each province should be allowed to sanction alternative intervals of one hour and half an hour at his discretion certainly so far as the engineering industry is concerned. We have no further remarks to make.

(iii) These are satisfactory; we would prefer to start earlier during the hot months, but owing to our labour living at a distance from the factory this is impracticable.

(iv) We have 11 listed holidays, but it is usual to close the works for some days longer at the Durga Puja in October than the number of days shown on the list. A number of half-holidays are also regularly given.

61. (i) All labour is given Sundays save when required for urgent repairs on attendance on boilers, etc. These men are given a day's leave early in the following week. Their number is small.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—Satisfactory.

62. The only provision which applies to us is that contained in section 30, sub-section (3) of the Indian Factories Act relating to urgent repairs. This exception is vital to the engineering industries.

### X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

86. We provide facilities for two classes of apprentices :—(a) Those who come to us direct from school for a full apprenticeship of six years. These apprentices are admitted on the results of an examination conducted by the Bengal Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training, and are bound to attend the Calcutta Technical school for a full term of five years ; (b) Those who have passed through one or other of the engineering colleges, and come to us for shorter periods, varying from 3 months to 3 years, for practical training. These men having already a considerable amount of general engineering knowledge generally do well.

In regard to engineering apprenticeship generally we wish to make the following comments :—(a) The only schemes of apprenticeship it has been so far possible to evolve apply to the training of overseers, rather than of skilled workmen. (b) It will not be possible to train skilled workmen, skilled in the European sense that is, until either the mistri class become more educated or the educated classes of Bengal become much less averse to manual labour than at present. The greatest difficulty is found in all apprenticeship training in making the training really practical owing to this general dislike of manual work. We find far too great a tendency amongst our apprentices to watch the mistris working rather than attempting to do the work themselves.

### XII.—Wages.

96. (i) We enclose (Appendix) a schedule showing the average rates of wages paid to our daily men. We have very little piece-work in the European sense but the few piece-workers we have earn similar or higher rates. We have every reason to believe that the contractors working on piece-work must pay wages at least equal to those paid to similar men in our and other works in the district or they would not be able to retain their labour.

97. (i) There has been an increase of about 25 per cent. during the past ten years. Most of this increase occurred almost immediately after the war and the increase since has been much smaller.

(ii) The general increase in wages has been due to the higher cost of living since the war with some improvement in the standard of living especially in recent years when the cost of living has moderated somewhat without any corresponding decrease in wages.

(iii) Our records for the pre-war period not now being available we are unable to answer this question fully but we know that various allowances were made at different times and believe that the wages level at the end of the war probably approximated to the cost of living, the index figures for which were (in Bombay) 118 in July, 1917, and 149 in July, 1918. We think that wages had probably risen by 30 per cent. by the end of 1918.

A further general increase averaging 25 per cent. was given early in 1921, when the cost of living index figure in Bombay was about 180.

The wages settled then have continued unchanged up-to-date, though the cost of living index has now fallen to 148 (July, 1929).

We are thus unable to give a definite opinion as to the relation between wages and cost of living as compared with pre-war conditions but we can definitely state that real wages (i.e., wages expressed in terms of buying power) have increased by about one-sixth since 1921, and we think that this probably holds good as compared to the pre-war period also.

102. Ordinary overtime, i.e., overtime up to a limit of two hours on one day is paid at ordinary rates. Men working on night shift and Sundays receive time and a half.

104. The supply of skilled labour is limited and the effect of a rise in wages in one place is mainly to cause a movement towards the highest point with a corresponding return wave when wages rise elsewhere. The supply of skilled labour as a whole does not appear to be greatly affected by changes in wages.

105. We do not think that it would be desirable for minimum wages to be fixed by law for the following reasons :—(a) Conditions in different parts of India vary very greatly. (b) The minimum would have to be fixed too low to be of any real use owing to the very low standard of skill which is here classed as skilled labour. A lot of the labour here classed as skilled would elsewhere be classed as unskilled or semi-skilled and the minimum would have to be low enough to include these men.

106. So far as we are concerned it would make no difference to us if fines were made illegal.

107. (i) Daily wages are paid weekly and contract wages half-monthly.

(ii) In both cases the period before payment is ten days, i.e., daily wages are paid on the tenth day and contractors' wages from the eighth to the twelfth day after the termination of the period.

(iii) (a) This would probably be desirable, but care should be taken not to make the regulation so widely applicable as to be unworkable. Periods should not be too short as more frequent payments mean to many of the men either extra expense in money order poundage, or the risk of spending or being robbed of the money before it can be sent to their families.

(b) This would be desirable, but the period must be considerably longer than is customary in England as it is impossible with the far less efficient clerical staff available and the far greater chance of fraud to pay wages for the week ending Wednesday night on Friday nights as is commonly done in England. We think a period of from 10 to 15 days should be allowed.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are kept in a special account for one year, after which unclaimed balances are transferred to profit and loss, but the records are available for at least two years and any properly supported claim would be paid, even though beyond the period laid down in the Statute of Limitations.

109. (i) Some years ago we introduced a scheme in one of our machine shops of paying machine men for a standard time for each job irrespective of the actual time taken. The scheme was very successful for a short period, the output being greatly increased and the workers' wages correspondingly larger. It was given up at the men's request as they preferred to earn lower wages on daily time work.

(ii) A piece-work bonus scheme in addition to daily wages is in operation in our machine shop and has helped to secure rather higher outputs.

111. We do not think that this is practicable as it would be impossible to define what "fair wages" are in a country the size of India and with such very varying conditions.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Our experience is to the effect that there has been no improvement in industrial efficiency in recent years, but rather the reverse. This apparent loss of efficiency is probably largely due to the great increase in industry having spread the limited number of really skilled men over a larger area. Outside of the castes and classes, who have been craftsmen for generations, we do not get many really skilled men and as industry grows there is bound to be a period before the supply of skilled labour is adequate to the demand.

113. We consider that the relative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers is about in the proportion of their relative rates of payment, i.e., about one to four. Our experience is that piece-work rates are as high or higher in India than in Europe, and the Indian workman earns less because he does less work.

We have obtained certain figures, which we are willing to give the Commission in confidence, if we are assured that they will not be published, as they were given to us under a similar promise. These figures relate to drop stampings, rivetting, etc., and confirm the statement made above.

It is not possible for the Indian workman with his lesser physique and entire lack of education to produce as much work as the foreign worker, and we would point out that this lower output is a very severe handicap to Indian industry, as larger shops and more supervision have to be provided and more machines, etc., installed, for a given output. This necessarily meaning increased overhead charges.

114. *Extent to which Comparisons are Affected by (i) Migration of workers.*—Not seriously.

(ii) *Use of machinery.*—The Indian workman rarely uses a machine to its full capacity and takes longer to set up and take down a job than foreign workers. More men are required per machine.

(iii) *Comparative efficiency of plant.*—It is naturally more difficult to keep a plant up-to-date in India, but we are sure that our plant would compare favourably with most similar plants elsewhere and we have now in hand a large scheme of improvement.

The inherent conservatism of the worker is one great handicap to progress.

(iv) *Comparative efficiency of management.*—We do not think that management in India is generally less efficient than elsewhere.

(v) *Physique*.—The physique of the Indian workman, at any rate in Bengal, is much below that of the European workman and greatly affects his output, but the greater use of machinery tends to neutralize this disadvantage, and we do not think that the relative capabilities are as low as the present relative outputs.

(vii) *Education*.—It is only very rarely that men of any education can be induced to take up practical work, the present tendency is for any boy who has been to school to refuse to do manual work.

(ix) *Climate*.—The climatic conditions are undoubtedly against the workers, particularly at certain seasons, but we think that the effects can be easily over-estimated.

115. (vi) Our experience shows, that any rise in the wages level not justified by the increased cost of living, is not accompanied by an increase in output, but by increased absenteeism. This applies more particularly to the lower grades.

(vii) Recent enactments have on the whole tended to curtail production.

(viii) All that we can say is that the meat eating classes have usually better physique than the vegetarian classes.

116. With regard to possible methods of securing increased efficiency, we do not think that much can be accomplished by legislation, other than in so far as legislation can help to make education more readily accessible; and to remove or curtail the deadening effect on men of unsatisfactory social conditions. As the conditions of living improve, and as social abuses are gradually lessened, the physique of the people will improve and with that improvement we may expect increased efficiency.

As the social bar, which prevents men of the *badralog* classes undertaking manual work, of however skilled a nature, is removed under the pressure of economic circumstances, we may expect that a higher class of labour will be obtained, which, desiring a higher standard of living, will be ready to give greater effort.

All this, however, must be of very slow growth and we do not think that any real improvement can be affected by legislation of any sort at present.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) We are members of the Indian Engineering Association, a body existing to look after the interests of the engineering industry and associated with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. This body does not officially control wages levels, though it is customary for members to consult before giving any general increase. Owing to the differing conditions of life and caste in different parts of India any attempt to standardize wages for the whole of India would be futile.

(ii) So far as our men are concerned, there is no real organization. A loose organization, mainly from outside, was formed during the strike of 1928, but so far as we know it is no longer in existence.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (i) The two strikes we have had during recent years have been due to causes as below :—Strike in 1920–21—High cost of living, and the general unrest due to the non-co-operation movement at the time. Strike in 1928—Partly sympathetic with the strike at the E. I. R. workshops at Lilloah. And partly due to external intimidation.

(ii) The duration in 1920–21 was three months and in 1928 three and a half months.

(iii) The strike in 1920–21 was settled by the men returning to work on a promise that their grievances would be considered. Increases were granted. It should be noted that in this case, the strike occurred whilst the question of increases was under consideration.

In 1928 the men returned to work unconditionally.

(iv) In 1928 the loss of output was probably about 50 lakhs of rupees and the loss to the workers 6 to 7 lakhs in wages.

#### XVII.—Administration.

138. We do not think that the workpeople have any real knowledge of factory legislation and unless protected by the factory inspection department there would be ample room for an unscrupulous employer to evade the Acts.

## APPENDIX.

| Monthly Rates of Pay of Workmen in the Howrah Ironworks. |          |          |                           |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| Trade.   | Min. Rs. | Max. Rs. | Trade.                    | Min. Rs. | Max. Rs. |
| Armature winder ..                                       | 20       | 70       | Belt man ..               | 21       | 40       |
| Arc lamp trimmer ..                                      | 18       | 20       | Oilman ..                 | 15       | 18       |
| Blacksmith ..  | 20       | 55       | Pattern maker ..          | 20       | 75       |
| Boiler maker ..  | 26       | 45       | Plumber ..                | —        | 43       |
| Brazier ..   | 28       | 35       | Planerman ..              | 20       | 59       |
| Boring machineman ..                                     | 19       | 20       | Painter ..                | 16       | 26       |
| Bricklayer ..  | 25       | 45       | Rivetter ..               | 20       | 53       |
| Coppersmith ..   | 26       | 40       | Slotting machine operator | 29       | 32       |
| Carpenter ..   | 20       | 46       | Sawyer ..                 | 25       | 29       |
| Crane driver ..  | 20       | 34       | Saw sharpener ..          | 25       | 31       |
| Core maker ..  | 25       | 41       | Screw (machine) ..        | 22       | 24       |
| Drop stamper (mistri) ..                                 | —        | 65       | Switch board attendants   | —        | 35       |
| Driller ..   | 20       | 56       | Turners ..                | 20       | 71       |
| Engine driver ..   | 24       | 41       | Tin-smith ..              | 27       | 46       |
| Fitter ..  | 20       | 90       | Wireman ..                | 25       | 47       |
| Fireman ..   | 18       | 20       | Welder ..                 | —        | 60       |
| Grinder ..   | 22       | 39       | Coolies (standard)        | —        | 15       |
| Hammerman ..   | 15       | 18       | Khalassis (standard)      | —        | 18       |
| Hydraulic press operator                                 | 15       | 24       | Coolie sirdar ..          | 17       | 34       |
| Miller ..  | 18       | 47       | Khalassi serang ..        | 22       | 37       |
| Moulder ..   | 20       | 54       | Tindals ..                | 26       | 43       |
| Marker out ..  | 24       | 60       | Stokers ..                | —        | 22       |

Notes.—(1) Men are actually engaged and paid at an hourly rate equivalent to the above monthly rates for a standard month of 212 hours.

(2) In addition to the above an attendance allowance is paid as follows:—

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Under Rs. 26. per month ..    | 20 per cent. |
| Rs. 26 to Rs. 35 per month .. | 17½ "        |
| Rs. 36 to Rs. 58 per month .. | 12½ "        |
| Rs. 59 and over ..            | 7½ "         |

These allowances are paid provided the worker is not absent more than two days in the month.

(3) As stated elsewhere many men included in the above list would in Europe be classed as "unskilled" or "semi-skilled."

Mr. A. T. WESTON, M.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.E., DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIES, BENGAL, CALCUTTA.

9. *Apprentices Act XIX of 1850*.—As far as the Director of Industries is aware, this Act is a complete dead letter. It is probable that no employer nowadays knows anything about it. The Act was introduced—it is understood—now 79 years ago in order to provide a definite channel for the employment and livelihood of orphans and Anglo-Indian children. It made no pretence to provide any solution to the employment problem or the apprenticeship of recruits for industry generally. The only apprenticeship scheme existing in Bengal is that known as the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training scheme, which body in short represents the employers of the engineering and electrical industry, the technical education authorities, and some other members of the interested public composing a Board, which sets the standard of admission which would-be apprentices must satisfy, and also lays down standard courses of training, and institutes examinations to test the technical knowledge acquired at the end of each year's apprenticeship. In this way the Board selects the best apprentices after four years' training in workshops, both from the technical and practical point of view, to proceed to the highest training available at the Bengal Engineering College. There is also a large technical school in Calcutta, training about 150 apprentices, and another school at Kanchrapara with the facilities for 100 apprentices. These latter are employed in the large railway workshops of the Eastern Bengal Railway. There are probably not more than 300 young men serving a regular apprenticeship and receiving a proper satisfactory technical training in the whole of the province. The majority of the industries in Bengal depend for their skilled supervision on European or Anglo-Indian employees—often without any real technical educational qualification or experience of industry through a proper apprenticeship or other form of practical training. As for the labour force it is mostly recruited from, what is called, the mistry and working low-caste people, who in the case of such industries as the jute and cotton textile industry are imported from Madras, Bihar and Orissa or the United Provinces. The idea of using the best intellectual talents and practical skill in industry has so far made very little headway in Bengal.

41 and 86. *Provision of Educational facilities by Employers with special reference to Technical Education.*—The part of the problem the Department of Industries, Bengal, has been mostly concerned with is the provision of technical education to the first-class apprentices, mostly young literate Indians in railway and other big workshops. The employers choose these apprentices from the pass list of an admission examination, conducted by the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training, constituted under Government auspices and on which employers of labour have effective representation. Some employers also allow these apprentices time and opportunities to attend technical school classes during workshop hours, where necessary. Lastly, they contribute, more or less, to the cost of running technical schools, from which benefit is derived by their employees.

The first class apprentices are trained for the workshop and drawing office posts in industrial concerns, but educational facilities are also provided for less educated employes or employees' children in very few cases only, such as at the Ichapore Rifle and Metal and Steel Factories and the railway workshops at Kanchrapara. We have little or no knowledge of these, inasmuch as no grants-in-aid have been claimed from this department.

The following is a list of the employing firms who encourage the technical training or education of their apprentices :—

*Calcutta Technical School.*—Burn & Co., Ltd. ; John King & Co. ; Jessop & Co. ; Garden Reach Workshops ; The Calcutta Port Commissioners ; Gun and Shell Factory, Cossipore ; East Indian Railway Electrical Department ; Saxby and Farmer ; Marshall Sons & Co. ; The Vulcan Iron Works ; Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation ; British India Electric Construction Co., Ltd. ; Eastern Bengal Railway Signal Workshops ; Russa Engineering Works ; Bengal Telephone Corporation, Ltd. ; Beruck and Comens ; Telegraph Workshops ; Calcutta Tramways Co., Ltd. ; Mackintosh Burn & Co., Ltd. ; India General Navigation and Railway Company's Dockyard.

*Kanchrapara Technical School.*—Eastern Bengal Railway Workshops.

*Khargpur Technical School.*—Bengal Nagpur Railway Workshops.

Clearly, the Calcutta Technical School touches the largest number of employers of labour and more nearly represents the condition of affairs which obtains in Great Britain. It must be recorded that the employers in the above list have come into much closer contact with the school authorities in recent years. Such employers are now almost wholly drawing their apprentices from the pass lists, either of the Admission Examination conducted by the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training, or a smaller but less exacting examination conducted by the Calcutta Technical School. Such employers of labour have a direct representation on the Governing Body of the Calcutta Technical School as well as the Board of Control for Apprenticeship Training.

It will be recognised that only the fringe of the problem has so far been touched, and that the majority of employers and employees are quite apathetic to the advantages of technical education. As far as the employers are concerned, the advantage of giving technical education has so far been appreciated only by the engineering trade and the total number of apprentices who are receiving technical instruction with the permission and help of their employers would not exceed 300 students in the whole of the province.

The Department of Industries has endeavoured to provide opportunities for Bengali school-boys, both literate and illiterate, to take up the technical and industrial line by means of technical schools in district headquarter towns. There are four such schools maintained by Government in Bengal and ten similar schools maintained by District Boards or Missionary bodies with the aid of grants-in-aid from the Department of Industries. In spite of these facilities, however, it must be confessed that technical education is not popular. The charging of fees in technical schools is objected to, and indeed, in many cases, students expect so-called scholarships or stipends in order to bribe them to attend such schools. This lack of appreciation of the value of technical education is partly due to the fact that technical schools are not given a comparable status with high English schools. Moreover, it is only recently that any attempt has been made to bring about a common curriculum and examinations in these technical schools, and to correlate their courses of instruction with the products of the ordinary educational system at its different stages. Lastly, it has to be said that although long standing prejudice against any profession involving manual labour is breaking down, the process has not yet gone far enough to bring a large accession into the ranks of industry of the enterprising and intellectual human material of the Province.

139. (iii) *Application of the Indian Factories Act to small Factories.*—In regard to the question of the applicability of the Indian Factories Act as amended in 1922 to small factories, I observe that in accordance with the definition of " factory " in Clause 2 of the amending Act :—

" (a) any premises wherein, or within the precincts of which, on any one day in the year not less than 20 persons are simultaneously employed and steam, water or

other mechanical power or electrical power is used in aid of any process for, or incidental to, making, altering, repairing, ornamenting, finishing or otherwise adapting for use, for transport or for sale any article or part of an article ; or

"(b) any premises wherein, or within the precincts of which, on any one day in the year not less than ten persons are simultaneously employed and any such process is carried on, whether any such power is used in aid thereof or not which have been declared by the Local Government, by notification in the local official gazette, to be a factory ;"

cover the conditions which constitute a factory. The Act as amended has I understand in practice not been made generally applied to concerns where the number of employees is less than 20, although the Act empowers Government to bring factories employing as low as 10 or more persons within its operation. Only in the case of a very few concerns where the employees have numbered less than 20 and more than 10 has the concern been declared to come within the operation of the Act, such action being taken mainly in order to remove doubt. It is, of course, common knowledge that there are many small industrial manufacturing concerns which should strictly come within the operation of the Amending Act, but regarding which, definite action has not been taken, for well understood reasons. Bringing a factory within the scope of the Factories Act brings in consequences such as employers liability under the Workmen's Compensation Act. It also involves imposing conditions on the concern in the interests of safety, etc., which from experience it can be said will never be reasonably carried out and perhaps it has been thought that until the general standard of employment in the smaller bazaar industries becomes more amenable to the kind of organization and control as is connoted by modern industry it is hardly practicable to enforce the Act in the case of the smaller industries.

As to the extent and number of the small cottage or bazaar industries which do not come within the provisions and inspection laid down in the Indian Factories Act on account of the limitation of numbers employed being below 20, it is difficult to give any reliable estimate. The Survey of Cottage Industries Report originally made in 1924 and revised in 1928, the second edition of which is just published, gives a conspectus of these various kinds of industries. Of all places in the province, Calcutta is the one place where such industries exist in the greatest numbers because of the availability of cheap electrical power. From the survey of such industries carried out by the staff of the Calcutta Corporation at the suggestion of this Department, it will be seen that the following small factory industries, amongst others, exist in Calcutta :—

|  | Concerns. |
|--|-----------|
| Hosiery .. .. .  | 16        |
| Ropes and cordage .. .. .                                    | 13        |
| Tanneries .. .. .  | 95        |
| Buckets and small hardware workshops .. .. .                 | 49        |
| Steel trunk factories .. .. .                                | 30        |
| Brass hinge making .. .. .                                   | 36        |
| Wire-netting weaving .. .. .                                 | 23        |
| Brass and bell-metal casting and polishing workshops .. .. . | 110       |
| Umbrella factories .. .. .                                   | 20        |
| Soap factories .. .. .                                       | 35        |
| Type foundries .. .. .                                       | 12        |
| Tobacco leaf pressing .. .. .                                | 20        |
| Oil mills driven by electric motors .. .. .                  | 16        |
| Oil mills driven by steam engines .. .. .                    | 43        |
| Oil mills driven by bullocks .. .. .                         | 29        |

Most of these—though not all—use some form of machinery driven by electricity or other motive power. There is no doubt also that the list is not exhaustive, and that there are many small shops and premises where electric driven flour-grinding mills, soda water bottling, small chemical industries, etc., are carried on which have escaped enumeration.

It is difficult to particularize, but having had occasion to visit many of these small concerns, the general impression retained is that the various industries are carried on, usually, in the most unsuitable cramped premises, with little provision for light and air, ventilation and sanitation, and in such a state of congestion and disorder that danger to human life is an imminent and constant environment to those who labour therein. From the point of view therefore of industrial efficiency, and more especially that of safety and decency in conditions of human labour, my own view is that as soon as practicable all such concerns should be brought within the Factories Act and subjected to the process of inspection by competent factory inspectors, and the necessity of making the conditions of labour a particular consideration in the management of the concerns.

Whether such a course is possible is mainly one of ways and means, as it will necessitate the attentions of an adequate factory inspection staff. Such an application

of the Act will also evoke opposition from the persons concerned as it will be alleged that such small industries have not the capital or resources to enable them to comply with the Factory Act provision, and therefore that such industries will have to close down. While this may be true in some cases, my own view is that the discouragement of the small and less well-conditioned industries in favour of the larger consolidated and better equipped concerns will give a balance in favour of the community as a whole, and will not ultimately lead to any unemployment of skilled workmen. Another alternative which has been mentioned is that the legislation covering municipal administration should be so co-ordinated with the aims of the Factories Act as to make it obligatory on municipal bodies not to give registration to these small industries unless some reasonable observance of the conditions laid down in the Factories Act is complied with. To my mind though the intention behind this suggestion is well meaning, inasmuch as it would simplify and confine the administration of the Factories Act proper, I feel that no reliance could be made upon the administration of municipal control in the manner desired. The necessary protection and guidance to the smaller industrial concerns can only come from inspection, and the advice of competent factory inspectors, and my considered opinion is that all such concerns should be brought within the operation of the Act, as now amended, as soon as ways and means make it possible.

Mr. M. BROOKS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE ANGUS CO., LTD.,  
CALCUTTA.

#### Period in Business and Local Conditions.

Angus Jute Works began operating in May, 1913. When construction work commenced in May, 1912, the land now owned by the company was chiefly jungle and paddy fields, with but a few small brick dwellings and thatched huts, and with narrow winding roads, difficult of passage during the rainy season, leading through the jungle to these dwellings. The company has had to provide all the conveniences usually provided by public bodies in other countries—roads, water supply, electric lighting, sanitation and sewage disposal, and in addition has carried out or paid for, improvements to public roads and provided a free water supply to occupiers of land in the vicinity. Through the operations of the company's medical staff, under our Chief Medical Officer, F. H. B. Norrie, M.D., Ch.M., F.R.C.S.(E), O.B.E., a notable work has been accomplished by reducing to practically nil the incidence of malaria within a district covering about 1,000 acres, including the company's 200 acres, and having a population of about 10,000. The company's dispensaries, hospital and women's clinic, with their staff of one European Surgeon, one Lady Doctor, five Indian Doctors, and their assistants, serve a much larger area, attendances numbering about 60,000 last year and increasing this year. Small fees ranging from four annas, to Rs. 10 for a major operation if the patient can afford to pay, are charged in the case of non-employees, medical service being free to employees of the company. Dr. Norrie, as a specialist in ear, nose and throat diseases, is also consulted by Europeans from Calcutta and other parts of India, and during the past two years has been permitted by the Company to supervise medical work at several other jute mills on the Hooghly within a few miles from Angus.

#### Nature of Business.

*Angus Jute Works.*—The chief business of the company is the manufacture of special quality jute cloth, the entire process from raw jute to finished material being carried out under one roof. The output of this jute mill, consisting of 1,196 looms and 22,576 spindles, and working 60 hours per week as at present, is about 75,100,000 yards of cloth per year, of which about 50,600,000 yards are known in the trade as hessian cloth and about 24,500,000 yards as sacking cloth. Measured in tons of 2,240 lbs., the usual basis for jute mill calculations, the year's production is about 26,930 tons, consisting of 14,690 tons Hessians and 12,240 tons sacking.

*Angus Engineering Works.*—The business of the company next in importance to the jute works is the manufacture at Angus Engineering Works of all the machinery required for jute mills. This engineering works, located at the same place as our jute works, was established on a small scale in 1917 and was extended to its present size in 1921. The output in a year is sufficient to equip completely, except engines and boilers, a new mill of 500 looms and 9,500 spindles. This is in addition to various classes of work done for railways and other industries. As in the jute works, the engineering works specialise in the highest quality of output, scientific control of materials and operations being aided by our metallurgical and chemical laboratory.



### Number Employed.

*Angus Jute Works.*—Including works office staff and crews of boats on the river, and excluding Calcutta office and welfare department staff, the total staff employed by the jute works is about 6,200. Of this number 22 are Europeans, and of the remainder only about 12 per cent. are Bengalis, 88 per cent. of the operatives being people of other provinces who come to Bengal for work in the jute mills and most of whom return to their native villages annually for several weeks, when perhaps another member of the family takes the place of the worker in the jute mill. Most of the Bengalis come to work daily from their homes in the district, while most of the workers from other provinces are housed by the company. More detailed information regarding our jute works employees and housing is given herein later on.

*Angus Engineering Works.*—Including office staff and launch crews, the total staff employed by the engineering works is about 2,000. Of this number 26 are Europeans. The majority of the Indian employees are Bengali mistris (artisans) living in villages in the surrounding district or within a few miles. Many of these are carried to and from the works daily in our launches and many travel daily by train, or by train and launch. Only a small proportion of the Indian employees of the engineering works are housed by the company.

With these introductory remarks we will proceed with our statement under those subjects, set out in the Schedule of Subjects supplied to us, in which our experience mainly lies. Unless otherwise noted in each case, the statements hereunder refer to our jute works only. The various parts of our statement are numbered to correspond with the numbers of the headings in the Schedule of Subjects supplied by you.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) As mentioned in the introductory remarks, about seven-eighths of the employees in our jute works come from outside provinces. The distribution by provinces, religion and sex of the total Indian employees of the jute works is as follows:—

| From                 | Hindus. |       | Mahomedans. |    | Totals. |     |       |    |       |     |
|----------------------|---------|-------|-------------|----|---------|-----|-------|----|-------|-----|
|                      | M.      | F.    | M.          | F. | M.      | %   | F.    | %  | Total | %   |
| Bengal (Local) ..    | 598     | 94    | 66          | 4  | 664     | 87  | 98    | 13 | 762   | 12  |
| Bihar and Orissa ..  | 1,713   | 183   | 1,507       | 25 | 3,220   | 94  | 208   | 6  | 3,428 | 56  |
| Central Provinces .. | 683     | 540   | 1           | —  | 684     | 56  | 540   | 44 | 1,224 | 20  |
| United Provinces ..  | 390     | 157   | 56          | 24 | 446     | 71  | 181   | 29 | 627   | 10  |
| Madras Presidency .. | 26      | 30    | —           | —  | 26      | 46  | 30    | 54 | 56    | 1   |
| Other Provinces ..   | 83      | —     | —           | —  | 83      | 100 | —     | —  | 83    | 1   |
| (Nepal 81)           |         |       |             |    |         |     |       |    |       |     |
| (Punjab 2)           |         |       |             |    |         |     |       |    |       |     |
| Totals .. ..         | 3,493   | 1,004 | 1,630       | 53 | 5,123   | 83  | 1,057 | 17 | 6,180 | 100 |

It is to be noted that only those women actually employed by the jute works are included in the above table.

2. (i) As near as we can estimate, about 13 per cent. of the labour from other provinces leave the jute mill each month, either with or without leave, and are absent for periods of several weeks, when it may be assumed that they have returned to their homes. The percentage is higher during the seasons of planting and harvesting, resulting in a shortage of labour at those times in many mills.

(ii) The Bengali employees, amounting to 12 per cent. of the total, may be considered as being the permanent labour force; although a large number of the workers from other provinces return to the mill yearly after their annual visit home.

3. No recruiting is necessary for Angus. The applications in person for employment are always in excess of the vacancies occurring, even during the seasons when labour scarcity may be expected.

8. For the purpose of these figures it is necessary to assume that an employee's service terminates when he leaves for several weeks' visit to his native village, although undoubtedly a large proportion of such persons ultimately resume their employment in the mill. On this basis the labour turnover (*i.e.*, actual changes in composition of the total labour staff) at Angus Jute Works average about 12½ per cent. per month, so that the average duration of employment is about eight months. The turnover varies with the class of labour and with the season, as shown hereunder:

LABOUR TURNOVER AT ANGUS JUTE WORKS.

July, 1928 to June, 1929.

| Department.       | Average number employed. | July per cent. | August per cent. | September per cent. | October per cent. | November per cent. | December per cent. | January per cent. | February per cent. | March per cent. | April per cent. | May per cent. | June per cent. | Average per month per cent. |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Batching .. .. .  | 384                      | 8.1            | 12.2             | 10.4                | 9.6               | 15.3               | 9.3                | 17.9              | 10.4               | 12.5            | 15.8            | 18.7          | 16.4           | 13.1                        |
| Preparing .. .. . | 978                      | 13.2           | 14.0             | 12.4                | 12.3              | 17.6               | 11.9               | 18.5              | 13.4               | 13.2            | 14.6            | 23.2          | 20.6           | 15.4                        |
| Spinning .. .. .  | 971                      | 18.2           | 15.8             | 9.8                 | 15.6              | 18.6               | 8.3                | 14.7              | 9.7                | 11.8            | 14.0            | 25.0          | 18.6           | 15.0                        |
| Winding .. .. .   | 435                      | 12.0           | 12.4             | 10.9                | 6.9               | 13.3               | 7.7                | 12.2              | 9.1                | 8.0             | 9.6             | 11.7          | 9.6            | 10.3                        |
| Beaming .. .. .   | 103                      | 5.7            | 8.9              | 7.1                 | 2.0               | 10.5               | 3.9                | 12.7              | 5.7                | 4.7             | 5.6             | 7.5           | 5.6            | 6.7                         |
| Weaving .. .. .   | 1,315                    | 17.8           | 24.7             | 20.0                | 17.3              | 26.9               | 10.3               | 15.1              | 17.7               | 17.6            | 19.6            | 21.0          | 19.9           | 19.0                        |
| Finishing .. .. . | 302                      | 12.1           | 14.4             | 9.5                 | 11.5              | 12.2               | 13.3               | 17.5              | 9.0                | 11.6            | 10.4            | 19.1          | 11.7           | 12.7                        |
| Sewing .. .. .    | 379                      | 8.5            | 9.5              | 8.0                 | 6.8               | 7.8                | 7.4                | 8.2               | 6.3                | 5.7             | 7.1             | 7.7           | 8.4            | 7.6                         |
| Baling .. .. .    | 35                       | 11.4           | 5.7              | 14.3                | Nil.              | 11.4               | 5.7                | 22.8              | 5.7                | 8.5             | 5.7             | 2.8           | 8.5            | 8.5                         |
| Mistris .. .. .   | 441                      | 2.5            | 1.1              | Nil.                | 1.8               | 3.1                | 0.6                | 3.8               | 2.5                | 1.8             | 3.9             | 4.1           | 2.5            | 2.3                         |
| Outside .. .. .   | 585                      | 0.9            | 1.4              | 1.0                 | 1.3               | 0.8                | 2.0                | 1.3               | 1.4                | 1.1             | 2.9             | 1.3           | 1.1            | 1.4                         |
| Overall .. .. .   | 5,928                    | 12.1           | 13.8             | 10.9                | 10.8              | 15.6               | 8.3                | 13.0              | 10.4               | 10.7            | 12.5            | 16.7          | 14.2           | 12.4                        |

For classification of labour in each department by province of origin, religion and sex, see table given in our reply to subject No. 10, "Details of Organization."

## II.—Staff Organization.

## 10. Indian staff classified by province of origin, religion and sex.

|             | Bengal<br>Presi-<br>dency. | Bihar<br>and<br>Orissa. | Madras. | United<br>Provinces. | Central<br>Provinces. | Other<br>Provinces. | Total. |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Hindu—      |                            |                         |         |                      |                       |                     |        |
| Males ..    | 598                        | 1,713                   | 26      | 390                  | 683                   | 83                  | 3,493  |
| Females ... | 94                         | 183                     | 30      | 157                  | 540                   | —                   | 1,004  |
| Mahomedan—  |                            |                         |         |                      |                       |                     |        |
| Males ..    | 66                         | 1,507                   | —       | 56                   | 1                     | —                   | 1,630  |
| Females ..  | 4                          | 25                      | —       | 24                   | —                     | —                   | 53     |
| Totals ..   | 762                        | 3,428                   | 56      | 627                  | 1,224                 | 83                  | 6,180  |

13. (i) Generally, relations seem to be satisfactory. Special personal attention is constantly being given by the officers of the company to the improvement of working and living conditions.

(iii) There are no works committees, as understood in Europe and America. The workers are divided by race, religion and district of origin into many groups having little intercourse with those of different race or religion. The solidarity of such a group from one small foreign district, and possibly connected more or less by family ties, is probably greater than that of a works committee in occidental countries. Public letter writers in the vicinity are supplied by the company with printed forms addressed to the head office of the company, so that any illiterate workman having a grievance which he feels has not received proper attention at the works, may bring his case directly to the notice of the managing director. Any such petition or complaint receives careful investigation and considerate attention, but most complaints are settled by the European staff at the works, who are instructed in the company's policy toward employees.

14. (ii) The actual payment of weekly wages is done personally by the European overseer in charge of each department, wages being handed by him to the employees in exchange for the wage tickets distributed to the workers earlier in the day by the Bengali clerks. These tickets have been made in the works office from the figures given in the above-mentioned registers.

15. The only work, other than building construction, done by contractors at Angus Jute Works is:—(1) Carrying of jute from tramway and railway wagons to godowns, and stowing in godowns, from godowns to the mill daily; (2) carrying of cloth from looms to finishing department; (3) loading of finished goods into railway wagons on siding and into our cargo boats at the jetty; (4) unloading coal from railway wagons on siding and carrying coal to boilers

## III.—Housing.

16. (i) (a) In addition to housing provided for the European staff, housing is provided in our coolie lines for mill operatives, also in our babu quarters and mistri quarters for a large number of our babus (Bengali clerks) and mistris (Bengali artisans). The company's total investment in housing for Indian employees, excluding land, is about Rs. 6,20,000. As both our jute works and our engineering works are located at Angus, the housing herein mentioned is available for use of the engineering works as well as the jute works. But as a large proportion of the engineering works employees are Bengalis living in their own homes in the district and outlying villages, practically all the accommodation in our coolie lines, and about half of that in our babu quarters, is utilised for our jute works employees. The mistri quarters are utilised almost entirely for engineering works employees. The babu and mistri quarters are used chiefly by those Bengalis whose homes are so distant that they visit their homes only at week ends, or less often.

(b) The number of dwellings provided, and the number of actual employees housed therein, apart from members of their families or others not employed by us, is as follows :—

| Class of quarters.                                 | Number of dwellings. | Number of rooms. | Number of employees housed. |
|--|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Coolie lines, in blocks of 20 to 36 rooms ..       | 1,496                | 1,496            | 3,760                       |
| Single-family type for Bengali clerical staff ..   | 39                   | 195              | 91                          |
| Two-family type for Bengali artisans ..            | 8                    | 24               | 15                          |
| Four-family type for Bengali artisans ..           | 32                   | 96               | 140                         |
| Two-family type for lady doctor and lady teachers. | 2                    | 6                | 2                           |
| Totals ..  | 1,577                | 1,817            | 4,008                       |

(c) A description of each class of quarters can best be given by building and site plans which can be supplied if requested. The general details are as follows :—

*General.*—All buildings are of brick, with exterior walls plastered and colour-washed, interior walls plastered and white-washed, the colour-wash and white-wash being renewed each year after the close of the rainy season. Coolie lines have sloping clay-tiled roofs. All other buildings have flat roofs of beaten concrete on two layers of flat tiles, supported on steel beams. All buildings are single storeyed in height, and all floors are brick and concrete, cement plastered.

*Coolie Lines.*—The last eight blocks built on this site contain 160 rooms, 20 rooms per unit, each room being 12 ft. long by 10 ft. wide by 9½ ft. high, with a roofed and semi-enclosed verandah 10 ft. long by 4½ ft. wide, with an improved type Indian style "chula" or cooking place built in a corner of the verandah and equipped with hood and chimney, and with a steel shelf 8 ft. long by 14 ins. wide built in the wall of the room.

The older blocks contain from 22 to 36 rooms per unit, each room being 9½ ft. long by 8½ ft. wide, by 9 ft. high, with a roofed open front verandah 9½ ft. long by 3½ ft. wide.

(iii) The housing provided or controlled by landlords in the vicinity of Angus for the accommodation of mill workers falls under two heads :—1st, that provided by the landlords themselves, and 2nd, that provided by persons who have taken land from the landlords as tenants-at-will. In both cases the type of construction and the surrounding conditions are the same. The walls are constructed either from mud plastered on a split bamboo framework, or are 5 in. walls of low quality brick held together by mud plaster or a binding of ashes and lime. The roofs are of thatch or tiles. The houses are built to occupy as much as possible of their respective plots of land, closely abutting or encroaching on public lanes which thereby eventually become so narrow as to permit the passage of only one bullock cart. Light, ventilation and sanitation are given little, if any, attention by the owners of the huts or by the landlords. The rooms are small, the object apparently being to crowd as many rooms as possible into one block or "busti," to spend the absolute minimum on construction and maintenance, and to extort the greatest possible amount from rental of the land to tenants, and from the rental by landlords and tenants of rooms to mill workers. The average annual rent paid by the "busti" owners to the landlords is Rs. 3 per cottah per year (Rs. 181-8 annas per acre), and the rent paid by the mill workers for one room is from Re. 1 to Rs. 3 per month, depending on the size of the room; whereas the rental of most rooms in the company's coolie lines is only 8 annas per month. The living conditions in such "bustis" are, to the Western mind, appalling and, at Angus, are only alleviated by the attention which the company's health officers give to private property in the vicinity free of charge. These conditions probably will continue until the large landholders, who never visit their holdings, acquire a better knowledge of the conditions and a greater sense of responsibility for them. Landlords, if so inclined, could do much to prevent the construction of filthy hovels, and the maintenance of insanitary conditions on their land.

(iv) The living accommodation being required chiefly by workers from other provinces, who have their homes there, no houses are built by the workers themselves except, in a few cases, by those who are able to rent a plot from the landlords and construct a "busti," as above-mentioned, for rental to others. In such cases the worker himself may occupy one or more rooms in the "busti."

17. Schemes for the further acquisition of land by the company, in order to eliminate the existing insanitary private "bustis" in the vicinity and to permit the opening up of roads by the company and the construction of additional and improved accommodation for employees, are completely blocked by the impossibility of obtaining the necessary land, either by private negotiations which have failed

or by the operation of the Land Acquisition Act, at a price which will permit proceeding with the scheme. We have offered in recent years for land in the locality, suitable for building quarters, at rates as undernoted, and for that reason it is unlikely that similar land could be acquired at any less figure even under the Land Acquisition Act.

|  | Rs.              |
|--|------------------|
| For the rights of the present tenants .. .. .                                | 2,500 per bigha. |
| For permanent leasehold from the landlords .. .. .                           | 500 "            |
| Plus annual rent of Rs. 25 per bigha which capitalized at 20 years' rent, is | 500 "            |
| Total .. .. .  | 3,500            |

As 3.025 bighas = 1 acre, this is Rs. 10,587 per acre, which, at 1s. 6d. per rupee, is £794 per acre for land 20 miles north from Calcutta and about a quarter mile inland from the west bank of the river.

18. (i and ii) Mill operatives would naturally prefer a separate walled or strongly fenced plot of land for each family, with a single family dwelling thereon which, to equal that to which they are accustomed in their own villages, need only be of bamboo and mud construction with thatched roof. Sufficient room on the plot for a small vegetable garden, and for the keeping of a cow or goats, would also be desirable. The provision of such accommodation by the mill company is impracticable in mill areas for the following reasons :

(1) The large number of workers to be accommodated, consequently the large area of land required, and the high cost of land near jute mills.

(2) The high cost of maintaining such dwellings in good repair, and, if a more permanent type of dwelling is provided, the high cost of constructing the required number of this type.

(3) The difficulty in and the cost of maintaining proper sanitary conditions over such a large area, among people whose customs are insanitary.

If land were obtainable to square the boundaries of a large irregular low-lying plot of land held by us adjoining our present coolie lines, we would proceed gradually with our scheme to raise the level of the land by excavating tanks, lay out roads, install a supply of tube-well water, a drainage and a sewage system, and construct a type of quarters more suitable for family occupation than our present lines, and distribute these buildings so as to give the maximum amount of land between houses.

(iii) *Provision made for Lighting, Conservancy and Water Supply*—(a) *Lighting*.—All coolie line roads and passages, and all buildings provided by the company for the use of workers living there, such as the market, school, mosque and tea shops, are lighted by electricity supplied from the company's power house. All other company quarters have electric lights in every room, and lighted roads, the current coming from the same source.

(b) *Conservancy*.—Except in the factory enclosure and the European residence enclosure, both of which places are served by the septic tank system, the effluent being filtered and chlorinated, all other company housing is served by ordinary privies. The night-soil is removed daily by the company's conservancy carts to the trenching ground provided by the company. The nearest municipal trenching ground is inadequate and at too great a distance for our use. Estimates are now being obtained from contractors for replacing the ordinary privies by a more modern sewage system which we expect to install shortly.

(c) *Water Supply*.—The drinking water supply at Angus for all company buildings and for many residents in the vicinity is supplied by the company from two sources, the two mains being connected to maintain good pressure at all points. The main source is the River Hooghly, from which water is pumped, treated with sulphate of alumina, passed through a sedimentation tank filtered by Jewell Gravity Filters having a capacity of 18,000 gallons per hour, and sterilized with chlorine gas by Wallace-Tiernan and Chlorodon apparatus. The other source of supply is a 5-inch tube-well 260 ft. deep, located in the coolie line area and having a capacity of 6,000 gallons per hour. The pressure in the mains is kept as constant as possible throughout the day and night. The coolie lines are supplied by 36 hydrants conveniently located. All other quarters are supplied with a tap inside each dwelling. The residents on private lands in the vicinity, and the general public, are supplied free of charge by 10 company hydrants located on public roads outside the mill premises. The company has also provided free of charge a 2-inch tube-well and pump for the inhabitants of a small village about three-quarters of a mile west from the mill office.

19. The accommodation is always fully utilized and, at the rates of rental charged, any further accommodation provided would no doubt be likewise fully utilized. Rentals do not cover even the interest and depreciation charges on the cost of construction.

20. *Rent Rates in Various Classes.—Coolie lines.*—Eight annas per room per month is the rate paid for practically all rooms in the coolie lines. The highest rate paid is twelve annas per room per month for 80 rooms in the four newer units isolated from the older and more congested area. Thirty-six rooms are occupied free of rent by the "methors" or sanitary squad.

21. Owing to the large number of workers living in the coolie lines, to the constantly changing tenancy, and to the fact that brothers, families or friends live together, although one may be employed by us and another by the adjoining jute mill, it is impracticable to restrict this housing to occupancy only by Angus employees. For the same reasons it is also very difficult to control the number of persons occupying one room at night. It is impracticable, and would naturally be resented, to demand admittance to a room at night in order to check the number of occupants. Estimates of the average number of persons housed in the coolie lines vary from 2½ to 4 persons per room.

#### IV.—Health.

23. (i) *Figures of Mortality.*—The figures for occupiers of the company's houses were as follows for the year 1928 :—

|              |    |    |    | Deaths. |          |         |
|--------------|----|----|----|---------|----------|---------|
| Class.       |    |    |    | Males.  | Females. | Totals. |
| Hindu ..     | .. | .. | .. | 25      | 13       | 38      |
| Mahomedan .. | .. | .. | .. | 7       | 3        | 10      |
| Totals ..    |    |    |    | 32      | 16       | 48      |

(ii) *Birth Rate and Infant Mortality.*—The figures for 1928, for the company's houses, were :—

|              |    |    |    | Births. |          |         |
|--------------|----|----|----|---------|----------|---------|
| Class.       |    |    |    | Males.  | Females. | Totals. |
| Hindu ..     | .. | .. | .. | 26      | 13       | 39      |
| Mahomedan .. | .. | .. | .. | 8       | 3        | 11      |
| Totals ..    |    |    |    | 34      | 16       | 50      |

|              |    |    |    | Infant Mortality. |          |         |
|--------------|----|----|----|-------------------|----------|---------|
| Class.       |    |    |    | Males.            | Females. | Totals. |
| Hindu ..     | .. | .. | .. | 8                 | 5        | 13      |
| Mahomedan .. | .. | .. | .. | 1                 | Nil      | 1       |
| Totals ..    |    |    |    | 9                 | 5        | 14      |

A whole-time vaccinator and registrar of births and deaths is employed by the company.

24. *Extent of Medical Facilities Provided*—(i) (a) *Staff organization.*—The company maintains the following whole-time staff for free medical service to employees, and for improving health and sanitary conditions in the district.

| Name.  | Branch of work.   |
|--|---|
| Dr. F. H. B. Norrie, M.D., Ch.M.,<br>F.R.C.S.(E.). | Chief medical officer.  |
| Dr. Miss G. Owen, L.S.M.F.P. . . . .               | Women and maternity clinic.   |
| Dr. J. N. Dutt, M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. . . . .       | General sanitation, anti-malarial squad,<br>bacteriological laboratory. |
| Dr. S. P. Chandra, M.B. . . . .                    | Tropical laboratory, skin diseases, an-<br>aesthetist.                  |
| Dr. Asanullah Ahmed, L.M.F. . . . .                | General dispensary, venereal diseases.                                  |
| Dr. J. C. Shaha, L.M.F. . . . .                    | General dispensary, eye diseases.                                       |
| Dr. N. L. Ghose, L.M.F. . . . .                    | Hospital, ear, nose, and throat, assistant<br>to C.M.O.                 |
| Miss S. Lala . . . . .                             | Trained midwife.  |

Three Bengali clerks; two Bengali electrical assistants; one Bengali laboratory assistant; two Bengali compounders; five Bengali dressers; one sanitary patrolman; 11 menials.

Anti-malarial squad :—One sirdar, 16 coolies.

(b) *Annual Expenditure.*—Excluding sanitation and conservancy, the total expenditure by the company during 1928 on health and welfare work, including Rs. 12,733 for interest and depreciation on capital invested in buildings used for this purpose, was Rs. 1,63,669. Against such expenditure the company receives annually the sum of Rs. 12,600, being the income from Angus preference shares left in trust for this purpose in 1917 by Mr. J. M. Bemis, since deceased, one of the founders and, originally, the largest shareholder in this company. The following additional receipts were applied against the above expenditure in 1928—

|   | Rs.   |
|---|-------|
| From non-employee patients, as fees and donations | 7,136 |
| From unclaimed wages at Angus Jute Works ..       | 1,141 |
| From fines for faulty work at Angus Jute Works .. | 2,412 |

(c) *Medical Equipment and Methods.*—The units composing the dispensary include the following departments:—General dispensary, tropical dispensary, eye, ear, nose and throat, venereal, skin, bacteriological laboratory. Electrical-X-ray, diathermy, ultra-violet light, ionization and massage. Operation theatre, women's outpatient clinic, maternity clinic, hospital.

All departments, except possibly the hospital, are well equipped and kept up-to-date. Most modern methods of treatment are available for employees and their families free of charge. Small fees are asked from non-employee patients.

An attempt has been made to establish the clinic system, each member of the staff having some special branch of work in addition to general duties. We have found his system to be of great advantage to both doctors and patients. Consultations on interesting cases are held regularly, attended by all concerned.

(ii) No medical facilities are provided by the Government in the immediate locality. However, there is a Government hospital at Chinsurah and another at Serampore, each being about 6½ miles from Angus, under the civil surgeon of Hooghly district stationed at Chinsurah.

(iii) Other jute mills in the district have dispensaries to serve their own employees and there are small municipal dispensaries about one mile from Angus, both north and south.

(iv) Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or "dais." (See (i) above and 25 (ii) below).

25. (i) The attendances at Angus dispensary during 1928 were as follows:—

*New Cases.*

| Origin.  | Number. | Percentage<br>of total. |
|--|---------|-------------------------|
| Angus Jute Works—Employees and families .. ..        | 11,019  | 55                      |
| Angus Engineering Works—Employees and families .. .. | 6,086   | 30                      |
| Non-employees .. .. .                                | 3,056   | 15                      |
| Total .. .. .  | 20,161  | 100                     |

*Total Attendances.*

| Origin.  | Number. | Percentage<br>of total. |
|--|---------|-------------------------|
| Angus Jute Works—Employees and families .. ..        | 33,133  | 55                      |
| Angus Engineering Works—Employees and families .. .. | 16,512  | 28                      |
| Non-employees .. .. .                                | 10,118  | 17                      |
| Total .. .. .  | 59,763  | 100                     |

(ii) (a) The attendances of women have increased quite recently owing to the addition to our staff of a lady doctor. The attendances of women during 1928, before this additional service, were as follows:—

*New Cases (Women only).*

| Origin.   | Number. | Percentage<br>of total. |
|---|---------|-------------------------|
| Angus Jute Works—Employees or families .. ..        | 1,301   | 55                      |
| Angus Engineering Works—Families of employees .. .. | 424     | 18                      |
| Non-employee families .. .. .                       | 659     | 27                      |
| Total .. .. .                                       | 2,384   | 100                     |

(b) A maternity clinic with outpatients' department has been operated since 1926. We experienced much difficulty in obtaining a suitable midwife and it is only since May, 1928, when we obtained Miss Laia from the Eden Hospital, Calcutta where she received her training, that consistent progress has been made with this work. In August of this year, Dr. Miss Owen was appointed to take charge under Dr. Norrie, of the medical work for women, and rapid progress in this department is already being recorded. Two untrained "dais" of the Chamar caste who practised their crude profession among our women workers, have been taken into this department for instruction and training as future assistants, thus becoming allies instead of unhygienic competitors in the work. The successful argument in winning them over was the offer of a fee of 8 annas for each case of theirs brought by them to our maternity ward for delivery, and they are now learning and appreciating the benefits of scientific supervision of childbirth.

26. (i) Latrine accommodation for operatives while at work in Angus Jute Works consists of—

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Three large septic tank latrines, each of the same type and capacity. |                             |
| Total capacity .. .. .  | 13,740 persons per day.     |
| Total seats .. .. .   | 540 (male 396, female 144.) |

At Angus Engineering Works the accommodation is—

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| One septic tank latrine. |                        |
| Total capacity .. . . .  | 2,000 persons per day. |
| Total seats .. . . .     | 44                     |

The effluent is filtered at each tank, then flows to a common sump, where it is treated by chlorine gas through a Wallace-Tiernan apparatus before discharge through an underground drain. The final effluent is tested twice a month in our bacteriological laboratory, and once a month by the Public Health Department, Government of Bengal.

(iii) (a) *Coolie Lines*.—There are four large bathing tanks excavated by the company in the coolie line area. One of these has brick walls on all sides and six brick bathing "ghats" or steps leading into the water. The other three have sloping natural banks on all sides. The larger of these three has three brick and cement bathing "ghats." All four tanks are inter-connected, and the renewal and circulation of water is effected by pumping in water from the river through a conduit of about half a mile in length. The surface of the water and the banks of the tanks are kept in clean condition by the sanitary staff and the anti-malarial squad.

(b) *Other Quarters*.—All other quarters for Indian employees have a bathing enclosure in each dwelling, provided with a filtered water tap.

(c) *Hydrants*.—It is customary for all filtered water hydrants to be used for bathing and washing. There are 36 of these in the coolie line area.

29. (i) There are no serious industrial diseases at Angus. There are numerous cases of engorgement of certain parts of the nasal passages, probably due to inhalation of dust in the batching department of the mill. Apart from some little inconvenience, this is a minor complaint.

In certain parts of the mill where workers handle jute treated with mineral oil and whale oil, a skin disease exists known as jute dermatitis, which is due to the sweat glands becoming clogged with oil and dirt. This disease could be avoided to a large extent by greater attention to personal cleanliness. In cases investigated the disease appeared about three months after the patient returned to work after a visit to his home province, and a similar period of leave at home results in a complete disappearance of the lesions.

(ii) *Cholera*.—During 1928 there were no cases of cholera in our coolie lines, with the exception of one imported from Howrah, although the disease was epidemic from March to May and again during October and November in neighbouring villages where about 250 cases occurred with 60 to 70 deaths.

The total anti-cholera inoculations carried out for the three years 1926–1928 were:—

|               |        |
|---------------|--------|
| 1926 .. .. .  | 474    |
| 1927 .. .. .  | 3,825  |
| 1928 .. .. .  | 5,836  |
| Total .. .. . | 10,135 |

Every effort is made to obtain prompt report of any case of cholera in the vicinity, and all cases are brought under treatment. All contacts and probable contacts are



inoculated immediately. We have no difficulty in persuading workers to be inoculated; in fact many ask to be done, as they are now beginning to appreciate the benefits conferred by protective inoculation.

The cases of cholera attended by our medical staff during 1928 were :—

|  |    |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|----|
| Angus Jute Works employees and families        | .. | .. | .. | 31 |
| Angus Engineering Works employees and families | .. | .. | .. | 5  |
| Non-employees                                  | .. | .. | .. | 45 |
| Total  | .. | .. | .. | 81 |

There was a very heavy death-rate from cholera in Bengal during 1928, and the value of inoculation was strikingly demonstrated by the absolute freedom from the disease of workers living in our coolie lines, while the epidemic was raging in the surrounding villages and on the other side of the Hooghly from Angus.

*Malaria.*—During 1928, apart from a few imported cases, there was no malaria among our employees living in quarters provided by the company. There were also but few cases in the neighbouring villages under treatment by our anti-malarial squad. In former years there have been many fatal cases of the pernicious type of malaria in these villages. In 1928 no case was reported, although the whole neighbourhood was under supervision to detect any occurrence of the disease. It would appear that malaria is well under control in the vicinity of Angus, and we may attribute this to the work of our anti-malarial squad, the recurring cost of which is only about Rs. 5,000 per year. We hold malarial surveys and take spleen indices twice yearly in the locality, and also supply coolies, trained in anti-malarial measures, to any of the neighbouring jute mills who apply for them.

The cases of malaria attended by our medical staff in 1928 were :—

|  |    |    |    |       |
|--|----|----|----|-------|
| Angus Jute Works employees and families        | .. | .. | .. | 713   |
| Angus Engineering Works employees and families | .. | .. | .. | 457   |
| Non-employees                                  | .. | .. | .. | 210   |
| Total  | .. | .. | .. | 1,380 |

*Hookworm.*—The number of cases found among our employees is not large. The total cases treated by our medical staff during 1928 were :—

|  |    |    |    |     |
|--|----|----|----|-----|
| Angus Jute Works employees and families        | .. | .. | .. | 51  |
| Angus Engineering Works employees and families | .. | .. | .. | 7   |
| Non-employees                                  | .. | .. | .. | 47  |
| Total  | .. | .. | .. | 105 |

*Small-pox.*—There has been no case in our coolie lines since 1926, although the disease has been more or less constantly present in nearby villages. Practically all children and adults living in our coolie lines have been protected by vaccination. Owing to the continuous influx and eflux of persons living there, it is necessary to have our vaccinator at work constantly. The total number of vaccinations carried out for the three years 1926–28 were :—

|       |    |    |    |    |       |
|-------|----|----|----|----|-------|
| 1926  | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6,214 |
| 1927  | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,187 |
| 1928  | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,042 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | 9,443 |

Of the 1928 vaccinations, 573 were primary and 379 secondary.

*Tuberculosis.*—During 1928 there were nine cases of pulmonary phthisis among employees residing in our houses. The number of phthisical patients from neighbouring villages attending our dispensary comprises a high proportion of the total cases treated, which for 1928 were :—

|  |    |    |    |     |
|--|----|----|----|-----|
| Angus Jute Works employees and families        | .. | .. | .. | 23  |
| Angus Engineering Works employees and families | .. | .. | .. | 11  |
| Non-employees                                  | .. | .. | .. | 70  |
| Total  | .. | .. | .. | 104 |

*Kala-azar*.—In 1928 there were no cases of this disease in our houses, and very few of those treated were from nearby villages. The disease seems to be checked, or is dying out in the locality. Most of the cases treated were from distant points, the total for 1928 being :—

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Angus Jute Works employees and families .. .. .        | 10 |
| Angus Engineering Works employees and families .. .. . | 7  |
| Non-employees .. .. .                                  | 41 |
| Total .. .. .  | 58 |

*Rabies*.—This disease is unknown in the locality, though elsewhere cases of dog-bite from suspected animals are of frequent occurrence owing to the large number of unlicensed and diseased dogs permitted to roam about. As an anti-rabic measure and to minimize the nuisance of pariah dogs, we carry on a continuous campaign against them ; 565 dogs were destroyed by our sanitary staff during 1928. Rats are also destroyed regularly.

*Other Tropical Diseases and Influenza*.—The number of cases treated by our medical staff in 1928 was as follows :—

| Origin.   | Influenza | Dysen-tery | Dengue Fever. | Leprosy | Filari-asis. |
|---|-----------|------------|---------------|---------|--------------|
| Angus Jute Works employees and families.        | 756       | 234        | 99            | 30      | 16           |
| Angus Engineering Works employees and families. | 430       | 125        | 47            | 14      | 9            |
| Non-employees .. .. .                           | 78        | 134        | 109           | 53      | 23           |
| Total .. .. .                                   | 1,264     | 493        | 255           | 97      | 48           |

31. (i) *Extent and Working of Existing Schemes (including Allowances given before and after Childbirth)*.—During 1921–23 we had a maternity benefit fund, but there were only two claimants. Our experience led to the conclusion that the payment of money before and after childbirth was of less benefit to the woman than obtaining her submission to proper medical supervision at childbirth. Much difficulty was experienced in persuading women to abandon the practice of calling in the usual ignorant low-caste dai or midwife, whose insanitary administration often causes the death of both mother and child. It is only recently that we have succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory and properly trained midwife and a lady doctor for our maternity clinic. On the 1st September this year a notice was posted in the jute works that no woman would be allowed to work therein during the period from one month before to one month after childbirth, and that full wages would be paid during such period of absence from work providing that the woman would attend our maternity clinic. This has resulted up to date (14th September) in bringing 18 cases of pregnancy under proper medical supervision. We are drawing up plans for a separate small hospital for women to improve and increase the existing facilities, and are embodying in the plans a creche for small children.

(iii) In considering any legislation on the subject of maternity benefits, it may be well to bear in mind that, unlike similar schemes in other countries, no subscription to the cost of such fund could be enforced or expected from the employee, and that the entire cost probably would have to be shared by employers and the Government.

#### V.—Welfare (other than Health or Housing, but including Education).

33. Apart from our chief medical officer, and several members of our European staff who work without remuneration in the interests of the various welfare activities at Angus the company does not employ a separate welfare staff.

34. (i) (a) *Refreshments*.—The company has provided in the coolie lines two Mahomedan and one Hindu teashops. These are rented to shopkeepers to operate under the company's supervision. Tea is also served to employees in the jute works during the morning and afternoon by the teashop staff.

(b) *Shelters*.—Practically all work is conducted under shelter.

(c) *Creches*.—We have none, but are now drawing up plans for one.

(ii) We have supplied an outdoor gymnasium in the yard of the boys' school, equipped with ladders, horizontal bar, parallel bars and Swedish horse. Mr. W. N. Hardy, of Angus Engineering Works, gives gymnastic instruction here to boys of the school and to a few young mill operatives. Mr. G. Williams, of Angus Jute Works, an ex-army non com., gives instruction in boxing to the Boy Scouts.

Two football grounds are provided by the company for the use of the Indian staff.

A tennis court is provided in the area of the Bengali clerical staff quarters for their use.

Many of the tanks existing on the company's land have been stocked by us with fish, and fishing with rod and line is permitted free to all employees. Netting is prohibited.

For the European staff a golf club house has been provided by the company, and the free use of a portion of the company's land for a nine-hole golf course. The staff, by means of golf membership fees, have themselves constructed and maintained the course. Several tennis courts and a bowling green are provided in our European residence compound.

Fortnightly cinema shows throughout the year are provided free by the company in the coolie line area, and are well attended by workers.

Radio receivers with loud-speakers have been installed by the company in the three teashops in the coolie lines.

(iii) (a) *Staff Provident Fund*.—The total membership of this fund is about 790 employees, and the total amount lying to the credit of members in the fund is about Rs. 8,22,000. Membership is open to all employees of the company drawing wages or salaries of at least Rs. 30 per month. Employees drawing less wages than this minimum are of the mill operative class, whose average duration of employment is eight months (see Subject 8 (i) herein), so that it is impracticable to admit them to the benefits of this fund. The objects of the fund are to encourage and assist the employee in making some financial provision for old age, disability, and the major calamities of Indian life, such as collapse of one's house (or the marriage of a daughter). The member contributes at least 5 per cent. of his salary each month and the company contributes the equivalent amount every half-year. The amount contributed during 1928 by the company free of income tax was Rs. 64,744, as against Rs. 46,744 contributed by members. Six per cent. of the company's contribution accrues to the member for each half-year of service with the company, but this provision is not strictly enforced, and the company's contribution, in the majority of cases, is paid in full to members leaving our service. Loans may be taken by members up to two-thirds of the amount of their own subscription, and this privilege is extensively used.

(b) *Clerks' Tiffin Fund*.—In the Calcutta office of the company it was found some years ago that the health of clerks suffered through abstinence from mid-day refreshment, and that the abstinence was due chiefly to the difficulty in obtaining near the office food of good quality at a sufficiently low price. A scheme was therefore put into effect at a cost of about Rs. 4,800 per year to the company, under which we contribute to the clerks' tiffin fund at rates depending on the salary of each clerk—the less the salary the greater the company's contribution in each case. About 60 clerks are employed, and the fund is managed by a committee elected from and by the clerks themselves.

(c) *Vernacular library*.—A library with about 900 volumes in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu is provided by the company for the free use of Indian employees. The library is located in a lower room of the clock tower in the coolie lines, and a whole-time librarian is employed.

(d) *Bazaar*.—A large market building is provided by the company in the coolie line area, containing shops and stalls for grain, foodstuffs, aerated water, clothing, and miscellaneous small articles used by the workers. Shops and stalls are rented to shopkeepers. The company endeavours to exercise control over prices and usury. If the conduct of a shopkeeper is the subject of complaints from our workers, and we are unable to remedy the condition otherwise, he is evicted after reasonable notice.

(e) *Mosque*.—A large mosque has been provided by the company for the Mahomedan workers.

(f) *Burial ground*.—A burial ground for Mahomedans has also been provided by the company.

(g) *Boy Scouts*.—The Boy Scouts movement was introduced by us in January, 1928, in connection with our Boys' School.

Total scout strength is 30, cub strength 41. The scout masters are employed by us as school teachers.

(h) *Girl Guides*.—Mrs. B. McDiarmid, wife of an assistant manager of our jute works, has been taking the course of training in Calcutta as guider, and the Girl Guide movement will shortly be started by her among the pupils of our girls' school.

(i) *Ice plant*.—An ice plant with a capacity of 4 tons per day is maintained by the company, the ice being supplied free of charge to employees.

(j) *Aerated water factory*.—A plant for the manufacture of aerated water has been provided by the company and is operated by the committee of the Angus Community Club, under agreement with the company that all profits are to be used for the benefit of employees. The product is purchased by our European staff. A shopkeeper in our bazaar provides aerated water for sale to Indian workers.

(k) *Angus Community Club*.—The company has provided for the European staff in their compound a building containing a library of about 4,200 volumes, a billiard room with two tables and a concert hall to seat about 150 persons. A librarian, a billiard marker and three menials are employed by the company in this connection. The affairs of the club are managed by a general committee, with sub-committees for entertainments, golf, tennis and the aerated water business. All expenses, other than building maintenance and the staff above mentioned are paid by the members of the club from the proceeds of membership fees and admittance fees to entertainments. Concerts, dances and cinema shows are held during the cooler months, and cinema shows during the hotter months. Entertainments are largely attended by Europeans from other places as well as by Angus Europeans.

35. The object of all the company's health and welfare work is to provide for employees the best working and living conditions possible in the industry. A very large share of the writer's time during his residence in India, which covers the entire period, with the exception of furloughs, from the clearing of jungle for the mill construction up to date, together with a corresponding amount of time and attention by all the administrative staff of the company, has been given to this object by the direction and desire of the chief shareholders, Mr. A. F. Bemis, a director, and Mr. A. V. Phillips, the chairman of the company. Much remains to be done, and no doubt members of the Commission can point out much that obviously should or could be done, towards raising the standard of living among the rank and file. It is for others than ourselves to judge what has been done, but we believe it has resulted to some extent in attracting to Angus a little higher grade of employees than the average in the local industry. This is more noticeable among the higher paid employees and less noticeable among the rank and file.

36. (i) Evening classes in elementary subjects are held for adults in our boys' school conducted by the three schoolmasters and attended as follows:—

| Class.                      | * Average number of pupils. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bengali and English .. .. . | 11                          |
| Urdu and Persian .. .. .    | 10                          |
| Hindi .. .. .               | 12                          |
| Total .. .. .               | 33                          |

(ii) We do not employ any half-time workers.

(iii) (a) A boys' school with three schoolmasters is provided by the company, day classes being held. The average attendance is—

| Class.                      | Pupils. |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Bengali and English .. .. . | 39      |
| Urdu and Persian .. .. .    | 32      |
| Hindi .. .. .               | 37      |
| Total .. .. .               | 108     |

(b) A girls' school with two Bengali lady teachers is provided by the company. The pupils attending are mainly Bengali girls. No girls attend after 12 years of age. There is a well-equipped Indian-style kitchen in a separate building attached to the school, where cooking lessons are given once weekly. Mrs. B. McDiarmid, wife of an assistant manager of our jute works, teaches knitting and supervises the sewing class, and other Angus European ladies assist by supplying sewing materials. Subjects taught are reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, music, drawing, physical

drill, outdoor games, and, in addition, to the senior standards, English writing and reading, Bengali literature, geography, dictation, knitting and hygiene. Total attendance is as follows :—

| Grades.              | Children of employees. | Children of non-employees. | Totals. |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| Junior Classes—      |                        |                            |         |
| A .. .. .            | 14                     | 3                          | 17      |
| B. .. .. .           | 5                      | 10                         | 15      |
| C. .. .. .           | 6                      | 2                          | 8       |
| Senior Classes—      |                        |                            |         |
| 1st standard .. .. . | 7                      | 4                          | 11      |
| 2nd .. .. .          | 7                      | 3                          | 10      |
| 3rd .. .. .          | 1                      | 1                          | 2       |
| Total .. .. .        | 40                     | 23                         | 63      |

(c) Plans are being made for another school to accommodate children of workers. A census of all children in our coolie lines this month (September, 1929) revealed the following figures classified to show the number of boys and girls not attending school at present, whose parents expressed willingness or unwillingness, respectively, to send the children to such a school if built. The census also shows the number of children under school age who, in addition to the infants in arms of employees living elsewhere, would possibly be benefited by the proposed creche.

*Abridged Census of Children in Angus Coolie Lines, September, 1929.*

|                   | Under 4 years. |        |        | 4 years and over. Willing. |        |        | 4 years and over. Unwilling. |        |        | Total Children. |
|-------------------|----------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|--------|--------|------------------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
|                   | Boys.          | Girls. | Total. | Boys.                      | Girls. | Total. | Boys.                        | Girls. | Total. |                 |
| Hindu .. .. .     | 67             | 63     | 130    | 104                        | 33     | 137    | 2                            | 67     | 69     | 336             |
| Mahomedan .. .. . | 22             | 25     | 47     | 45                         | 15     | 60     | 10                           | 26     | 36     | 143             |
| Total .. .. .     | 89             | 88     | 177    | 149                        | 48     | 197    | 12                           | 93     | 105    | 479             |

37. For the permanent staff it is possible to make provision for old age and premature retirement under such a scheme as our staff provident fund, which has 790 employee members, and which is described here under Subject 34 (iii) (a). For the majority of employees, whose average duration of employment is eight months, it does not appear possible at present to make such provision.

## XII.—Wages.

96. (i) The average earnings per week for each class of operatives inside the mill at Angus Jute Works is as follows, excluding Bengali Clerks, Mistris (artisans) and Europeans. There are no half-timers or children. All workers are employed for 60 hours weekly under the single-shift system. The number of women operatives in each department is shown in the table given under subject 10 (c).

## Weekly Wages at Angus Jute Works.

| Department and Class. | Number Employed. | Average Weekly Remuneration. | Department and Class. | Number Employed. | Average Weekly Remuneration. |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
|                       |                  | Rs. a. p.                    |                       |                  | Rs. a. p.                    |
| Batching (Sacking)—   |                  |                              | Brought forward 2,907 |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 17 12 11                     |                       |                  |                              |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 7                | 7 5 10                       |                       |                  |                              |
| Operatives ..         | 133              | 4 0 2                        |                       |                  |                              |
| Batching (Hessian)—   |                  |                              | Weaving (Sacking)—    |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 17 12 11                     | Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 32 10 2                      |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 11               | 7 10 11                      | Other Sirdars ..      | 17               | 15 8 5                       |
| Operatives ..         | 234              | 4 0 0                        | Operatives ..         | 322              | 8 10 3                       |
| Preparing (Sacking)—  |                  |                              | Weaving (Hessian I)—  |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 23 2 7                       | Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 35 5 7                       |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 39               | 8 12 5                       | Other Sirdars ..      | 31               | 14 15 4                      |
| Operatives ..         | 446              | 3 10 9                       | Operatives ..         | 546              | 8 2 2                        |
| Preparing (Hessian)—  |                  |                              | Weaving (Hessian II)— |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 22 13 11                     | Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 31 1 0                       |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 37               | 8 13 9                       | Other Sirdars ..      | 22               | 13 8 11                      |
| Operatives ..         | 472              | 3 9 10                       | Operatives ..         | 373              | 8 0 0                        |
| Spinning (Sacking)—   |                  |                              | Finishing—            |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 25 9 6                       | Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 10 14 0                      |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 38               | 12 1 10                      | Other Sirdars ..      | 13               | 7 1 9                        |
| Operatives ..         | 400              | 4 14 1                       | Operatives ..         | 250              | 4 8 5                        |
| Spinning (Hessian)—   |                  |                              | Machine Sewing—       |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar ..        | 12               | 6 1 6                        | Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 9 14 0                       |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 48               | 12 2 10                      | Other Sirdars ..      | 4                | 8 3 5                        |
| Operatives ..         | 494              | 4 13 5                       | Operatives ..         | 210              | 5 11 4                       |
| Winding (Sacking)—    |                  |                              | Hand sewing—          |                  |                              |
| Head Sirdar (Warp)    | 1                | 7 15 0                       | Head Sirdar ..        | 1                | 9 14 0                       |
| " " (Cop) ..          | 1                | 9 14 0                       | Other Sirdars ..      | 8                | 6 1 0                        |
| " " (Beaming)         | 1                | 8 14 0                       | Operatives ..         | 183              | 3 12 0                       |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 3                | 7 10 7                       | Cloth Examination—    |                  |                              |
| Operatives ..         | 202              | 5 14 9                       | Sirdar ..             | 1                | 9 3 0                        |
| Winding (Hessian)—    |                  |                              | Operatives ..         | 69               | 5 0 4                        |
| Head Sirdar (Warp)    | 1                | 9 14 0                       | Total .. .. 4,962     |                  |                              |
| " " (Cop) ..          | 1                | 10 2 0                       |                       |                  |                              |
| " " (Beaming)         | 1                | 13 6 0                       |                       |                  |                              |
| Other Sirdars ..      | 3                | 8 5 4                        |                       |                  |                              |
| Operatives ..         | 328              | 6 8 9                        |                       |                  |                              |
| Carried forward       | 2,907            |                              |                       |                  |                              |

## Summary.

Average Remuneration per person.

| Class.                   | Per week.  | Per month (4-1/3 weeks) |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 300 Sirdars .. .. .      | Rs. 11-7-0 | Rs. 49-9-0              |
| 4,662 Operatives .. .. . | Rs. 5-9-6  | Rs. 24-3-10             |

The wages paid to Indian employees at Angus Jute Works, working 60 hours weekly as at present, amount annually to Rs. 16,46,000 for weekly wages and Rs. 2,76,000 for monthly wages, total Rs. 19,22,000. Operatives' wage rates have for some years been reduced to their simplest form at Angus. For each class of work in

the mill there is only one wage rate per 60-hour week, which includes all extras customarily added separately as "khoraki," "50 per cent. war bonus," "electric light money," etc. There has been retained, however, a separate small bonus of 4 annas to 8 annas per week to time workers for good attendance, and a bonus system to piece workers for production in excess of a certain figure in each case.

98. The total amount of remittances by money orders through the Angus Post Office during 1928 was Rs. 3,88,797. We are informed by the Postmaster that practically the entire amount represents remittances home by jute mill operatives. The remitters were not all Angus employees, however, as this post office, together with the post office at Baidyabati, 1½ miles south, is used to some extent by workers in neighbouring mills. On the other hand, money may be taken home by a worker or sent by a brother worker returning home on his annual visit.

106. (i) The total wages paid to Indian staff at our jute works during 1928, when operatives were employed 54 hours weekly, amounted to Rs. 17,56,500. The total of fines deducted from wages during the same period was Rs. 2,412, or 137/1000ths of 1 per cent. of the wages paid. Fining is only resorted to in case of faulty work causing loss or damage. The average fine is about 4 annas, but may be as high as Re. 1 in the case of an artisan drawing Rs. 35 to Rs. 50 per month, depending on the extent of the damage.

(ii) There are no other deductions from wages at Angus, with the exception of the monthly subscription of provident fund members, and income tax in cases where the company is required by the income tax officer to make such deduction from salary.

(iii) All fines deducted from wages are credited to the welfare fund and applied against the expenditure of the health and welfare department.

107. (i) All wages to Indian employees at Angus Jute Works, with the exception of clerical staff and a few employees outside the mill, are paid weekly. Bengali mistris, or artisans, were formerly paid monthly as is customary elsewhere, but have been paid weekly since December, 1928. For the purpose of weekly wage payments the staff is divided into six sections as undernoted, the week ending on a different day for each section. Payments of wages occur consecutively on each working day of the week, so that the calculation and payment of wages is a continuous process.

*Programme for Weekly Wage Payments.*

| Section.                       | Wages paid on | For week ending on the previous | Unpaid wages in hands of company |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Spinning .. .. .               | Monday ..     | Thursday night                  | 1½ days.                         |
| Weaving .. .. .                | Tuesday ..    | Saturday noon                   | 1 day.                           |
| Preparing .. .. .              | Wednesday ..  | Saturday noon                   | 2 days.                          |
| Batching, Beaming and Winding. | Thursday ..   | Monday night                    | 2 days.                          |
| Finishing and Sewing ..        | Friday ..     | Tuesday night                   | 2 days.                          |
| Mistris and General ..         | Saturday ..   | Wednesday night                 | 2 days.                          |

The usual procedure in jute mills, and the procedure used at our mill before the above system was adopted a year ago, is to calculate wages in all departments for the week ending on the last working day of the calendar week, which is Saturday in the case of single-shift mills and Thursday or Friday in the case of multiple-shift mills. The labour of such calculation at one time, and the preparation of wage tickets, for several thousand employees is so great that wages usually are not ready for payment until the last working day of the succeeding week.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are kept for one year after the date they became payable. It is our experience that such wages are usually claimed within three months of issue and rarely claimed thereafter. At the expiration of one year, unclaimed wages are transferred to the credit of the welfare fund, and used for health and welfare work for employees. The total amount of wages lying unclaimed on 31st July, 1929, covering a period of one year previous, was only Rs. 1,137, or about 65/1,000ths of 1 per cent. of the total wages paid during the same period. The total amount lying unclaimed after one year, and thereupon credited to the welfare fund, was, for the same period, Rs. 1,115. During this period the programme of weekly wages payments, mentioned under (i) above, was introduced, and the shorter periods of time now elapsing before payment of wages has resulted in a noticeable reduction in the amount of unclaimed wages.

108. It is customary for mill operatives to obtain their food supplies on credit from the shopkeepers, who are also money-lenders. While we have no statistics of the extent of such indebtedness, we believe that the reduction of elapsed time before payment of wages tends to reduce the amount of the debt.

109. (a) A small weekly bonus for good attendance is paid to time workers, and a weekly bonus for production in excess of the fixed quantity is paid to piece workers at Angus Jute Works, but we consider this not as a bonus but as part of the weekly remuneration, the bonus being earned by practically all operatives.

(b) There is also a bonus on production paid to certain clerks and sirdars connected with the operation of some departments of the mill. This also is included in our table of wage rates given under subject 96 (i).

(c) We have a scheme drawn up for the payment of a monthly profit-sharing bonus to all Indian employees at the jute works, based on the profit, if any, made by the jute works during the preceding month and distributed in proportion to wages paid to each employee during that month. The scheme has not yet been adopted owing to the fear that a reduction in or failure to pay the bonus in any month, owing to decreased profits or a loss occurring, may be too difficult of comprehension to the ordinary illiterate mill operative, and may cause resentment and misunderstanding.

(d) A large share of the remuneration of the European staff directly concerned with the operation of our jute works, consists of a monthly bonus based on production. Claims, if any, against the company for any faulty goods are deducted from this bonus and are thus borne by those Europeans.

110. Leave is granted upon request to mill operatives, except in cases of incompetent workmen, who then leave without permission and toward whom we feel no obligation to re-employ if they return. Leave granted is evidenced by a leave ticket signed by the European overseer, and bearing the thumb impression of the worker impressed at the time leave is taken and again, for identification, upon his return. Such tickets, without means of identification, are often sold or transferred. Holders of leave tickets are, upon return, given first opportunity of employment to fill the vacancies occurring daily.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (a) On 1st July, 1929, all mills in the Indian Jute Mills Association, representing 97 per cent. of the total looms in Bengal jute mills, resumed working 60 hours weekly after having been working 54 hours since 1st April, 1921. The objects in so increasing production were to supply the world's increased demand for jute goods, and to bring down the price to a normal level, thereby tending to reduce the increasing danger to the industry in Bengal through competition from new jute mills on the Continent and elsewhere, which were encouraged by the high level of prices existing last year.

(b) In the case of Angus Jute Works, where wage rates were on the simplest possible basis, the alteration in working hours simply meant that workers were employed for 60 hours instead of 54 hours, both time workers and piece workers receiving exactly proportionate increases in weekly remuneration, and piece workers receiving a slight additional benefit, amounting to a total of less than Rs. 90 per week for the entire staff, owing to no change being made in the fixed task for 54 hours work, beyond which bonuses were paid for excess production. (There are no deductions from piece workers' wages for producing less than the fixed task; the same rate per piece is paid for all pieces produced up to the fixed task.)

(c) Dissatisfaction occurred among the workers in some mills over the question of "khoraki" and the alteration of the piece workers' fixed task in proportion to the increased working hours, and by the 15th August about 60 per cent. of the total looms in mills were stopped at one time by labour trouble. Certain persons became active immediately in encouraging the spread of the trouble from the two or three mills where it originated, until practically all mills were closed for various periods at some time from early in July to the 23rd September. We attach herewith translations made by our Indian staff of three vernacular leaflets widely distributed in mill areas during the trouble. (See appendices.)\*

(d) Angus remained unaffected until 19th August, when about 50 weavers stopped their looms and ran about shouting to others to stop work. The disturbers were successful in bringing out the weaving department and, with one department in the mill stopped, no other department can continue running. Every effort was made by the management to ascertain what demands or grievances the weavers wished to present for attention. No demands were presented to us by anybody before the trouble, and none were forthcoming as a result of our interviews with large groups in the coolie lines except a few scattered demands for 25 per cent. and 75 per cent. increase in wages and 3 months' leave to be granted every year. An attempt to restart the mill three times during the succeeding few days resulted in most of the

\* One printed.



male workers in other departments being present, but weavers remained out and women were afraid to come to work for fear of molestation. We were told by some of the weavers that if they resumed work they would be visited by bands of hooligans from other areas on strike, and would have half their beards shaved off, which is a crowning insult to Mahomedans, the beard having religious significance. The district authorities posted a large body of police for the protection and assurance of the large majority who desired to work. By the end of the week the excitement had subsided and all workers resumed work on Monday morning, 26th August. No increases in wages were given during or after the trouble. All increases granted by other mills as a result of the strike had already been incorporated in the wages rates at Angus on 1st July, when we began working 60 hours weekly.

*Appendix C.*

7th September, 1929.

*Translation of Urdu, Hindi and Bengali Leaflets being distributed in mill areas.*

**BENGAL JUTE WORKERS UNION.—NOTICE No. 1.**

*Be careful of Capitalists—Request to Labour Brothers (Friends).*

Dear Brothers :—Looking at your unity and the wonderful enterprise of Mother Provabati Dasgupta, the eyes of the capitalists and millowners have been opened. They have now come to realize that three lakhs of labourers and artisans being united have the capacity and are in a position to remove their own troubles and difficulties. Your peaceful Hartal (strike) and picture of unity poking at their eyes like pins. They are now endeavouring to make a breach among the labouring and craftsmen classes. This is her order and request that you should work quietly *for three months*. In the meantime you should inform your grievances at the Titaghur Union office or you should bring it to the notice of Mataji's (Mother Dasgupta's) office in mill areas and of other places. Gourepare, Titaghur, Jagatdal, Kankinara, Telinipara and in other places union offices have been opened.

Dr. Provabati Dasgupta is the father and mother of the poor. You know perhaps that in the last strike of Methars and Dhangars she undertook so much untiring trouble for their cause which achieved success in the long run. She is trying her level best to remove your miseries. In order to make a dis-union and complications amongst you, the capitalists and millowners are trying in various ways. Their men are distributing notices in every mill and they have taken up many youths to their sides. Be careful not to believe in the least their notices and preaching. You should try to remove your troubles quietly. You should inform your grievances verbally or in writing to local union office. In emergent cases you should inform your grievances in person to the president of the union (Mother Provabati Dasgupta), Head Office of Bengal Jute Workers Union, at No. 1, Antony Bagan Lane (near Raja Bazar Tram Depot), Calcutta.

There are twelve departments in each mill. From each department you should select one honest man (whom you can trust) and send the names of such twelve men to the head office. It has been estimated more than enough that the prestige of three lakhs of men have been saved in such a bad time. Besides that you shall have to remember the comforts and conveniences of your peasant brothers. You should mind also that they may not be put into inconveniences and difficulties for your cause. The capitalists are profited in both ways. During Hartal the price of jute comes down and they used to store jute to the value of several millions. On the contrary, they are also profited if Hartal fails. Consequently, it would be better for your peasant brothers if you continue to work instead of Hartal. We hope that you should go through this notice patiently, and should be read to your other brothers, and it is also hoped that it will not be difficult to attain your aim if you continue your work quietly.

Vice-President : Narendra Nath Chatterjee.

General Organizing Secretary : Nripen Choudhury.

Titaghur Group : Nripen Choudhury.

Secretary of Budge-Budge Group : Panchanon Babu.

Titaghur : K. Ahammad.

Shamnagar—Secretary : Nando Kisore Sarma.

Kankinara—Secretary : Mahammad Siddik.

General Secretary : Bakar Ali Mirja.

Barrackpore Group—Secretary : Kali Banerjee.

Hooghly-Chinsurah Group—Secretary : Ramlagan Parsad Jaswal.

Kamarhatty Agarpura—Secretary : Ronjoy Mukhopadhyay.

Kamarhatty Agarpura—Asst. Secretary : Ramgopal Bhattacharjee.

Jagatdal—Secretary : Samu Mia.

Gourepare—Hazinagar—Secretary : Bibhu Banerjee.

MAJOR-GENERAL G. TATE, I.M.S., SURGEON-GENERAL WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

The problems presented in enclosure 2, para. IV—Health, more nearly concern the public health department than mine, and I take it that, so far as I am concerned, what the commission requires is information regarding the supply of medical men in Bengal.

2. There are 5,778 medical men registered in Bengal, and their distribution is roughly as follows:—

|   | Graduates. | Licentiates. |
|---|------------|--------------|
| In Calcutta .. .. .   | 1,136      | 292          |
| In district headquarters towns .. .. .                        | 257        | 362          |
| In district board and other local bodies dispensaries .. .. . | —          | 1,196        |
| Health department .. .. .                                     | 14         | 145          |
| Railways .. .. .  | 145        | 185          |

The remaining number find employment in tea gardens, mills, factories, shipping companies, etc., and a few only seek practice in rural areas.

The average number of students who pass out yearly from the medical colleges and schools in Bengal is:—Graduates, 187; Licentiates, 260; total, 447. When the four new medical schools come into existence—two of these are under construction—there will be an average of over 550 newly qualified medical men turned out yearly by our teaching institutions.

There can be no question that the supply even now exceeds the demand. I should like to make it quite clear that I do not refer to the *needs* of the province which are great, but there is no general *demand* at present for skilled medical assistance so far as the rural areas are concerned, and to a lesser extent I believe the same holds good in the case of the industrial population. The Khabiraj, the Vaid and the Hakim still more than hold their own against the exponents of western scientific medicine, and education is, I believe, the only real remedy, although a certain amount could be done by propaganda. So far as medical aid is concerned there is therefore no lack of medical men on whom to draw. Anything in the nature of a panel system would be a god-send and help to save a situation which is rapidly becoming a serious one.

3. Bengal is exceedingly backward so far as rendering of medical aid to women is concerned. The sadar hospitals situated in the headquarters of districts have as a rule women's hospitals attached to them, but in few of these is there any maternity or real gynaecological work done, and as often as not the women's hospital simply becomes a female ward of the sadar hospital in which ordinary medical and surgical cases are treated. Few of the sadar hospitals provide any nursing for the patients, and only in Calcutta, Dacca, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Mymensingh is any training of nurses attempted.

The number of nurses who complete their training annually is:—senior nursing certificates and junior nursing certificates, 43; midwives, 56.

The sources of supply of nurses are limited to Anglo-Indians—who supply by far the largest number—Indian Christians and girls from the hill tracts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. So far, better class Bengali ladies have not entered the fields of nursing, except in purdah nashin institutions in Calcutta. A few male nurses are trained at the Carmichael hospital. Supply and demand so far as they relate to nurses fairly balance each other, but again it is necessary to distinguish between the needs of the province, which are great, and the demand which, in the rural areas, is practically non-existent.

Mr. M. DALMIYA, SECRETARY AND GENERAL MANAGER, KESORAM COTTON MILLS, LTD.

I.—Recruitment.

1. Up to June, 1929, the Kesoram Cotton Mills were worked on single-shift system and the labour force numbered about 4,500. But since July, 1929, double-shift working has gradually been introduced in some of the departments, and, therefore, the number of workers has at present increased to a total of about 6,500. This will further increase when all the departments will be run on double-shift system. The total number is composed of approximately as follows:—Men, 5,750; women, 600; children, 100. Total, 6,500.

Out of this total number of 6,500 workers, about 5,000 are those who have migrated from other provinces and the remaining 1,500 only are local. Most of the workers come from Behar, Orissa, Central Provinces, Madras and United Provinces. The weavers are generally Mohammedans, both local and up-country, and a large portion of the spinners are Uriyas.

(ii) The main causes of migration from distant provinces and villages are want of local employment, failure of crops and famine. These causes lead people to go to industrial centres to seek for employment in mills and factories. When they get employment and earn good wages they induce their friends and relations also to come and work in the mills.

(iii) Labour from outside provinces are coming to Calcutta in increased numbers.

2. (i) Among the migrated workers about 80 per cent. have contact with villages. They periodically send money to their village homes and go there every 8 or 10 months for 2 or 3 months.

(ii) Besides the local labour of about 1,500, a number of the migrated labour are also settling down in the locality. Though, of course, it is difficult to give the exact number, still the total of 2,500 would be a fair estimate.

3. (i) There is no direct recruitment on the part of the company. Different sardars get men from their different provinces and communities, mostly from their own villages and neighbourhoods. Poor, ill-fed villagers, hearing of jobs fetching good wages, come to the sardars for employment of their own accord, when the sardars go to their village homes. The sardars bring them down and get them admitted into the mills.

(ii) *Possible improvement.*—I have got no suggestion to offer on this head.

(iii) Public employment agencies, if established on proper lines and under official supervision may be useful both to the employers and the workers. They will be able to find right type of workers for the mills and factories, and also right type of jobs for the men.

4. There is no denying the fact that family life among the workers is disturbed to some extent as a result of their contact with modern industrial city life. But it is very difficult to give accurate information on this point. In some cases wives are left behind at village homes, and husbands working in mills either take fresh wives and settle down or become addicted to vices and never go back to their families. Sons who go to work in the mills or factories, leaving aged and dependent parents behind in village homes, do not in some cases take any further notice of their poor parents and settle down permanently in the cities where they work. These are some of the effects of disturbance of family life.

7. The question of unemployment does not concern us, as we are mostly short of the required number of workmen and there is never any excess.

8. (i) The average duration of employment is about nine months.

(ii) There is hardly any casual employment in our mills.

(iii) (a) Nearly 8 per cent. of the workers absent themselves from work. Some of them do so with permission, but most of them without permission of or notice to the proper authorities. Causes of absence are illness, domestic festivities, return to villages, etc.

(b) The workers absent themselves mostly in the latter part of the summer season and during the rainy season. Some absences are caused by epidemics.

(c) Three days in a month are lost in time and Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 in wages.

9. *Apprentices Act, 1850.*—It is a dead letter so far as we are concerned.

## II.—Staff Organization.

10. *Details of Organization—Administrative and Departmental.*—*Administrative.*—Managing agents, secretary and general manager, assistant secretaries, manager, head clerk, under staff.

*Departmental.*—(a) Weaving department—Chief weaving master, assistant weaving masters, departmental assistants, head jobbers, line jobbers, weavers, fitters, vicemen, carpenters, coolies.

(b) Spinning department—Spinning masters, departmental assistants, head jobbers, head mistries, assistant mistries, line mistries, head winders, doffers.

(c) Engineering department—Chief engineer, electrical engineer, assistant engineers, overseers, head mistries, assistant mistries, head carpenters, carpenters, coolies.

- (d) Workshop—Officer-in-charge, head mistry, mistries, mechanics, coolies.
- (e) Machinery overhauling department—Erection officer, head fitters, assistant fitters, mistries.
- (f) Cotton department—Cotton expert, departmental assistant, under staff, sardar, coolies.
- (g) Stores department—Storekeeper, departmental assistant, under staff, coolies.
- (h) Timekeeper's department—Head timekeeper, assistant timekeeper, departmental timekeepers, office staff.
- (i) Medical department—Resident medical officers, head matron, sanitary inspector, compounders, dressers, nurses, ayahs.
- (j) Dye house department—Dye master, departmental assistants, head mistry, under staff, workers.
- (k) Warehouse department—Officer-in-charge, departmental assistants, warehouse man, under staff, workers.
- (l) Efficiency department—Officer-in-charge, assistant, under staff.
- (m) Watch and ward department—Superintendent, jamadars, darwans.

11. Managing staff are selected from experienced and expert candidates obtained through newspaper advertisements or on recommendation of well-known men in the line, and also promoted from assistants on merit.

12. (i) Supervising staff, both superior and subordinate, are partly selected from outside candidates and partly obtained through promotion of apprentices and talented and skilled workers.

(ii) There is no special arrangement for training of workmen. Those who have some intelligence and a natural inclination to learn, get trained up in the course of their actual employment. There is every facility for promotion. A worker can rise to the post of a head jobber, fetching a salary of from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 per month.

13. (i) Relations between staff and rank and file of the workers are generally cordial—though occasion sometimes arises when they become strained. But such occasions are very rare.

(ii) Jobbers are a lot of very skilled people whose employment is valuable for all purposes, though sometimes they create trouble among the workers by ill-treating them and exacting illegal gratifications from them.

(iii) *Works committees : their constitution, extent and achievements.*

(iv) *Works councils and industrial councils.*—The existence of any of the above bodies are not known to us.

14. (i) Registers are kept by the timekeepers of different departments and checked by the head timekeeper and his staff. Different departments have got different tokens and each worker must possess one, with his number stamped on it. At the commencement of every shift, the workers, as they come in, produce their tokens before the departmental timekeepers and he notes the attendance against their names. A daily abstract of attendance is sent to the head timekeeper's office from each department.

(ii) Wages tickets are prepared by the departmental timekeepers and checked by the head timekeeper and his staff, which are then distributed to the workers. Wages are actually paid to the workers by specially deputed officers on production of wage tickets.

15. There is no contract system of work in these mills.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) Housing is provided by the employers to the extent of 35 per cent.

(ii) None by Government or other public agency.

(iii) Private landlords provide housing to the extent of 55 per cent.

(iv) Workers themselves provide 10 per cent.

17. There are absolutely no facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses. Government is indifferent in these matters and no help has so far been received from that quarter in this respect. Housing is a great problem with the employers and it is impossible to get land in the neighbourhood at a reasonable price for building workers' houses. Therefore, it is most desirable that there should be legal facilities for acquisition of land for this purpose.

18. The workers' demands in the way of accommodation are very moderate. They are satisfied if they can get pucca rooms to live in and adequate arrangements

for latrines and water supply. The accommodation provided by the owners meets all these demands of the workers. The accommodations provided by the private landlords and workers themselves are mostly ill-ventilated kutchas houses.

(ii) Though none of the different classes of accommodation is ideal from the health point of view, yet the lines owned by the company are a little better than those provided by private landlords. They are cleaner and kept in better repair.

(iii) The company has made adequate arrangements for lighting, conservancy and water supply in the lines owned by them. The lines are lit by electricity and provided with service privies. Drinking water is obtained from Calcutta Corporation and supplied from reserve tanks. Ganges water is supplied through pipes for washing purposes. In the privately-owned lines the water supply is obtained mostly from wells and partly from street hydrants. Service privies are provided, but there is no adequate lighting arrangement.

19. The workers utilize available accommodation to its utmost capacity.

20. The company charges a nominal monthly rent of from 8 annas to 14 annas per room. The private landlords charge Rs. 2-8 annas to Rs. 3-8 annas per room.

21. No case of subletting of quarters in the company's lines has come to the notice of the management. The company is extending its coolie lines and pending completion of the building work has lately rented some houses in the locality and sublet them to the workers at half the rent they are paying to the landlords. Occupation of company's houses by outsiders is not allowed, and there has been no necessity of evicting workers from the lines.

22. The moral effect on the workers of industrial housing conditions has been of a mixed type—both good and bad. Working together and living in very close proximity to each other, the workers have learnt the value of co-operation and mutual help and also it has to some extent slackened the rigidity of social customs of different castes and sects. On the other hand, for the same reasons, there is some amount of mixing up of sexes, which leads to sexual irregularities and their consequences. This is inevitable under the present circumstances. Spread of education and better housing conditions may improve matters—but both these depend on Government action.

#### IV.—Health.

23. The general health conditions of the workers of these mills are fairly good.

(i) and (ii) We are not in a position to furnish details of births and deaths among the workers, as no registers are kept. The mills being situated within the municipal area of the Calcutta Corporation and that body keeping regular birth and death registers, no special register for the mills seemed necessary.

(iii) (a) Working conditions at work places are certainly better than they could possibly be at the workers' village homes. The mills are situated on the bank of the river and are composed of pucca buildings. The workers get better houses to live in at working places and purer water to drink. They are better protected from rain and sun and get better medical help when ill.

(b) At their village homes, the workers, who are mostly cultivators or day labourers, live mostly in kutchas insanitary houses, work under the scorching sun and in the pouring rains and drink filthy water. In most villages medical help is not available. Of course their open-air life in the villages saves them from some of the diseases that people of the cities are liable to suffer from.

(iv) Dietary varies according to race, and climate of the province the workers come from. But the main articles of food are rice, atta, dal, vegetables and fish. The Mohammedan workers take meat occasionally.

(v) Physique varies according to race and province the workers come from. Those coming from up-country are sturdier than the Bengalis, Uriyas, and Madrassis.

(vi) *Effects of disturbance of Sex Ratio in Industrial Cities.*—The effects are—(a) a certain amount of disruption of family life, (b) moral depravity among a certain percentage of workers and (c) prevalence of venereal diseases and consequential breakdown of health.

(vii) There is close relation between housing and mortality. It is generally seen that mortality is higher, in damp, dark and ill-ventilated quarters.

24. (i) The company has got in their service two medical graduates of the Calcutta University as resident medical officers and also passed compounders and dressers to look after the medical needs of their employees. There is a well-equipped dispensary in the mills, which contains, along with other things, a big ultra-violet-ray apparatus, and the workers are given free treatment and medicines. Those who are too ill to come to the dispensary are attended to at their houses by the resident medical officers free of charge. During epidemic periods the company engages

additional medical officers to render adequate medical aid to the millhands and their families. The workers who get injured while working in the mills not only get free medical treatment and medicines but are also supplied with special sick diet by the company according to medical advice.

The company has a scheme in hand for the establishment of a hospital and preliminary work for it has already begun. Pending completion of the hospital building temporary arrangements have been made to take in a few emergency cases as indoor-patients. A maternity home on a small scale and a baby clinic, with a children's creche attached, have lately been started.

(ii) There are Government hospitals in Calcutta where workers are admitted, but all of them are at a considerable distance from our mills and accommodation in them is not quite adequate.

(iii) The Corporation of Calcutta supply prophylactic vaccines for cholera and small-pox during epidemic periods only and their paid mid-wives render help to the female workers free of charge if called in. There are a few private practitioners also in the locality, but they, of course, are not available free of charge.

(iv) The company has lately engaged a lady medical officer, who is fully qualified in maternity and baby clinic work and placed her in charge of those departments. She has some trained dais and nurses under her. As stated under item (iii) there are also corporation midwives who render free help to the women workers if called in.

25. (i) Utilized to the full extent by all male workers.

(ii) The women also take medical help for ordinary diseases to the extent of 75 per cent. But they decline to receive medical aid from male doctors for female diseases.

26. (i) (a) In the mill compound there are two septic tank latrines for workers and, of course, separate arrangements for males and females. Officers of the public health department of the Government of Bengal take the filtered and unfiltered effluent from the septic tank latrines every month, get them chemically analysed and send us a report on the result of the examination. (b) The workers' houses, both in the company's lines and private landlords' lines, are provided with service privies. The sewage is disposed of by the sweepers of the Calcutta Corporation.

(ii) There are 21 reserve tanks for drinking water in the mill compound, the capacity of each being 400 gallons. The Corporation of Calcutta supplies filtered water daily by a steamer and the water is stored in the tanks. Workers get their drinking water from these tanks. But those living in the houses of private landlords get their drinking water supply from the Corporation street hydrants or water lorries.

(iii) The water of the river is used for bathing and washing purposes, both in the mills and in the attached coolie lines. The company has laid out pipes to carry the water to different places. Separate sanitary baths for males and females, fitted with water taps and shower baths, have been provided in the mills. Water supply in these baths is continuous. The workers living in outside lines use well water or street hydrant water for bathing and washing purposes.

27. (iii) *In Mill and other Industrial Areas.*—The only official supervision as regards health of the workers, is done by the health department of the Corporation of Calcutta and practically confined to vaccination against small-pox and cholera inoculations when epidemics are apprehended.

29 (i) No disease has been noticed among the workers of the cotton mill which can be regarded as peculiar to the industry.

(ii) A few cholera cases occur during the summer months and malaria prevails in a mild form in the latter part of the rainy season. Hookworm cases do not occur, but two or three cases of Kala-Azar in a year and some cases of dysentery occur among the workers.

30. *Sickness Insurance*—(i) *Suitability of International Labour Convention.*—Not suitable for India.

(ii) *Possibility of introducing other systems.*—A special scheme suitable to Indian labour conditions may be formulated. Though the measure is desirable, it is doubtful whether it is possible at this stage.

31. Liberal provisions have been made by the company for maternity benefit. The company pays a cash gratuity of Rs. 10 to all prospective mothers with continuous service of three months or more and grants 15 days' leave with full pay to those with continuous service up to six months, and a months' leave with full pay to all those with continuous service of seven months or more. Cash gratuities are paid before the parties go on leave and the leave allowances are paid when they rejoin duties, if within four months from the date of the sanction of the leave.

**V.—Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).**

32. (i) The company is taking keen interest for the welfare of the workers in all departments of their life, viz., health, sanitation, morality, education, etc., as will be evident from the answers on the other points in this section.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—Nothing.

33. The company has a welfare officer under its employ, whose only duty is to look after the welfare of the workers, to enquire about their difficulties and to bring them to the notice of the authorities for redress ; to organize amusement for the recreation of the workers, etc.

34. (i) A big shed is in course of erection, which when completed will provide the workmen with shelter to spend their off-time in leisure and which will also serve as an auditorium for the amusements.

A children's creche has lately been opened under a qualified matron and an adequate number of ayahs has also been appointed to help her. Toys have been provided for the children to play with, and milk and sweets are given to the children at the company's expense.

(ii) The company encourages physical culture among the workers and has provided two wrestling grounds (*akhras*), one within the compound and the other in the coolie lines. These *akhras* are furnished with Indian clubs and dumb-bells. Competition in physical feats are held from time to time and prizes awarded to the deserving athletes.

The company owns two complete outfits of bioscope machines of the latest type and shows cinema pictures to the workers every week-end, weather permitting, within the mill compound. Theatrical and Jatra performances are also occasionally arranged for the amusement of the workers. These cinema shows and other performances not only provide the workers with healthy and innocent amusement, but help to keep them away from Toddy shops, gambling dens and other allied mischiefs.

(iii) Lantern lectures on health, sanitation, etc., are arranged occasionally to impart knowledge to the workers on these vital subjects.

The company has established a small bank in the mills where money is lent to the workmen at an interest of from 9 per cent. to 12 per cent. per annum. The workers were in the habit of borrowing money from money-lenders paying interest at the rate of 2 annas to 3 annas per rupee per month. The establishment of the bank has saved the simple workers from the clutches of the bazaar shylocks.

(b) *By other agencies.*—Nothing.

35. Results so far achieved are that the workers are beginning to take intelligent interest in their own welfare and that they are being saved, to some extent, from their perpetual indebtedness.

36. (i) *For adult workers.*—A night school is run by the company for the adult workers, but they do not care to take advantage of it.

(ii) and (iii) There is a day school for both half-time workers and workers' children.

(iv) These schools are under competent teachers, but they are not utilized by the people they are meant for to the extent they are desired to be. About 50 of the workers' children regularly attend school and are given all encouragement and facilities. A Scout Master has been appointed to organize a company of Boy Scout cubs from among the children of the workers. This will improve their health, engender discipline among them and keep them away from mischief.

37. Provision for old age is desirable, but its possibility is doubtful considering the fact that workers are very reluctant to contribute to any scheme of this kind.

38. Co-operative movement has never been tried among the labourers. It cannot be successful, if it is done.

**VI.—Education.**

40. There is no special facility for the general education of the workers' children in the area in which our mill is situated. Of late the Corporation of Calcutta has started a few primary schools, but they are not adequate in relation to the number of children population of the locality. There is also a long-established high school in the neighbourhood and it is run by the local public. There is no Government Institution near about.

41. *Facilities for Industrial and Vocational Training.*—None.

42. Education is likely to improve the standard of living of the workers to some extent and also engender a sense of responsibility in them, which in turn is expected to improve the skill and efficiency of the workers.

### VII.—Safety.

43. Regulations regarding factories are in general adequate, but those relating to fencings around machinery seem a little bit drastic. The management ought to be allowed some discretion in the matter.

44. A statement is given below showing accidents for two years up to the end of June, 1929 :—

|               | Total accidents<br>for two years. | Average<br>per year. | Incidence.    |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Fatal .. ..   | 1                                 | 0·5                  | 0·11 in 1,000 |
| Serious .. .. | 24                                | 12·0                 | 2·6 in 1,000  |
| Slight .. ..  | 381                               | 190·5                | 42·0 in 1,000 |

*N.B.*—The number of total workers—about 4,500.

45. The great majority of accidents are due to negligence on the part of the victims or to disregard of the specific orders of the management.

46. All recommendations of Inspectors are carried out and adhered to, as far as lies in the power of the management; and also warnings are given to all workers regarding the danger of cleaning or, in any way, interfering with any part of moving machinery.

48. The medical officers and assistants are continually in attendance in the dispensary during working hours, and medicines and attention are given free of charge.

50. No case of accident has occurred which could be attributed to weariness through too long working hours, or conditions of working.

### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) The Workmen's Compensation Act is being used to the full extent.

(ii) All possible claims are actually claimed. The Company take special care to see that no injured worker is deprived of his legitimate compensation.

(iii) Effects are good. It has created confidence in the workers that they can now depend upon getting appropriate compensation without any difficulty and this confidence is an asset for the good of the industry. The Act has regulated the scale of compensation and has thus saved the industry from wasteful litigation and great deal of disaffection among the labour.

(iv) There are several insurance companies who accept proposals for workmen's compensation and the company has insured with one of them. The value of insurance from workers' point of view is that they have not to fight with the employers for compensation, the employers now fight for them with the insurance companies for the prompt settlement of their claims.

(v) Some measure for compulsory insurance by employers is desirable for securing workmen against possible loss of compensation.

53. *Suitability of Provisions relating to—(i) Scales of Compensation.*—Not quite adequate in all cases, specially where the loss of a minor limb is concerned. For example :—

Several fingers of a man's hand are seriously injured in an accident. After a prolonged treatment of eight months, the wounds heal up and all his fingers are saved. He gets half-monthly allowance all through this period of eight months as compensation. But if after eight months' treatment one of his fingers is amputated, the man gets for this partial permanent disability, only 5 per cent. of the total disability compensation, which comes to much less than half-monthly allowance for even six months.

The scales should be revised in the light of the past few years' experience of the working of the Act.

The Company not only pays compensation to the injured workers in accordance with the provisions of the law, but also allows them additional privileges, such as (a) full pay for the period they are absent from work, including 10 days' waiting period, (b) free medical treatment, and (c) specially prescribed diet, such as milk, fruits, etc.

(ii) The system of waiting period causes real hardship to the injured and disabled workers and should be eliminated altogether. They should be entitled to get the compensation from the very first day of their absence from work.

(iii) *Industrial Diseases.*—The present provisions are quite suitable.

(iv) *Machinery of Administration.*—Quite suitable.

(v) *Other Matters.*—Recurring payments may be substituted for lump sum payments in the cases of workmen who are residents of urban areas. Both systems of payment, lump sum and recurring, ought to be in force and the manner of payment to individual claimants be left to the discretion of the Commissioner, who may consult the desire of the party himself in the matter and also the opinion of the employer.



Section 12 of the Act should be amended so as to place the ultimate liability for compensation on the person, contractor, or sub-contractor, as the case may be, directly employing the workmen in every case.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories.

55. (i) The hours worked per week are 60, and per day 10, normally. But now that most of the departments are working on double shift system the total daily working hours are coming up to 19½ hours, "A" shift working 10 hours and "B" shift working 9½ hours, and therefore the total hours worked per week come up to 117 hours.

(ii) No overtime is worked except in the case of machinery maintenance, and this varies as occasion arises.

(iii) The workers are not on call except during their actual working hours.

56. Six days worked per week.

57. *Effect of 60 hours restriction.*—(i) The effect on the worker has been very beneficial, specially with regard to their health. They are getting more time for rest and recreation.

(ii) The effect on the industry has been a decrease in production and profit, though gradually compensated to some extent by an increase in the efficiency of the workers.

58. As the shifts are not worked more than 10 hours, the restriction on the daily limit does not affect us in any way.

59. The reduction of the present maxima of working hours is not at all possible.

60. (i) (a) (b) In working single shift 1½ hours' interval is allowed between the hours of 11-45 a.m. and 1-15 p.m. This is used in most cases as a time of rest. Although officially employed from 6-15 a.m. till 11-45 a.m., most of the workers take time off during these hours for meals, the machines on which they are employed being attended to during their absence by the workers of the adjoining machines and vice versa or stopped altogether.

In working double shift the workers are divided into "A" and "B" shifts. "A" shift commencing at 5-30 a.m. works until 10-30 a.m. and again from 2-0 p.m. until 7-0 p.m., "B" shift from 10-30 a.m. till 2-0 p.m. and again from 7-0 p.m. till 1-0 a.m. "A" shift, having an interval of 3½ hours, works 10 hours daily and "B" shift, with an interval of 5 hours, works 9½ hours daily, though paid for 10½ hours. This applies to adult workers only.

(ii) The existing law is quite suitable, but some extra time should be allowed for cleaning, repairs and maintenance work.

(iii) *Suitability of hours during which Factory is working.*—Quite suitable.

(iv) *Number of holidays given.*—Sunday of each week and about 12 other days for Hindu and Mohammedan festivals.

61. (i) Sunday of each week is observed as a day of rest.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—Quite suitable.

62. The only use made of exempting provisions is in the case of machinery repairs and upkeep.

### X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

81. *Effect of 1922 Act on Employment.*—The effect so far noticeable has been that the number of children among the mill labour has decreased to some extent.

82. Where there are no provisions for creches, the children should be allowed to be with their mothers in the factories.

83. The regulations for women's work are quite suitable.

84. *Suitability of Regulations affecting Children.*—(i) and (ii) The regulations are quite suitable.

85. *Double Employment of Children.*—Nothing is known of such occurrences. Very difficult to detect if practised.

86. There are no special facilities for apprenticeship or training up of children. They get trained by working with their relations or friends.

87. *Extent of "Blind Alley" Employment.*—No such practices are followed here. When the children reach their full age they are allowed to work full time and get full wages as any other worker.

88. In single shift working, longer hours have to be worked at a stretch, but in double shift working, the workers get longer intervals and so more time for rest and leisure, and keep better health. But as women are not allowed to work at night, they cannot work in double shifts.

## XII.—Wages.

96. (i)—We have got different rates of wages in different departments for different occupations. A statement showing the monthly wages of workers up to head jobbers is given below :—

|  |         | Rates of Wages per Month. |        |
|--|---------|---------------------------|--------|
|  |         | Rs.                       | Rs.    |
| <i>(a) Weaving Department—</i>               |         |                           |        |
| Head jobbers                                 | .. .. . | 150                       | to 200 |
| Line jobbers                                 | .. .. . | 100                       | .. 125 |
| Weavers, fitters, vice-men, carpenters..     | .. .. . | 40                        | .. 60  |
| <i>(b) Spinning Department—</i>              |         |                           |        |
| Head jobbers                                 | .. .. . | 125                       | to 150 |
| Head mistries                                | .. .. . | 70                        | .. 100 |
| Asst. mistries                               | .. .. . | 40                        | .. 50  |
| Line mistries                                | .. .. . | 30                        | .. 35  |
| Head winders                                 | .. .. . | 25                        | .. 30  |
| Piecers, winders                             | .. .. . | 20                        | .. 25  |
| Doffers                                      | .. .. . | 15                        | .. 20  |
| <i>(c) Engineering Department—</i>           |         |                           |        |
| Head mistries                                | .. .. . | 125                       | to 150 |
| Asst. mistries                               | .. .. . | 60                        | .. 70  |
| Head carpenters                              | .. .. . | 50                        | .. 60  |
| Carpenters                                   | .. .. . | 30                        | .. 40  |
| <i>(d) Workshop—</i>                         |         |                           |        |
| Head mistry                                  | .. .. . | 125                       | to 150 |
| Mistries, mechanics                          | .. .. . | 35                        | .. 60  |
| <i>(e) Machinery Overhauling Department—</i> |         |                           |        |
| Head fitters                                 | .. .. . | 150                       |        |
| Asst. fitters                                | .. .. . | 100                       |        |
| Mistries                                     | .. .. . | 40                        | to 60  |
| <i>(f) Cotton Department—</i>                |         |                           |        |
| Sardar                                       | .. .. . | 30                        | to 35  |
| Coolies                                      | .. .. . | 20                        | .. 25  |
| <i>(g) Dye House Department—</i>             |         |                           |        |
| Head mistry                                  | .. .. . | 60                        | to 75  |
| Workers                                      | .. .. . | 20                        | .. 25  |
| <i>(h) Warehouse Department—</i>             |         |                           |        |
| Warehouse man                                | .. .. . | 100                       |        |
| Workers                                      | .. .. . | 20                        | to 25  |
| <i>(i) Sanitary Department—</i>              |         |                           |        |
| Sweeper—Jamadars                             | .. .. . | 18                        | to 22  |
| Sweepers                                     | .. .. . | 14                        | .. 17  |
| <i>(j) Watch and Ward Department—</i>        |         |                           |        |
| Jemadars                                     | .. .. . | 25                        | to 35  |
| Darwans                                      | .. .. . | 22                        | .. 30  |
| Women workers                                | .. .. . | 15                        | .. 20  |
| Half-timers                                  | .. .. . | 7                         | .. 10  |
| Coolies                                      | .. .. . | 15                        | .. 25  |

(ii) *In surrounding Agricultural areas.*—Exact information on this head is not available. The average does not in any case exceed Rs. 10 per head per month.

(iii) *Difference between money wages and money value of all earnings.*—Those of the workers who live in the Company's lines get about Rs. 2 extra in the shape of lower house rent than that charged by the private landlords.

From time to time the Company offers prizes to the workers in the form of money-bonus for good work, which not only encourages healthy competition among them but adds substantially to their income, to some as much as Rs. 50 in a month.

Some workers also receive occasional gratuities when they are in distress or on the occasion of some ceremonies.

97. (i) Rates of wages have gradually increased in recent years. Wages were increased 50 per cent. in 1920 and between 1925 and 1929 a gradual increase of another 15 per cent. has taken place.

(ii) The main reasons for variation in wages are the higher prices of commodities and consequent higher costs of living.

(iv) Excepting the first increase in wages in 1920, the profits have no relation to the fact of increase of wages which has taken place in recent years, as there has been a gradual decrease in profits during these years.

98. The workers usually remit about a third of their earnings to their village homes.
99. There is no system of payment in kind in this Mill.
100. No payments are made through contractors, sub-contractors or head men. All payments are made direct to the workmen.
101. Wages are fixed according to the individual skill of the workers.
102. Twenty-five per cent. extra is paid for overtime and 50 per cent. extra for Sunday work.
103. There is no standardization of wages, and none is possible.
104. As the wage changes in recent years have taken the form of increases only, the labour supply has also increased, though not to the desired extent. Our supply is affected by the fact that there is no other cotton mill in this area.
105. Fixing up of minimum wages by statute is not at all advisable.
106. (i) Fining is generally restricted to weavers and winders for bad work and the amount of fine never exceeds four annas.  
 (ii) There are no other deductions, if the house rents deducted from the wages of those workers who live in the Company's lines are excepted.  
 (iii) A Workers' Fund has been formed with the fines realised, unpaid wages and certain other monies, and the workers are helped in various ways out of this Fund.  
 (iv) Imposition of fines is essential to maintain the quality of production and there should be no legislation to restrict it.
107. (i) Wages are paid monthly for the period of a month's working.  
 (ii) Wages are paid after the lapse of a fortnight, i.e., by the 15th of the following month.  
 (iii) (a) and (b) The present practice is quite suitable and no legislation is necessary. There is no unnecessary delay in payment. Some time must be kept in hand for the preparation of the wage bills.  
 (iv) If any wages lie unclaimed for more than three months the amounts are transferred to the workers' fund mentioned under item (iii) of Section (106) above.
108. (i) and (ii) There is no doubt that great indebtedness exists among workers, both in villages and industrial areas, but it is not possible to say to what extent that prevails. It should, however, be noted that this indebtedness of the workers is not due wholly to poverty, but mostly to extravagant social ceremonies and partly to habit.
109. *Bonus and Profit Sharing Scheme.*—No such schemes have ever been or are at present in force in these mills.
110. *Annual or other Leave.*—There is none, so far as the workmen are concerned.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. There has been very little advance in the efficiency of the workers in recent years, taking into consideration the improvements which have been made in machinery.
113. No correct comparison is possible, having had no personal experience of the working of the foreign workers. But if comparison can be made, relying on the reported efficiency of the foreign (European) workers, then 1 to 2 would be the approximate ratio of Indian efficiency as compared to European. It may, however, safely be asserted that the Indian workers could be more efficient if they wished, but, unfortunately, they would not.
114. *Extent to which Comparisons are affected by.*—(i) Migration of workers, 10 per cent.; (ii) comparative efficiency of plant, 5 per cent.; (v) physique, 10 per cent.; (vi) health, 10 per cent.; (vii) education, 10 per cent.; (viii) standard of living, 15 per cent.; (ix) climate, 15 per cent.; individual disinclination, 25 per cent.
115. (i) Production has not been appreciably increased in the case of time workers by shortening working hours, but an increase per day is noticeable in the case of piece-workers.  
 (ii) There is certainly an improvement due to the greater interest that is taken in the health of the workers and the attention that is paid to the proper sanitation of the mills.  
 (iv) Housing affects production advantageously in this way, that, where good living quarters are available, there is not the coming and going of workers, which prevails in the case where bad accommodation is provided.  
 (v) Methods of remuneration are gradually being altered from daily rates to piece rates and it is expected to improve production to some extent.  
 (vi) Wage levels have gradually gone up, but that has made no effect on the quantity or quality of production.

(viii) Dietary has very little effect on production.

(ix) Many workers are addicted to drinking, but only a few to drugs. This has some bad effect on production, no doubt, but not to any great extent.

116. It is very difficult to say what methods could secure increased efficiency in the workers. As has been remarked before, the workers could be more efficient if they wished. To bring them to that frame of mind, education is absolutely necessary.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) The employers are organized under chambers of commerce and in some places under millowners' associations.

(ii) Unregistered trade unions have cropped up in recent years for workers to combine. But these bodies are very loosely organized by outsiders and generally patronized by only a small fraction of actual workers.

118. (i) The effect of organization of employers is that they are able to save the industry by helping each other when there is any trouble. Trade union organizations, on the other hand, have done harm to industry by their irresponsible manipulation of the labour movement.

(ii) Workers' conditions are gradually improving, mostly through the goodwill of the employers and partly because of the activities of labour unions.

119. The activities of trade unions in this part of the country are mostly confined to organize strikes. The idea seems to be ingrained in them that there cannot be any justification of their existence if there are no strikes. Trade unions are not heard of when the workers are in real distress. There is no attempt on their part to organize any benefit scheme for the workers. The employers would welcome trade unions organized on proper lines and would be glad to co-operate in those of their activities which are aimed at doing real good to the workers.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. There has never been any lock-out since the mills came under the present management, but there have been four strikes since 1925, as detailed below :—

##### 1.—Strike in March, 1925.

(i) *Causes.*—Cause of this strike was that restriction was put on the workers going out whenever they liked during working hours.

(ii) *Duration and Character.*—Only the workers of spinning department struck work and it lasted for only a day and a half.

(iii) *Nature and Methods of Settlement.*—The management agreed to allow a certain number of workers to go out at a time during certain specified hours if they could arrange with other workers to look after their machines during their absence, and the strikers accepting this arrangement resumed work.

(iv) *Loss to Industry and Workers.*—The workers lost in wages only about Rs. 2,000 and the loss to the mills was negligible.

##### 2.—Strike in August, 1926.

(i) A section of the workers put in a demand for increased wages and struck work.

(ii) Only a portion of the workers of the weaving department struck work and the strike lasted for five days.

(iii) The secretary and general manager addressed a gathering of strikers and pointed out to them the unreasonableness of their demand and the strikers resumed work unconditionally.

(iv) Workers' loss, about Rs. 3,500, and loss to the mills, negligible.

##### 3.—Strike in April, 1927.

(i) It was a lightning strike caused by the imposition of fines on the workers of spinning department for absenting themselves from work on the day following a holiday.

(ii) Only the workers of spinning department struck work and the strike lasted for a single day.

(iii) The workers resumed work on their fines being remitted by the authorities.

(iv) Workers' loss, about Rs. 1,500, and loss to the mills, negligible.

4.—*Strike in May—June, 1928.*

(i) The cause of this strike was reduction of rates of the weavers on the production quantity from the new looms.

(ii) The strike originated in the weaving department, but the workers of all other departments joined in it and there was complete suspension of work for 11 days.

(iii) The dispute was settled by the authorities agreeing to pay the old rates.

(iv) The mills lost about Rs. 60,000 and the workers about Rs. 20,000.

## THE COMMITTEE OF THE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, is an Association representing various commercial and industrial interests. Its membership includes shipping companies, jute presses, jute mills, match manufacturing companies, iron and steel manufacturing companies, cotton mills, rice mills, tanneries, coal mines, glass manufacturing works, pharmaceutical works, railways and mechanical workshops, etc., etc. As several of its members will submit their memorandum and tender evidence before the Commission and as they will throw full light and discuss in detail the labour conditions of their respective industries, my Committee have attempted to present in this memorandum their views on a few outstanding questions regarding the labour problem.

The labour force for the different industries in Bengal such as jute mills, cotton mills, etc., is drawn from the local residents and, particularly, from Bihar and Orissa, Madras, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces. The present methods of recruiting labour seem to be quite satisfactory, and there does not appear to be any need for establishing special agencies for recruiting labour. In most of the jute mills a large number of the labourers excepting the local people live with their families in the areas near about the mills. Those who live without families go to their villages after 6, 12, or 18 months according to their habits and needs.

There is no doubt that much unemployment prevails amongst the classes from which Indian labourers are drawn. In any event the income of the families is not sufficient to maintain all the members and they do not have sufficient work to employ all the members. A proof of this lies in the fact that no shortage of labour is experienced in any industry at any time and new hands are available whenever necessary. The solution of the unemployment problem amongst labourers lies in the development of industries throughout the country. At the present time almost all the labourers employed in the industries belong to the agricultural classes. Whilst there has grown, and is growing, a permanent industrial labour population, there is still a large section that work on the industries only during the months when their labour is not required in their villages for the purposes of sowing or harvesting the crops. And so long as the state of things remains in which the labourers return to the soil for a few months of the year, it is difficult to bring about a substantial improvement in their efficiency as the periods for which they are working are not continuous and the work assigned to them on their return to the industry after a holiday is generally not the same as they had before they left. Specialized knowledge of a particular branch of the industry cannot thus be easily acquired by them, and unless they have had the same work for a very long time it is difficult for them to add to their efficiency.

Another great handicap in the way of improving the efficiency of labour is the problem of illiteracy prevalent in the country. Almost all the labour population is steeped in illiteracy and ignorance. Indeed, most of them are analphabates. It is easy therefore to see that unless primary education is made compulsory, there is hardly any hope of bringing about an improvement in their efficiency, standard of living, etc. The Committee of the Chamber regret that in spite of the increasingly higher taxation levied on the people of the country since the outbreak of the War, the needs of the people in the matter of compulsory education have not yet been met by the Government though they profess to evince great solicitude for the welfare of the working classes and the masses. The stumbling block in the progress of labour in all directions is, in the opinion of my Committee, their illiteracy and ignorance. It is, as a result of this ignorance and illiteracy, that the labour population falls a prey to the advice offered by so-called labour leaders in their own interests. They are unable to perceive what is good and what is bad for them, and it is natural that they follow outsiders who are able to speak to them with knowledge and persuasion. It is on this account that we see of late sudden outbreaks of strikes in many industries without any justification. Due to the influence of outsiders who make a show of having a great interest in the welfare of labour, these labourers are found declaring strikes in their works without, in many cases, even intimating their grievances to their management. In several cases, the grievances have not even been formulated

before embarking upon a strike. Somehow or other an impression has gained ground that a strike is the most expeditious and potent method of redressing the grievances. In point of fact, a strike is detrimental to labour inasmuch as it means loss of wages to them, and is detrimental to the industry which suffers losses due to the cessation of work, and this curtailment of production is therefore a loss to the country. The average national income of this country is grievously low in comparison with other countries, and when to that is added the huge sum lost by way of wages to the workmen, and loss of profit to the industries, these strikes cannot but be deplored in strongest terms by every one having the welfare of the country at heart. In the recent jute mill strike of Calcutta the grievances of the workmen were not formulated, the workmen did not know what they wanted, and the strike was progressing in some mills even against the wishes of the labourers, due to the influence of outside agitators who for their own ends made it difficult for them to go to work. To prevent all this happening, the only remedy is the spread of literacy amongst the labourers who can then see things for themselves and distinguish between what is in their interest and what is not. Along with the provision of compulsory elementary education which my Chamber strongly recommends, facilities ought also to be provided for higher and technical education for the labourers to enable them to occupy higher posts by gaining experience and knowledge about their work from books, industrial journals, etc. Inculcation of the habit of reading is very desirable as it will tend to broaden the outlook of labour and increase their efficiency. In Japan, almost all the cotton operatives have the knowledge of the alphabet and, indeed, many of them are eager readers. The Indian labourers are intelligent and can easily adapt themselves to the work in which they are placed, if they are given the necessary opportunities and facilities.

An efficient labour force would be a great asset to the industries, and also to the country, and there are various other directions in which the employers can help in improving the conditions of labour and increasing their efficiency, as for example, by the provision of industrial schools which are very necessary for training the future labour force of the country, by the provision of facilities for hospitals and efficient medical aid, housing, sanitation, higher wages, etc. But the introduction of all these measures means an additional burden on the industries which to-day thanks, largely to the disastrous policy of the Government in regard to currency and finances and *Laissez Faire* policy in regard to the industrial development of the country, they are unable to bear. The Government have been unperturbed spectators of the depressed condition of the various industries and have not come forward with any bold measures of giving them relief in their difficult times even though the troubles are due partly to their unwise and ill-suited policy in regard to the finances of the country, which has sought to care for the interest of the foreign industries at the expense of the indigenous industries. In the absence of a vigorous industrial policy on behalf of the Government, the Indian industries which are in a nascent state are in the throes of acute depression and are unable to pay even adequate wages to the labourers. It is entirely foolish to expect the employers to do the impossible, viz., to pay increased wages to the labourers for improving their standard of living when the industries are making no profit or running at a loss. If, therefore, the Government are genuinely solicitous about the well-being of the labour force in the country, it is up to them to give protection to the industries and restore the industries to their prosperity, because the prosperity of the industries will naturally be reflected in the prosperity of the labour force, which is after all a partner in the industries, strengthening with their strength, and weakening with their weakness.

My Committee are also surprised to notice the promptness with which the Government of India desire to take action for the ratification of the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Conference. While it may be desirable to ratify these conventions in the interest of labour, it should not be forgotten that the burden falls on the industries which, due to the increased cost of production, are unable to stand foreign competition. It is also remarkable that while the Government is thus ready to take immediate action on these conventions and recommendations, it does not act with half that zeal in settling industrial disputes and deadlocks whenever they occur. The recent strike in the Bombay Cotton Mill industry is an instance in point when the Government took no immediate action and watched the situation which was threatening the peace of the city of Bombay more or less as disinterested spectators. Even with regard to the other strikes that occurred on the railways during the last one or two years and the strike in the Tin Plate Works at Jamshedpur, the Government remained adamant and refused to appoint a court of arbitration so frequently urged by the Indian Chamber and the public. If the welfare of labour is really desired by the Government it is absolutely essential that they should offer immediate intervention by means of a suitable machinery and settle strikes which, as they are fully aware, are detrimental to the best interests of the country. The necessity of providing for an improvement in the welfare and well-being of labour which is not possible to be done by the employers due to the depressed

condition of the industries at the present time, constitutes a very cogent argument for the grant of adequate and full protection to the industries in India to enable them to develop.

In regard to sickness insurance for labourers in industries, while my Committee do not think it advisable to adopt the International Convention in toto, they are in favour of making some provision for some sort of sickness insurance for the workers in order to maintain their physique, efficiency and longevity. A start may be made in a certain group of industries, but, here again, the main difficulty that will arise will be about the contribution. It would be very difficult to bring home the advantages of sickness insurance to the labourers due to their ignorance and illiteracy, and to get them to contribute even a very small portion of their incomes for the purpose, it might be difficult, though perhaps not to that degree, to induce the employers to make a substantial contribution for meeting with the expenditure of this scheme, for providing relief to labourers in their sickness, in the present depressed state of industries when they are likely to resent every item of additional avoidable expenditure. Whatever sum falls short after the provision is made by the employers in this connection should therefore be made good by the Government. The Indian employers are generally sympathetic towards the demands of labour as they realise the advantages of a contented, efficient and healthy labour force. If they are averse to launching upon expensive welfare schemes which, when once started, would require a recurring heavy expenditure, it is because they are apprehensive of the apathetic attitude of the Government which shows no eagerness or anxiety to help them even when the industries are doing badly. It is this attitude of the Government that is mainly responsible for making them a little conservative in regard to the provision of many facilities for the welfare of labour. Assured of the sympathetic attitude of the Government in periods of industrial depression, the Indian employers will not lag behind in earmarking adequate sums of money for the welfare of labour. My Committee would heartily welcome the formation of genuine and well-regulated Trade Unions amongst labourers. They are aware, however, that most of the recent labour strikes were fomented by outside agitators who were instrumental in widening the gulf between capital and labour. These trade unions should receive regular contributions from the members, and their work should be managed by men of the working classes from their own membership, or by regularly appointed trade union officials. Only last year there was a huge strike in the jute mills which caused a loss of production of about 170 lakhs of rupees and a loss of wages to the labour force of about 21 lakhs of rupees, and affected about 2½ lakhs of labourers. My Committee hold that if the grievances of the labourers in the recent jute strike had been properly formulated and brought to the notice of the employers for their consideration and if sufficient time had been allowed to ventilate them, perhaps there would have been no necessity of declaring the strike. This was due largely to uneducated labour, irresponsible labour unions and the evil influence of the so-called well-wishers of labour who sought to impose the strike for their own ends. To prevent the occurrence of such wild and lightning strikes, my Committee would reiterate their suggestion here that it is of imperative necessity that the labourers should be educated, trained, and made alive to their duties, to their responsibilities and to their relations with the employers who employ him. They must be educated and enabled to conduct their own affairs and to discriminate between what is good for them and what is not. If the Government are genuinely anxious to do any good to the labour of this country, they should not, on any ground, whatsoever, shirk their responsibility of providing compulsory education to the labourers as, then alone, we will begin to have an educated and efficient labour force, as desired by all, after a period of about 10 or 12 years or more. When labourers are educated and organized and can think for themselves, these lightning strikes declared without much forethought and regardless of their consequences may perhaps be minimized and their grievances settled more amicably and expeditiously to the satisfaction of both themselves and the employers. My Committee therefore trust that the Royal Commission on Labour will not fail to recommend to the Government the adoption of measures like adequate protection to industries and compulsory education which will increase and improve the efficiency of labourers, their average earnings, their standard of living and which, in turn, will bring about development of industries and prosperity to the country.

Mr. J. P. MANDELIA, SECRETARY, THE BIRLA JUTE MANUFACTURING CO., LTD.

#### L—Recruitment.

1. (i) The migrated labour is 1,900 or 31 per cent. as follows:—23.1 per cent. up-country (mostly weavers and sack-sewers); 5.6 per cent. Uriyas (mostly employed in loading and unloading works); 2.4 per cent. Bilaspuri (carriers).

(ii) *Causes of particular streams of migration.*—Unemployment at home; temptation for better wages; bettering their standard of life; failure of crops and famine.

(iii) Migration is increasing every year.

2. (i) Single up-country men (98 per cent. Mahomedans and 82 per cent. Hindus) go home every year for 2-3 months; family up-country men (2 per cent. Mahomedans and 18 per cent. Hindus) go every 2 years for 2-3 months; Uriyas who are almost without families, go every 14 months for 2 months; Bilaspuri go home every 10 months for 2 months.

(ii) 69 per cent. local Bengalis. Non-Bengalis are not permanent.

3. *Methods of recruitment.*—Unnecessary because of non-existence of labour shortage.

4. *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life.*—No effect is felt because of the following reasons:—always going and coming of neighbours; periodical money orders; correspondence.

7. *Unemployment.*—(i) *Extent and character.*—We do not perceive any unemployment existing in this district.

(ii) *Extent to which caused by.* (a) *Retrenchment or dismissals.*—Dismissal except in case of gross negligence in work is rare, as the sirdars are not allowed to indulge in extortions from workers, and are therefore not interested in the latter's dismissals.

(b) *Voluntary retirement.*—The workers can't afford.

(c) *Other causes.*—Adoption of single shift system by the double shift mills caused in the past temporary unemployment.

(iii) *Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.*—There being no unemployment, the question does not arise so far as this mill is concerned.

8. *Labour "turn-over."* (ii) *Extent of casual employment.*—During some months of the year, if heavier qualities are made, 1 to 3.5 per cent. more men are required. In the jute season every year from September to January about 1½ per cent. more men are required for unloading and piling jute bales.

(iii) *Absenteeism.* (a) *Extent, character and causes;* (b) *Seasonal or otherwise.*—During the time of paddy transplanting and cutting, which take place in the months of July and December respectively, about 10 per cent. of the total Bengali labour in the case of the former month, and 15 per cent. in the latter, keep away from work. Up-country labour usually go home in April-June. Ordinarily, up-country workers living in the mill lines do not absent themselves unless compelled to do so by illness; but the Bangali workers which constitute nearly two-thirds of the whole labour force of this mill, do keep away very often, due to festivals and domestic interests, and therefore they do not require to take any periodical leave like their up-country brethren. The weavers among them, however, do not indulge in this frequently.

(c) *Time and wages lost.*—Bengali 9 per cent. time and wages lost; migrated 4 per cent. time and wages lost.

## II.—Staff Organization.

10. *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*—It consists of secretary, assistant secretary, manager, departmental overseers, their assistants, head sirdars and line sirdars.

11. *Selection of managing staff.*—They are generally promoted from the supervising staff.

12. *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*—(i) The superior staff consisting of overseers is either selected from amongst the subordinate ones or recruited from educated and cultured class, and then trained locally for sufficient period to get properly qualified to undertake the responsibility. The subordinate staff can be divided under two heads—one is formed of sirdars who are generally illiterate and selected from workers according to their experience, merit and organizing capacity, the other is constituted of departmental assistants who come from educated class.

(ii) There are no special facilities for training the workers, but they are allowed to learn the work on the machines with their relatives and friends, and thus they pick up the job in time. The workers are by stages promoted up to head sirdarship only. They are unsuitable for promotion to higher posts, only for want of education, otherwise they might have made themselves good supervisors.

13. (i) Relations generally between the staff and workers are cordial. They, of course, could have been ideal had the illiteracy of the workers not hampered the selection of the supervising staff from amongst themselves.



(ii) *Value and defects of employing jobbers.*—It is a necessity as the workers require to be organized in small groups, and their work watched and looked after. Defects such as extortions, arbitrary dismissals of workers under them, injustices and other pinpricks crop up only when proper check is not exercised over them.

(iii) No works committee is existent.

14. (i) The time-keeping of daily hands or work of the piece workers is done by clerks under the assistant overseers in departments. There are always sanctioned numbers of different sorts of workers against whose names presence or absence, as the case may be, is marked in the registers. The next day, departmental abstracts of attendance are made out, signed by the departmental heads and then submitted to the office. There are two kinds of checkers. One to check the attendance after it is taken by the departmental timekeepers and the other checks the wages books for the past week. The former checks daily any department selected at random while the latter has to check all the registers.

(ii) The tickets are made out for individual workers to be distributed on pay-day, which is always the last working day of the week, by the respective timekeepers. They are, of course, checked and initialled by the overseers who themselves make payments.

15. (i) No work in the mill proper is given on contract. Only the works of jute and coal unloading, casting of machinery parts and blacksmithy, are on contract.

(ii) Sub-contracting.—Does not exist.

(iii) The foreman in charge of the department exercises control to a certain extent.

(iv) The contract work is always expeditious, but cannot be given with advantage where quality is concerned.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) The company has built 501 workmen's quarters on the riverside with the extraordinary facilities of a small septic tank latrine, a cook room, and a yard attached to each of the quarters. In addition to these the company has got 120 pucca rooms in the mill compound. The local workers forming the major portion of the labour force daily go to their homes, so do not require rooms in the lines.

(ii) *By Government and other public agencies.*—None.

(iii) Mud and straw huts are in existence owned by private persons.

(iv) Very few huts belonging to the workers are in existence.

17. There are no facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.

18. (i) The houses provided by the company are superior in relation to the workers' demands. The workers are satisfied so long as they get pucca rooms with latrines and water within a reasonable distance, while the mills have provided each room with a separate kitchen, a separate latrine and an enclosed compound of its own.

(ii) We regard them as one of the best types from the health point of view, on account of their being well ventilated from both sides and situated on the river bank.

(iii) Septic tank latrines have been installed separately in each room. Provision for water is made.

19. The accommodation provided by the mills is fully utilized.

20. The company charges a nominal monthly rent of As. 8 to Re. 1 per month respectively. The private owners charge from Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-8 per room per month.

21. Sub-letting is not prevalent. Occupation of company's rooms by outsiders is not allowed. Eviction is not necessary when the man is in employ.

22. Moral lapses on the part of the male labourers do occur on account of their living without families for long periods. It can be checked to a certain extent by spread of education. Drug shops and gambling dens also grow up, but they can be stopped by legislation and strict police surveillance.

### IV.—Health.

23. (iii) The work is carried on in pucca buildings having plenty of space, light and air and also facilities for water, privies and urinals. Agriculture being the only occupation, they have to work in fields without any of the above facilities.

(iv) Dietary consists mainly of rice, Khasari pulses, fish and vegetables in case of Bengali and Uriya labourers, while the up-country take coarse Atta (wheat flour). Arhar pulses, rice and occasionally meat.

(v) Generally the physique of the Bengali is weaker when compared with the migrated labour.

(vi) We think the effects are harmful to a certain extent.

(vii) Proper drainage and a plentiful supply of water leave little chance for bad effects on living in the thickly populated areas.

24. (i) An equipped hospital and dispensary under a qualified doctor is always open for free treatment of the patients. Beds are also provided in the hospital for indoor patients.

(ii) *By Government.*—None.

(iii) *By other agencies.*—There are a few private professional physicians practising in the vicinity.

(iv) *Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or dais.*—No provision.

25. (i) Generally all the workers take advantage of the facilities.

(ii) Women also equally utilize the benefits.

26. (i) *Latrines.*—A 46-seated activated sludge system septic tank is provided at the works, and 500 small septic tanks are installed in the houses.

(ii) *Drinking water.*—Taps are provided at works.

(iii) *Bathing and washing.*—Tank water is supplied through showers at works.

27. (i) No work of boards of health in existence.

29. (i) *Prevalence of industrial diseases.*—None.

(ii) We get cholera cases occasionally in hot seasons. Other diseases are negligible.

30. *Sickness insurance.* (i) *Suitability of International Labour Convention.*—Migratory difficulties, and added to that the unwillingness of the workers to contribute, make it unsuitable for the present.

(ii) *Possibility of introducing other systems.*—No suggestion to offer.

31. *Maternity benefits.* (i) *Extent and working of existing schemes.*—Since the recent strike we have started granting 5 weeks' wages.

(iii) *Possibility of legislation.*—It is quite possible.

#### V.—Welfare.

(*Other than Health and Housing but including Education*).

32. *Extent of welfare work.* (i) *By employers.*—Welfare work is being carried on for about a year.

(ii) *By other agencies.*—None.

33. One welfare worker is in employ at Rs. 125 per mensem to look after the health, sanitation, morality, etc.

34. (i) *Provision for refreshments, shelters and creches.*—None.

(ii) *Provision of physical culture, recreation and amusement.*—A complete outfit of cinema machine has been purchased for free fortnightly shows for the workers.

36. A primary school is provided for the children only.

37. *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*—It is desirable but does not seem possible in view of labour's unwillingness to contribute anything towards it. We took their votes on provident fund scheme some two years ago and found them unanimously unagreeable.

#### VI.—Education.

40. There are primary schools in workers' lines and neighbouring villages with scanty means.

42. Education will most likely improve the standard of living of the workers to a considerable extent and also develop a sense of responsibility in them and thereby improve the skill and efficiency of the workers.

#### VII.—Safety.

43. The present regulations in force are adequate.

46. In spite of the safety devices and particular directions of the factory inspector, accidents sometimes happen, mostly through negligence arising out of illiteracy.

48. Surgery on a small scale is provided in the mill hospital where accident cases are at once taken and attended to. Serious operation cases, after getting first-aid here, are sent to town hospitals.

49. The inspection and enforcement of regulations under the Factory Act are very strictly carried out by the factory inspectors.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation Act.

51. *Workmen's Compensation Act.*—(i) It is fully exercised.

(ii) All the cases have so far resulted in the full satisfaction of the claimants.

(iii) It is beneficial to both employers and employees, as it gives former facilities for insurance against unforeseen calamities beyond their means and the latter a sense of security, although before the introduction of this Act compensation was meted out to workers in the jute industry.

(iv) Insurance facilities are always available, and so far as jute industry is concerned we think they have been invariably utilized. This Act has been much appreciated by the workers.

(v) *Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.*—We think it is desirable as it would ensure better security for workmen against possible loss of compensation.

52. It is desirable to be extended to as far as practicable.

53. All quite suitable.

## IX.—Hours.

### A.—Factories.

55. (i) Sixty hours a week and 10 hours a day since July, 1929. Before, we were working 54 hours a week and 11 hours a day for four days and 10 hours on the fifth day. The extension in hours was the result of an agreement between all the members of the Jute Mill Association.

(ii) Normal and actual working hours are just the same with us.

(iii) Generally the workers are relieved for 25 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon. In the case of daily hands the relievers are employed for the purpose, while for the piece-workers either the work suffers or the neighbouring worker attends his machines as well.

56. Six days per week since July, 1929. Before, we were working five days.

57. *Effect of 60 hours' restriction*—(i) *On workers.*—From the workers' point of view it has met with universal appreciation.

(ii) *On industry.*—No adverse effect has been caused to the industry.

58. As the mill is working 10 hours a day, 11 hours' restriction does not affect

60. (i) (a) Sufficient relieving hands are employed to relieve the workers for about 25 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon.

(b) Two and a-half hours' interval from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. is provided, which is sufficient for the purpose.

(ii) The law in force is quite suitable.

(iii) *Suitability of hours during which factory is working.*—Quite suitable.

(iv) Ordinarily the labour gets one holiday a week. Besides, there are festival holidays which amount to nine days a year.

61. (i) Sunday is the day of rest.

(ii) *Suitability of the law.*—Quite suitable.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the use made of them.*—So far as the maintenance staff is concerned the use is made.

## X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

82. In our opinion either there should be nurseries or the infants should be allowed with their mothers inside the mills. Remaining outside without their mothers' care seems harmful.

83. We employ only 3 per cent. female labour, and that, too, mostly in the hand hemming department, where the work is carried on piece-work system and their attendance is never strictly enforced. They come and go according to their convenience and hence this question does not bear much importance in our case.

84. (i) As half of the children work for 5½ hours and the other half for 4½ hours only against 6 hours allowed under the Factory Act, it is suitable in our opinion.

(ii) Minimum age is 12, while the maximum age is 14.

85. There being no neighbouring industry within a radius of 5 miles, children employed with us cannot go to the other places for work on the same day.

86. Except spinning, weaving, and sack-sewing departments, other departments do not require any special training. As regards those that require, the necessary training is acquired by working with friends and relations. Besides, no other facilities are provided.

87. The children are not dismissed on their attaining adult age but promoted to the higher grade, i.e., spinner's job.

88. Double-shift mills have the advantage of shorter hours and days for workers over single-shift ones.

## XII.—Wages.

96. (i) Average wages per worker for 60 hours (half-timers for 30 hours).

|                      | Rs. | a. | p. |                               | Rs. | a. | p. |
|----------------------|-----|----|----|-------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| <b>Batching—</b>     |     |    |    | <b>Beaming—</b>               |     |    |    |
| <i>Hessian.</i>      |     |    |    | Sirdars                       | 11  | 9  | 10 |
| Sirdars              | 10  | 11 | 1  | Workers                       | 8   | 6  | 11 |
| Workers              | 4   | 11 | 5  | <b>Weaving—</b>               |     |    |    |
| <i>Sacking.</i>      |     |    |    | <i>Hessian.</i>               |     |    |    |
| Sirdars              | 10  | 10 | 10 | Sirdars                       | 15  | 1  | 7  |
| Workers              | 4   | 14 | 3  | Weavers                       | 9   | 7  | 11 |
| <b>Preparing—</b>    |     |    |    | Other workers                 | 6   | 10 | 1  |
| <i>Hessian.</i>      |     |    |    | <i>Sacking.</i>               |     |    |    |
| Sirdars              | 12  | 5  | 10 | Sirdars                       | 14  | 7  | 2  |
| Workers              | 4   | 4  | 11 | Weavers                       | 9   | 3  | 10 |
| <i>Sacking.</i>      |     |    |    | Other workers                 | 6   | 10 | 0  |
| Sirdars              | 10  | 10 | 11 | <b>Calendering—</b>           |     |    |    |
| Workers              | 4   | 7  | 0  | Sirdars                       | 9   | 1  | 0  |
| <b>Spinning—</b>     |     |    |    | Workers                       | 5   | 4  | 0  |
| <i>Hessian.</i>      |     |    |    | <b>Sack-sewing—</b>           |     |    |    |
| Sirdars              | 11  | 7  | 7  | Sirdars                       | 8   | 9  | 1  |
| Spinners             | 5   | 12 | 8  | Workers                       | 5   | 10 | 1  |
| Other workers        | 4   | 11 | 3  | <b>Finishing—</b>             |     |    |    |
| Half-timers          | 1   | 14 | 3  | Sirdars                       | 8   | 3  | 11 |
| <i>Sacking.</i>      |     |    |    | Workers                       | 5   | 6  | 7  |
| Sirdars              | 11  | 7  | 7  | <b>Mill mechanic shop—</b>    |     |    |    |
| Spinners             | 6   | 6  | 10 | Mistries                      | 6   | 2  | 6  |
| Other workers        | 4   | 11 | 5  | Oilers                        | 6   | 0  | 0  |
| <b>Cop winding—</b>  |     |    |    | <b>Factory mechanic shop—</b> |     |    |    |
| Sirdars              | 9   | 3  | 6  | Mistries                      | 6   | 4  | 2  |
| Workers              | 5   | 7  | 8  | <b>Engineering—</b>           |     |    |    |
| <b>Warp winding—</b> |     |    |    | Head mistries                 | 12  | 4  | 5  |
| Sirdars              | 9   | 10 | 7  | Mistries                      | 7   | 1  | 11 |
| Workers              | 4   | 11 | 7  | Other workers                 | 3   | 15 | 10 |

(ii) Twelve annas for household or agricultural work is the rate per man per day in the surrounding villages.

97. (i) In May, 1928, 5 per cent. increment was given to about three-fourths of the workers. In August, 1929, general increment of 8 per cent. was given to the labour. No decrease was ever effected.

(ii) In the first instance it was granted to encourage the labour to improve efficiency of the production, and in the second as the result of the strike, which practically involved all the jute mills of Calcutta in July–August, 1929.

(iv) The profits have gone down and are on the verge of being turned into losses while the wages have increased.

98. Figures for three years of the amounts sent from Birlapur P.O. to the villages are given below. They represent the migrated labour only, which is about one-third of the total:—February to December, 1927, Rs. 68,575-11-3; January to December, 1928, Rs. 1,20,002-9; January to September, 1929, Rs. 1,10,623-13.

100. *Extent and effect of Payment through Contractors, Sub-contractors or Headmen.*—Average monthly figures in case of jute and coal unloading are as follows:—Jute unloading, Rs. 3,988-9-2; coal unloading, Rs. 951-5-8.

Amount for the casting of machinery parts and blacksmithy is about Rs. 1,200 a month.

Workers always prefer working direct under the company.

101. *Method of Fixing Wages*—(i) *By negotiated agreements.*—None.(ii) *Other means.*—No particular method of fixing wages is in force.

102. So far as the manufacturing work is concerned, overtime is never worked. For repairing and maintenance work 25 per cent. more is paid.

103. Standardization of wages does not exist due to different conditions prevalent in different places.

104. Wherever the wages are higher the labour is always attracted.

106. (i) *Extent of Fining*.—Except the weavers no other worker is fined. The fine is always inflicted for bad work and never exceeds four annas.

(ii) *Other deductions*.—None.

(iii) The money realized through fines is used for welfare work.

(iv) Deductions for bad work is essential to maintain the standard of quality in case of piece-workers and legislation is not desirable.

107. (i) Wages are paid weekly to the textile, mechanical and engineering workers. Only the general coolies in the outside department, the contractors of casting and blacksmithy are paid monthly.

The monthly paid workers are 3½ per cent. only.

(ii) A week elapses before the weekly wages are paid, whereas monthly wages are paid on the 15th of the month following.

(iii) Legislation is not desired because wages are paid at present with as little delay as possible. Some delay is unavoidable, for time is required for calculating wages, making vouchers, checking the same and getting cash from currency. Besides, there are advantages of week-end payments from the workers' point of view also, as the money is taken to their homes at once without leaving any chance for being mis-spent.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are utilized for welfare work.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. It seems that the efficiency is increasing steadily.

115. (i) Recently the change in working hours from 54 to 60 a week has taken place, but it has not affected the production, which is just proportionate.

(ii) If the workers are better housed they care more for their work and the efficiency increases.

(iv) The increments which have been given in the past have undoubtedly resulted in their increased carefulness for the work.

(viii) *Dietary*.—No effect has been felt.

(ix) Most of the jute mill labour is addicted to the use of toddy, a country liquor derived from wild date trees. This affects the production to a certain extent.

(x) *Industrial fatigue*.—This is not felt in view of spare hands kept for relieving.

116. In our opinion the removal of illiteracy can contribute a lot to the efficiency of the workers.

### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) Almost all the jute mill concerns have formed themselves into an organization called by the name of the Indian Jute Mills Association.

(ii) There is an unregistered trade union which represents the cause of workers when necessity arises.

118. (i) The industry has been much benefited by the Indian Jute Mills Association.

(ii) Trade unionism, as a matter of fact, brought about the recent general increment in the wages of the workers and maternity benefits.

### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (i) After the adoption of single-shift working in February, 1924, the recent one was the only strike caused on the false promises made to the labour by an unregistered trade union that they would get them 33 per cent. increase in wages if they just did as directed by them. The change in working from 54 to 60 hours has little connection with the occurrence due to the fact that the mill worked smoothly for six subsequent weeks, and it was only after the appearance of the union and wide circulation of their inflammatory leaflets that the strike was brought about.

(ii) The strike lasted for two weeks only. It was partial inasmuch as the weavers worked for two days so long as the yarn was there, and about one-fifth of the mill was always working. On the first day of the next week the strike had practically opened as the result of the general settlement concerning all the mills, but the neighbouring mills having gone on strike the next day our workers again went out.

(iii) When the attempts of trade union people to call off the strike after the general settlement failed, Mr. G. D. Birla came to the spot, called a meeting of the workers, and after giving them a patient hearing assured them of the highest wages prevailing in any of the mills on the river plus 1 per cent. added to it. This pleased the workers much, who resumed work next day.

(iv) About a lakh of rupees was the loss to the industry while the workers suffered about Rs. 60,000.

## THE BENGAL MARINERS' UNION.

*History of Inland Steamer Services in Bengal, Behar, Orissa and Assam.*—In the above provinces, formerly the country boats used to maintain the river transport facilities. In was in the middle of the 19th century that two important steamer companies, namely, the India General Navigation and Railway Co., Ltd., and the River Steam Navigation Co., Ltd., came into existence and by ousting the country boats they soon monopolized the river transport services in these places. These two companies at first began to work in competition with each other. Finding that such an unhealthy competition was detrimental to their interests, these two companies combined and they have now been working under a joint management. The I.G.N. and Ry. Co. is a limited company and they publish their accounts for general information, whereas the R.S.N. Co. is a private limited company and they do not publish their accounts for such information. The strength of the fleet and the labour employed by each of these two companies are almost the same. It appears from the annual report and the balance sheet of the I.G.N. and Ry. Co., Ltd., which were placed in the meeting of the said company held in London, on 23rd May, 1928, that on 31st December, 1927, this company had on commission 151 steamers, 153 flats and 227 cargo boats, 29 barges and 46 receiving flats, making a total of 577. The said report also revealed the fact that in 1927 the said company made an increased profit amounting to £32,000 and declared a dividend of 8 per cent., and that in 1928 the increased profit amounted to nearly £24,000 and declared a dividend of 7½ per cent. on the ordinary shares, making a total of 10 per cent. free of income tax, and that block account, including stores, amounted to £895,025, and it was deemed advisable to transfer £85,000 to general reserve. The joint steamer companies' services are extended in all the navigable rivers of these provinces. They monopolize all the districts therein which are not served by any railway line, and as a result these companies naturally make a huge profit. They have to engage at a time 1,350 masters and drivers and about 25,000 crew, excluding their workshop employees at the different centres. The joint companies are financially well off, but the establishment expenses of the I.G.N. and Ry. Co., Ltd., are comparatively larger than those of the R.S.N. Co., Ltd., though their profits are presumed to be almost the same, and the R.S.N. Co.'s dividend would be higher than that of the I.G.N. and Ry. Co., Ltd.

*Conditions of Men's Services.*—The I.G.N. & Ry. and R.S.N. Companies' steamers were at first for several years run by European commanders and engineers, with the help of the Indian crew. In the beginning of the 20th century the joint companies replaced the European commanders and engineers by Indian masters and drivers at a comparatively very low rate of wages. The advantages regarding accommodation and personal servants which were extended to the Europeans were denied to these Indian masters and drivers, who were not given even one-sixth of the wages which were paid to the Europeans. Besides, an additional responsibility in the matter of recruiting the crew was thrown upon these Indian masters and drivers. The crew on the other hand are labouring under various disadvantages, namely, their very low wages, absence of proper accommodation on board the steamers, want of medical relief, and no fixity of hours of duty. As regards recruitment of the crew the procedure followed is rather curious. The joint companies leave this important matter affecting the vital interests of the crew to their masters and drivers. The companies do not hold themselves responsible in any way in this matter. They are just like the Zamindars of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, with their masters and drivers as Patmidars, and having no connection with the tillers of the soil, who in their case are the crew. Each master and driver at the time of his engagement is required to pilot the steamer with the requisite number of crew to be recruited direct by him. These masters and drivers very often find it difficult to get men for their steamers, and sometimes it so happens that the crew, who mostly come from villages, refuse to work, finding no bright prospect in the steamer service and having no direct connection with the companies, who do not keep any register of the crew, who are recruited by the masters and drivers. It is desirable for the interests of all concerned that the joint companies should make direct recruitment of the crew, and with the help of their union whenever found necessary.

*The Bengal Mariners' Union.*—The masters (serangs) and drivers (mistries) and the crew, in order to ventilate their grievances and for their redress by the joint companies in the matter of wages, accommodation, working hours, medical relief, accident benefits, provident fund, leave rules, unemployment benefits, old age pension, etc., combined in 1920 and formed what was then known as "The Inland Steamship and Flat Employees' Association." The Chandpur steamer strike happened in June, 1921, when the Non-co-operation Movement in Bengal was in the full swing. The said association for some time remained in a moribund state. In October, 1925, it was revived under the present name and style of "The Bengal Mariners' Union," on purely trade union principles. The union is now registered under the Indian

Trade Unions Act of 1926 (Register No. 9) and is affiliated with the All-India Trade Union Congress (?) and the International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam. The union has also been recognized as a properly constituted organization by the R.S.N. Co., Ltd., and the I.G.N. Ry. Co., Ltd.

*Men's Grievances.*—On account of the consistent agitation of the men employed in the companies' service and carried on through their union from different press and platform, the joint companies acceded to some extent to the men's request in the matter of their wages, "claims," restoration of retrenched hands, grading system of the pay of masters and drivers, etc. The following are the present outstanding grievances of the men, including workshop employees, and for the redress of which they through their union have been pressing the joint companies to take immediate steps. The companies up till now have not moved in the matter, on the other hand, they are trying to put it off as long as they can on flimsy grounds.

*Men's Grievances and Demands.*—(1) Twenty-five per cent. general increment in the wages of the deck and engine-room crew, workshop employees, barge manjies and khalasies, pilots, butlers and steamer and flat clerks, excepting the masters and drivers, in whose case a grade system has recently been introduced.

(2) Introduction of 8-hour day and 48-hour week, according to the Washington Convention of 1920, and recommendations of the last International Labour Conference held at Geneva.

(3) Direct recruitment of crew by the joint companies and with the help of their union whenever necessary.

(4) Overtime allowance for extra work.

(5) Arrangement of medical relief.

(6) Housing accommodation for the crew and the workshop employees in the companies' different centres and facilities for their recreation.

(7) Establishment of an institution for giving the necessary training to the crew and the workshop people and their children.

(8) Dissemination of prophylactic literature in vernacular amongst the crew and the workshop people for prevention of venereal and other tropical diseases.

(9) Better accommodation on board steamers for crew and those who work on shore in workshops.

(10) Maintenance of service sheets for all men of all ratings.

(11) Unemployment to be minimized and introduction of insurance and co-operative credit societies and death benefits and regular old age pension.

(12) Adequate safeguards against high-handed dismissals.

(13) Amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act so as to include native prams under 100 tons, for conferring compensation benefits for accidents to the crew engaged in small vessels.

(14) Engagement of sufficient number of crew in order to avoid over-strain and abolition of differentiation in the number of crew in vessels of same size and tonnage.

(15) Modification of existing leave rules according to the Negotiable Instruments Act.

(16) Abolition of alcohol and drug shops, and removal of brothels from the neighbourhood of a workshop and the different steamer stations.

*Employees under other Companies.*—A section of the crew (including their serangs and drivers) are employed in the steamers and vessels of the E.B.R.S.S. Co., the Sonakanda Building Co., R. Sim & Co., Chittagong & Co., Gardin & Co., and Co-operatives Societies & Co. The standing grievances of this section of the crew are those just mentioned before, and their distress and sufferings arising from their very low wages and the insecurity of their services, require careful consideration and necessary action at the hands of the authorities. The men under these companies are not employed for the whole year round, but their services are only requisitioned during the jute season, and for the rest of the year they are subjected to forced idleness with no occupation but to shift for themselves.

The condition of service of the crew employed in the water boats of the Calcutta Corporation are not also so much satisfactory as they ought to have been.

It is an open secret that abuses exist in the matter of recruitment, transfer and promotions of serangs, drivers and crew engaged under the different inland steamer companies and Calcutta Corporation, and the attention of the authorities has been repeatedly drawn to these prevailing abuses but without any result as yet.

The members of the Bengal Mariners' Union avail themselves of this opportunity of drawing the attention of the honourable members of the Commission to their legitimate grievances mentioned in this memorandum and earnestly hope and expect that this Royal Commission would take such adequate and effective steps as they deem fit and proper for their redress at an early date.

The existing grade system of pay for the masters and drivers and the scale of wages of the crew of the joint steamer companies and other companies and the Corporation of Calcutta, are given in an Appendix\* attached herewith for the information of the honourable members of the Commission.

\* Appendix not printed.

### THE INDIAN QUARTER-MASTERS' UNION.

*Recruitment.*—The Seacunnies generally come from the different districts of Bengal and specially from those districts which are flood-affected. Insecurity of agricultural products is the greatest cause of their migration. They gather in the port of Calcutta where from they are recruited. Up to the year 1925 they lived out of touch with their native districts for years together, some spending their lives here. Before the starting of the union the number of labour varied with the variation of seasons both new and old, but now such variation is rare. At present a man, after one full voyage is compelled to go home and come only when called. But there are cases where men become tired of waiting and come before time causing great difficulties.

Up to the year 1925, our quarter-masters were a body of scattered individuals, unorganised and hence subject to all sorts of oppression without the power of protest. In that year a body was organized to be known as the Indian Quarter-Masters' Union which immediately took up the task of waging a war along constitutional lines against all the oppressors as a result of which all the shipping companies except the B.I.S.N. & Co. and Turner Morrison & Co. were compelled to give effect to the recommendation (paragraph viii) of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee of 1922 and gradually they were able to assert their rights in all other matters. During this short period of five years the union had to pass through many catastrophies some of which still hang on it.

We beg first to refer to the method of recruitment. We have always held the "Roster System" to be the best of all systems and though the Government view was strongly against it, the trial given to it for a period of full five years justified our view. The greatest advantage of the system is that it saves the seacunnies from having to pay heavy bribes (at Rs. 100 on average) for each employment, borrowing at the rate of 108 per cent. per annum interest and makes the seacunnies certain as to the time when they will be called and hence while out of employment can devote their time in other occupations at home instead of wasting time here where living is so costly and thus incurring debt at an exorbitant rate of interest. We are at a loss to understand why Government and the companies should still stubbornly refuse to recognize the system formally.

*Unemployment.*—The evils of unemployment have been partly remedied by a method akin to guild socialism. But this is no solution of the problem. Method must be found for new recruitment, as also provisions laid down when a man shall have to retire. The union cannot take up any step so long as the employers are hostile to it. The present system is likely to work satisfactorily for a few years more until the supply has considerably gone down or the demand has considerably increased.

*Present condition.*—Present condition of our quarter-masters is far better than it was in 1924. They have been saved from the clutches of the moneylenders of the port, they have not to depend on the mercy of the Lathi-holders since they have a Lathi of their own under the management of the union. Though the eighth Recommendation of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee referred to above has not been formally recognized, all the companies except the two named above, generally recruit seacunnies along the line recommended, as a result of which our labourers have been saved from paying heavy bribes to the intermediaries but the Union has to be always on the alert as the companies and the interested parties are sparing no pains to deprive our seacunnies of the fruits of a hard-fought battle.



Though better housing arrangements have been made, it must be admitted that it has not been as it ought to be. This is due to the poverty of the seacunnies as also the want of financial strength of the union. Unfortunately the Calcutta Corporation instead of helping, try to exact taxes as much as they can from the union. Rate of wages of our seacunnies, also is very low, lower even than that of their brethren at Bombay, not to speak of white seamen, although all render alike services. The most glaring of all their sufferings is that they are not allowed sufficient time for sleep when on board ships. They have to work 12 hours a day, two at a time in three watches. Leisure allowed is four hours at a time, nearly half of which is taken in having bath and performing other necessary functions. Then there is the question of a suitable place for a sound sleep. Often they are not given separate cabins for use and even those cases where allowed they are not at all fit for use and would have been better termed if called cages. What is worse is that these so called cabins are situated adjacent to the folk-cell and hence the carousing of these who are awake hardly allows them to utilize those few hours. Want of a wheel-house in some ships leaves them to sun and rain and consequently prey to sickness.

*Grievances relating to Sickness, etc.*—Far from giving effect to the International Labour Convention relating to sickness insurance or to any equivalent method thereto, the officers on board the ship at once discharge the man who falls sick, his wages stop from the moment and he is left helpless in the hospital of the nearest port. Although the term of agreement has not run, the Law of Contract is kept at abeyance but in case the desertion is intentional the Contract Law is enforced to the extent of going to an excess.

No welfare arrangement has been made either in the port or on board the vessels. There is no arrangement either for old age pension or for insurance, thus making people unwilling to retire. Majority of seacunnies are illiterate. No facilities are given to those who are literate to utilize their time. Food allowed on board ships is also of a very low quality.

*Merchants Shipping Act.*—In connection with the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, there is the question of disciplinary measures on board the vessels. We fully realize the need of a strict discipline on board the vessel, but this is no reason why a man should be allowed to be heavily punished for slight offences or no offences at all and at the same time will not be allowed to appeal, due to want of means and expensive method of litigation against such punishments or be given opportunity to do so. They are often arrested and prosecuted in foreign courts at the whim of the officers and where seacunnies can hardly defend themselves. The Indian Merchant Shipping Act has made them so helpless. As a consequence they are not only fined and imprisoned but also doubly and sometimes trebly punished by being made to serve for period, without pay and then discharged with bad remarks in their continuous discharge certificates which deprives them of opportunities for future jobs. This miserable state of affairs has recently been brought to light from the proceedings of several cases in the Calcutta High Court as also in foreign courts (c. f. Anwar Ali seacunny Vs. Andrew Weir & Co., Calcutta High Court, Statesman, July, 16th, 1929).

*The Union.*—The Indian Quarter-Masters' Union has a membership of 1,666 souls, there being very few left in the port who are not members of this union.

The Bengal National Bank failure causing loss of about Rs. 4,000 and the constant litigation with the intermediaries costing about Rs. 6,000 put the union in financial difficulties from which the union has only recently recovered. In spite of all these difficulties the union contributed largely in the fund of the local Indian Seamen's Union to which it has still been rendering help by lending the services of one of its paid officers so that she may achieve for herself the direct recruitment system along the line of the quarter-masters and thus come up to her standard. Besides, the union contributed to the all-India Trade Union Congress, The Bengal Trades Union Federation and the International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam, to all of which our union is affiliated. The panic stricken by the Bengal National Bank failure has now evaded and we are about to open our account with the Imperial Bank of India.

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Mr. S. A. M. SHOOSTRY, GENERAL SECRETARY, BENGAL LABOUR ASSOCIATION.

The memorandum sets forth the working and other conditions of approximately 15,000 stevedoring labourers at present employed in the ports of Calcutta, in accordance with their unanimous opinions.

The men are employed by the stevedores in gangs of 9 to 10 men to load and unload cargoes. The wages of one such gang is Rs. 12-8 annas and Rs. 16-8 annas per day and per night respectively. The gang is expected to load or discharge over 100 tons of cargo in a full day work, for which said 100 tons the stevedores get from Rs. 62-8 annas to Rs. 100, according to the class of cargo, from their shipping companies.

Fully 75 per cent. of the workers come from Durbhanga, as owing to their superior physique and brawn, are well fitted to the calling.

Owing to the gross carelessness on the part of the stevedores, 50 per cent. of these labourers remain totally unemployed for months, whereas the rest usually earn from Rs. 18 to Rs. 20 per month.

It is difficult for them to obtain proper food or clothing for themselves and for their families or to educate their children. The lack of education is deeply felt, and no arrangement of any kind has so far been made by the employers.

Most of the men are driven to rent room in the bustees on the outskirts of the town, and have either to live fifteen to twenty men in one room, or sleep on the pavements of Calcutta or the courtyards of the mosques.

The working hours are from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., but, as the majority of the workers live from 5 to 7 miles away from the jettys, they are forced to leave home as early as 3 a.m. in order to be in time for the bookings which the stevedores hold at 6 a.m. Further, stevedores always call out more men than there is work available, and thus daily many of the men are sent back.

There does not exist any arrangement for proper inspection of the chains, and other arrangements, for the safety of the workers, and thus accidents, fatal and otherwise, are a daily occurrence.

In case of any kind of disputes, the stevedores have made it a common practice never to pay any attention to the claims, and just grievances of the workers, and all representations, are always ignored, and treated with contempt.

Want of sanitary quarters near the site of work, lack of sleep, for reasons already enumerated, and proper food and clothing are daily taking their toll, over and above this in case of sickness, or disablement, the employers never render any assistance, nor make any kind of arrangement for the care or medical treatment of the workers, who are just left to suffer as best they may.

The workers want recognition of their association, and in the whole body of the union not more than 5 men are those who are not connected with industry, the rest being all actual workers.

The abolition of the stevedoring system will, in the unanimous opinion of the members, totally do away with every one of their grievances.

The men are unanimously in favour of arranging employment through their association on the one side, and the shipping companies on the other, thus the union will be in a position to secure the workers regular employment, and to immediately settle all disputes as they arise, also to remedy, and remove any cause of discontent that may then occur.

This measure, if adopted, will at once do away with the prevailing tension of feelings between the stevedores and the men, and will greatly help to remove for ever the constant threat of strikes, which as past experience shows has been fraught with dire consequences, as in the times of the strikes these men go back to their villages, and those that are left here devote their idle time and energies to whatever may be just then going on, in the shape of bloodshed, plunder, such as invariably follow in the wake of every strike.

Heavy loss is caused to the shipping companies, the exporters, and importers, and everyone connected with any kind of trade or business are made to suffer; as these stevedoring labourers are the men that keep the wheels of industry and commerce going round.

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*Preamble.*—The historians have yet to analyse and evaluate the impetus given to India since the great war. The growing labour consciousness in India is a social phenomenon which has to be contended with, and the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into and report on the existing condition of labour is a reflection of the recognition of problems that have, in recent years, manifested

themselves in trade and industry of this country. The Commission has, indeed, come at a time when the shadows of the conflict between the employer and the employee show signs of an ominous situation. The undertaking may also be regarded as a policy of Government to provide accurate knowledge as a guide in constructive legislation.

With the growth of industrialism in India have come, as they inevitably do, the characteristic socio-economic phenomena which tend to disturb harmonious articulation among all factors of national welfare. Although India has entered rather late into the field of industrial enterprise, she has the unmistakable advantage of obtaining the knowledge of the collective experiences of various developmental processes, undertaken and initiated by the west, in order to harmonize the conflicting interests of labour and capital. Their applications by Japan and China under the social circumstances totally differ from those of the west, furnish fresh data for formulating an industrial and labour policy for India. Then, one of India's chief advantages is its ready-made place and position in the International Labour Organization, which enables her to maintain, through her own representatives, an effective control in claiming the attention of the civilized world to justify her grievances and seek her redresses. But India can and will derive benefits from these advantages if and when she organises industrial relations on a basis of mutual understanding between predominant conflicting interests.

The purpose of this memorandum is not to reiterate and emphasise the existence of the conditions under which the ordinary Indian workman lives and works. They have been adequately dealt with in the evidence supplied to the Commission. I shall venture to offer a few suggestions in regard to labour administration and labour welfare work, generally, laying stress on the part the Government of India should play in bringing about harmonious relationship between industry and labour.

My interest as a student of social sciences brought me in close contact with the labour movement in 1919-20. A number of labour associations in Bengal was then in existence, but there was no co-ordinating body which might assist these infant organizations in developing in the *right* direction. An attempt was, therefore, made to set up an agency under the title "The Bengal Central Labour Federation." But, within a very short time the symptoms of internal dissension became conspicuous and there was a marked tendency on the part of the organizers of the federation to identify them with the disruptive political forces. The constructive programme of the organization has had no chance under the circumstances created by predominance of political influences and consequently I ceased to take any interest in the movement.

Another occasion that brought me in direct touch with labour was in 1922, at the time of exodus of the Assam tea labourer. The situation was engineered by the extremists. As the coolies were put to an ordeal of suffering at Chandpur on account of the strike of the steamer crew, the late Mr. S. R. Das (then a prominent lawyer of Calcutta Bar) and myself made an arrangement for repatriation of the coolies by chartering a steamer.

Since then I have followed the growth of the labour movement in India more as a student than as an active participant. I venture to submit herewith a few remarks on some of the questions raised by the Commissioner.

#### XVII.—Administration.

I believe that the time has come in India when the Central Government must recognize more fully than in the past that it has a serious responsibility to discharge in regard to proper direction of forces that affect industrial relations. Labour questions in India embrace such problems which cannot and should not be treated in an isolated manner and therefore the Central Government should be very closely concerned with the matter of labour legislation, administration and other allied functions. The multiplicity of various administrative authorities, in the present stage of India's constitutional development is likely to produce chaos. My proposal is that a Central Labour Council should be constituted by an Act of the Imperial Legislature. The functions which the Labour Council would be called upon to discharge are stated as follows:—

*Central Labour Council.*—(i) Labour Legislation. The Labour Council would be a body to which the Government of India could look for guidance in all matters relating to labour legislation. The responsibility of ratification of international conventions would rest with the Council, and it would suggest ways and means by which legislative measures may be enforced.

(ii) General control of labour recruitment. The policy in regard to recruitment would be framed by the Council and it would supervise the working of provincial organizations (e.g., Assam Labour Board) set up for recruiting labour for factories, railways, mines and plantations.

(iii) Direction and control of labour emigration. The council would take over the duties now entrusted upon "The Department of Health and Lands" of the Government of India.

(iv) Conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes. The Council should bring into existence a standing committee on industrial disputes, which would act as the advisory and consultative body on matters arising out of strikes and lock-outs.

(v) Labour intelligence. The Council should maintain a Bureau of Labour Intelligence and should conduct such investigations as may be necessary for proper understanding of specific problems relating to labour and industry. Such investigations may be conducted through universities and trade unions under the general direction of the Central Council.

(vi) Direction of welfare work. The Council should be in a position to formulate a general scheme for welfare work and to indicate how best it may be given effect to. The Council would not exercise any administrative control over the welfare organizations but it would provide the requisite degree of co-ordination among them.

(vii) Control guidance and superintendence of trade union movement throughout India. The Council would assume the responsibility of fostering better relations between employer and the employee, and it would assist unions in winning recognition in Industry.

*Composition of the Labour Council.*—In order to discharge the functions enumerated above, the Labour Council should have representation not only from the employers and workmen, but also from the Central Legislatures, and recognized public bodies concerned with the welfare of labour and industry. The Central Labour Council, as I visualize it, should be more than a Joint Industrial Council and it must be invested with real authority of a department of the Government of India.

The Central Labour Council should consist of :—

(1) The The Honourable Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet in charge of the portfolio of Commerce and Industry—President.

(2) A whole-time Administrative Officer—Vice-President.

(3) Whole-time Secretary.

(4-5) Two whole-time Technical Advisers.

(6-8) Three representing railways—one of which would represent Railway Union or Federation.

(9-11) Three representing Docks—one of which would represent Union or Federation of Labour.

(12-14) Three representing Mines—one of which would represent Union or Federation of Labour.

(15-16) Two representing shipping—one of which would represent Seamen's Union.

(17-18) Two representing tea and other plantations.

(19-21) Three representing cotton industry—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(22-23) Two representing jute industry—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(24-25) Two representing iron works—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(26-27) Two representing post and telegraph services—one of which would represent Union or Federation.

(28) One representing Indian Chamber of Commerce.

(29) One representing Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

(30) One representing Associated Chamber of Commerce.

(31-32) Two representing Trade Union Congress.

(33-34) Two elected by the Assembly.

(35) One elected by the Council of State.

(36) One representing Railway Board.

(37-38) Two nominated by the Government of India from Medical Service.

(39-43) Five nominated by the Government of India—one of which should be a woman.

The executive functions of the Council would be discharged by a Standing Committee consisting of:—

(1) The Honourable Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet in charge of the portfolio of Commerce and Industry.

(2) The whole-time Administrative Officer.

(3-4) Two whole-time Technical Advisers.

(5-7) Three members elected by the Council.

(8-9) Two members nominated by the Government of India.

The specific duties, such as exercising general supervision on recruitment or examining the working of Trade Unions, or formulating particular schemes for welfare work, may be discharged by *ad hoc* Committees. For the purpose of settling disputes, the Council should have a Standing Committee. This Committee would act as a permanent Court of Appeal for settling disputes within a certain period.

The whole Council should at least meet twice a year preferably in certain industrial centres and full publicity should be given to its proceedings. The Executive Committee should meet as often as it may be necessary and its proceedings should be strictly confidential. The Council should be maintained by a grant from central revenues.

So much, then, about the Central Labour Organization. A permanent unification of all interests concerned with industry and labour under the guidance of the Government of India should bring to an effective focus the fundamental aspects of the labour problem in India. The collective agreements between industrial organizations and labour unions would form the foundations of a constructive programme that will meet the needs of industrial India at this stage of its development.

*Provincial Labour Councils.*—As regards administrative authorities now in existence in Provincial Governments, I am of opinion that the Central Labour Council should be invested with the responsibilities of administrative functions now discharged by provinces through special labour officers. The duties, such as factory inspection, mines inspection, and general supervision and control of welfare work, should rest with Provincial Governments and in each major province there should be a labour council under the chairmanship of Director of Industries. The Council should consist of representation from (1) principal industries, (2) recognised trade unions, (3) local government and (4) general public. It would be an advisory body and would suggest means of adjusting conditions of labour with analogous bodies of employees.

The relation of provinces with the Central Government is provided in the adequate representation of various industries and trades in the proposed Central Labour Council.

In certain quarters, the suggestion for creating a central body will be resented; but I am convinced that the time for decentralization of administrative functions in regard to labour has not yet come in India. For instance, the machinery of arbitration and conciliation to curb the wastes of industrial conflict must be run by a central agency, if it is to function properly and efficiently. A sound economic policy (which must embrace all problems relating to industry and labour) and an efficient administrative procedure to give effect to that policy are the two things India is in need of, and the responsibility of providing them rests with the Central Government.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

On the subject of trade combinations, both the state and employers must realise that trade unionism is the necessary product of the industrial growth in India and that the movement has assumed the character which is at once national and international. In one sense, the movement is certainly defensive and protective; but I would like to consider it as being "the fruit of a creative impulse." In order to create an industrial civilization based on that impulse, it is necessary to avoid all possibilities of conflict between labour and capital. The remedy of "the moralization of the employer" as suggested by the Le Play Societies in France and by the English positivists has a special significance in India. In the Western countries the employers are beginning to realise the efficacy of the remedy referred to above. The great American industrial magnate, Carnegie, writes in his "Gospel of Wealth":—

"The right of the working man to combine and to form trade unions is no less sacred than the right of the manufacturer to enter into associations and conferences with his fellows, and it must sooner or later be conceded. Indeed, it gives one but a poor opinion of the American workman if he permits himself to be deprived of a right which his fellow in England long since conquered for himself. My experience has been that trade unions, on the whole, are beneficial both to labour and to capital.

They certainly educate the working men and give them a truer conception of the relations of capital and labour than they cared otherwise for. The oldest and best workmen eventually come to the front in these organizations."

The Commission is fully aware of the criticisms of the nature of trade union activities in India. It is, indeed true that the standard of intellectual capacity of organizers is low and that their interest in the movement may not always be free from political bias. The extraneous pressure has undoubtedly given a false direction to the movement but the ultimate source from which it draws nourishment lies in the general conditions of life and labour of the working man. As long as they have to deny themselves of some of the essential amenities of life, the labour unrest must continue to be one of the distressing features of industrial development in India. The growth of trade unionism has already come to a stage when the movement cannot be warped and thwarted by not recognising its legitimate place in the constitution of industrial regime in India.

There would be no need of urging this commonplace view if the extreme conservatism and bitter opposition to unionism did not exist among organized industrial groups. They must, however, change their attitude towards organized labour in conformity with the tendency of the time.

On the other hand, the *raison d'être* of trade unionism should always be kept in view; that is, the movement must be directed to explore all means by which the wastes resulting from labour conflicts may not retard the growth of industry. Its ideal should be to foster the spirit of organized self-help. The movement should not aim at aggressive campaign against industrial ventures.

My suggestions are as follows:—(i) I recognise the importance of legalising trade unions and consider the Trade Unions Act of 1926 is a step in the right direction. But, the Act should be amended in order to widen its scope and to invest the Central Labour Council with such powers as may be required for proper control, guidance and superintendence of all trade union activities.

(ii) Three seats of trade union representatives elected by the Trade Union Congress should be reserved in the Legislative Assembly and one in the Council of State. The representation of labour in the Legislative Council in each province should be secured through electoral colleges and *not* through nomination. In each province there should be three such representatives.

(iii) Government, through the Central Labour Council, should make special arrangements for training trade union workers at least in one Indian University. The opportunities of studying trade union organization of the principal industrial countries should be given to suitable Indians. The Council should be in a position to offer facilities to trade unions for understanding the problems of industry.

(iv) The Central Labour Council, in collaboration with trade unions, should formulate schemes in regard to methods of negotiation between employers and employee. The schemes, as adopted by the Council, may be enforced by an Act of Legislature.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

I have already mentioned about conciliation and arbitration machinery and have suggested the formation of a permanent tribunal for settling disputes. Only those official and non-official conciliators who may be authorized by the tribunal to take part should be recognized by the parties involved in industrial disputes. I think the Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act of 1860 should be amended in the light of the experiences gained during the last few years in negotiating disputes.

The public is not fully aware of the extent of economic wastes caused by strikes, lock-outs, etc. The Central Council of Labour should publish an account of each dispute showing fully the loss sustained by industry and workers. These publications should also be printed in principal Indian vernaculars.

#### V.—Welfare.

Under this head, I desire to deal with certain aspects of welfare activities which have an intimate relation with that of housing and health improvement.

*Liquor Traffic.*—In the first place the question of liquor traffic in industrial areas is of so great importance that no scheme of "better living" can hope to succeed unless the drink evil is effectively kept under control. I am not a fanatic in temperance reform but I believe in the dictum of Lord Rosebery that "if the state does not control the liquor traffic, the liquor traffic will control the state."

In industrial areas, the licensing authority should consult the Provincial Joint Industrial Boards before issuing licences to retailers or wholesale dealers, and *special* measures should be taken for controlling the sale of liquors and drugs. For instance, no sale should be permitted on Sundays\* and other holidays; credit sale should be

\* Wales has a Sunday Closing Act. Both Scotland and Ireland, I believe, have had similar Acts.

strictly prohibited ; and the supply of intoxicants should be limited to a minimum standard of requirement, and they should not be sold to young persons under eighteen.

While advocating these controlling measures, I am not unmindful of their inadequacy in eradicating the drink evil. The real solution is to be sought in the improvement of industrial conditions under which the labourer works and lives. The case has been well put by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in their report which says :—

“ The close connection between a craving for drink and bad housing, bad feeding, a polluted and depressing atmosphere, long hours of work in over-heated and often ill-ventilated rooms, only relieved by the excitements of town life, is too self-evident to need demonstration, nor unfortunately is the extent of the evil more open to dispute.”

I attach some importance to persistent temperance propaganda through reliable agencies. Attractive posters and cinema films illustrating the risk of intemperance may be effectively used in propaganda work and the local authorities should be asked to remove all liquor advertisements within the industrial areas. With the extension of propaganda work, the time may come for the adoption of a scheme of local option.

*Indebtedness of labourers.*—The second evil to which a reference should be made is the growing indebtedness of labourers. Pathans, Marwaris and other indigenous money-lenders should not be permitted to carry on their trade among workmen. It is on these agencies the workmen usually depend during strikes.

The problem of indebtedness can be effectively tackled by starting Co-operative Societies ; but, at this stage, they should be established in a few selected areas where conditions of success appear to be favourable. The societies thus started should be under the supervision of a special officer of the provincial department of co-operation. In the organization of co-operative enterprises, both the industry and the union can render a valuable service, and I believe through their combined efforts and resources, the foundations of all forms of welfare schemes may be truly laid. To cite an example of an American Trade Union—six co-operative apartment houses for more than three hundred workers' families at a cost of \$1,800,000 were completed by the union in New York City and are now fully occupied, thus taking its members out of the old tenements and making it possible for them to get proper housing at reasonable cost.

There are numerous instances of co-operative labour banks organized in industrial areas of Europe and America which have made a substantial contribution to raising and maintaining a high standard of living. A small committee consisting of two representatives of the Trade Union Congress and one of the Central Labour Council should be deputed to Europe to study the growth of co-operative enterprises among industrial labour.

It cannot be said that in India we are generous in doling out “ gifts ” of welfare schemes to the working masses either in factories or in mines. The real solution of the problems of welfare work is to be sought in the vitality of the labour movement so that the workers themselves may unite in order to improve their social status. In the meantime, the state and the industry have a serious responsibility to discharge in the direction of providing the requirements of a decent environment for the workers to live in.

The question has to be considered from two points of view ; namely, one of effective organization and the other relating to finance. Unfortunately, as the existing welfare work in India lacks in both, the rate of progress has been extremely slow and unsatisfactory. The Commission will have before them volumes of evidence indicating the character and extent of the problems of labour welfare and it would not be difficult for the proposed Central Labour Council to formulate, in consultation with Provincial Labour Councils and Trade Unions, a positive and constructive programme. And that programme should include, among other items, an intensive propaganda scheme to be carried on in each industrial centre by authorised agents. The primary subject of this propaganda campaign should be to quicken a desire for better living among the workers so that they may voluntarily rally round the organizations set up for amelioration of their conditions of life. These organizations should consist of (1) representatives of industry, labour and the state, and (2) should aim at combining resources of industrial, labour and official bodies in order to give effect to a bold and comprehensive policy of welfare of the working class.

As regards the question of finance, I venture to offer a few suggestions :—

(1) A labour welfare fund should be constituted by a grant from the fund raised in India with a view to commemorating His Majesty's recovery. I trust that the proposed welfare fund will be considerably augmented by donations from various sources when the work initiated by the Central Labour Council would begin to attract attention. I am also of opinion that at this stage, the Government of India should make an annual grant to this fund, the administration of which would rest in the Central Labour Council.

The Commission is aware of the devolution rules in the present constitution under which the Central Government cannot incur any expenditure in the provinces for the work of labour welfare. I am of opinion that these devolution rules should be modified on the broad principle that the Central Government cannot divest themselves of the responsibilities for initiating and aiding such activities as are calculated to improve the lot of Indian labour. The Central Labour Council should be in a position to supplement provincial welfare activities or to finance such approved schemes drawn up by the recognised organizations of industry and labour.

2. For the purposes of general education of children in industrial areas, I think the fund should come from a provincial grant and from a reasonable contribution of the trade unions. The facilities for technical education should, however, be financed from the joint contributions of Provincial Governments and the industries directly interested in a particular form of technical education.

3. As regards sanitation and housing in industrial areas, the responsibilities should be shared, for some time to come, by the employers and Provincial Governments. The problem of housing must be tackled in a comprehensive manner and I do not think local bodies are competent to discharge this responsibility. Improvements of housing conditions should be made in the first instance in the factories and workshops directly under the control of the Government. The more enlightened type of employer is beginning to realise the importance of providing better housing accommodation which should certainly be considered as reproductive capital expenditure.

The Central Labour Council may profitably direct a portion of the fund at its disposal to (a) child welfare schemes (b) provision for creches and nurseries where woman labour is employed (c) provision for woman doctors, trained midwives and dais, and other forms of welfare work which would make an impression on the workers as regards the benevolent intentions of the Government. In India we cannot ignore the psychological effects of paternalism in the sphere of administration.

4. I am in favour of creating a statutory miner's welfare fund; but its control and supervision should rest with the proposed Central Labour Council.

#### VI.—Education.

Twenty-two years ago, the Indian Factory Labour Commission (1908) considered that every facility and encouragement should be given to promote the education of children working in factories, and they recommended the opening of special schools close to the factories. It is probably unnecessary to state here that the progress of a development, on which the prosperity of both industry and labour depends, has been very slow. What is worse—there is as yet no definite educational policy laid down by the Government of India in regard to (a) general education of children in industrial areas and (b) vocational training of boys who may be employed in various industries. One of the first important duties that the proposed Central Labour Council must discharge is to formulate a general policy in regard to education in industrial areas. I see no useful purpose in encouraging the waste of our primary educational system by establishing a number of ill-equipped schools there; what is really needed is to provide certain typical areas, where conditions are most favourable, with a number of well-organised schools so that the labourers themselves may appreciate the value of education imparted to their children. The Provincial Labour Council should carefully watch such intensive experiments and record their progress. Should they indicate satisfactory results, I am confident that the Trade Unions will do much to assist in the spread of literacy among the working class children.

On the subject of vocational training, I desire to say that it has to be "broad-based" upon a good general education if the object of such training be to turn out men capable of taking some share in the industrial development of the country. I think it is a mistake to give technical training before the most critical years of adolescence are over.

Perhaps the most effective means of spreading education on proper and practical lines would be to organise a scheme of adult education such as it exists in the West. I would like to see the beginning of an agency for adult education like that of the Workers' Educational Association of Great Britain. During my visits to England I had many opportunities of observing some of the essential features of this Association and regretted very much that in India we had no such efficient body. The initiative in this direction should be taken by some of our well-organised trade unions and for such work, the departments of public instruction should make adequate grants.

#### X.—Special Questions relating to Women and Children.

Although welfare schemes in the way of providing the employee with medical aid, maternity benefits, education, etc., are receiving some attention, I trust the Commission has had sufficient evidence to impress on them the gravity of the social



situation in the industrial areas where women and children are employed. It is a truism to say that the sort of surroundings into which the child is born would go far to determine its after-life. Childhood in the industrial areas is in danger, and if there be no substantial improvement in the direction of better housing, better nutrition, better education, India can never hope to obtain an efficient labour force to develop her industries.

The above schedule has raised several questions which have a close relationship with the welfare of women and children; but I propose to confine my remarks to the nature of organization required to administer their needs. In the Central Council of Labour, I suggested reservation of at least one seat for a woman member. Unfortunately there are not many Indian women whose services may be utilized for creating a strong permanent women's committee, the purpose of which would be to advise both employers and Government on problems peculiar to the employment of women in factories, mines and plantations. For the present, three seats in each Provincial Labour Council may be reserved for women, one of which should be from the Public Health service.

### III and IV.—Health and Housing.

I have already dealt with some of the questions placed under these schedules. Here I should content myself with a few suggestions in regard to (1) facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses, (2) effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities, and (3) need of women doctors.

(i) Owing to land speculations, land values in the neighbourhood of industrial areas are artificially raised. These speculators desire to reap the benefit of such improvements and developments which come from the efforts and energies of industrial or municipal enterprises and keep the land values far too high. The result is that land is not made available to industrial or municipal enterprises for their expansion at a reasonable price.

This problem has been solved in China by a system of land taxation and I would ask the Commission to consider similar schemes for their adoption in industrial areas where housing accommodation is insufficient.

(ii) The problem of sex-ratio in industrial cities has not arrested the attention it deserves and perhaps it may be difficult for the Commission to obtain relevant data for framing definite recommendations. The subject requires to be investigated into and examined in details before a workable solution may be suggested. As the problem is inter-related with the entire social system the urge for reform should come from the working class through the initiative of Labour organizations.

(iii) The small cadre of the Women's Medical Service in India is wholly inadequate for rendering any effective service to women and children. As it is, women doctors have to work under great disabilities and they are unable to cope with the work they are called upon to do. It is obvious that the cadre has to be increased for any expansion of the activities of the Women's Medical Service and here the responsibility lies with the Government. The Dufferin Fund constituted for the purpose should be augmented by further grants from the Central Government and constitutional changes should not be allowed to interfere with the administration of such funds.

*Seasonal Migration of Labour.*—In the Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture, we discussed the general labour situation as it affects agriculture. The seasonal migration of the rural population to industrial centres and the overseas emigration are two factors, which from the point of view of the economic welfare of the population, are of considerable importance. The pressure on the land in certain parts of India is alarmingly excessive and demands relief. Consequently, we were of opinion that "all restrictions on the movement of labour throughout India" should be abolished and that the objections urged by some of our public men against such measures could be met by improving the conditions of life in industrial centres. Prior to the withdrawal of the existing prohibitory measures, the Central Labour Council should, through a special Committee, review the situation from all points of view. The provision of decent livelihood in industrial centres or in plantations, the development of communications in rural areas and the growing pressure on the land—all these factors must tend to encourage seasonal migration. If industries desire to take full advantage of this source of labour, they must, to quote the words of the Agricultural Commission, "ensure that the housing and general social surroundings of the countrymen in the city are tolerable and decent."

*Possibilities of Overseas Emigration.*—While I realize that the Labour Commission is only concerned with "the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India," I am inclined to think that the problem of overseas migration of Indian labour to countries within the British Commonwealth cannot be entirely precluded from the consideration of the Commission. A well-formulated scheme of emigration with adequate safeguards against imposition of iniquitous

restrictions by the Empire overseas is desirable both from political and economic points of view. Certain congested areas in India have to be relieved and vast territories in Australia, South Africa, British Guiana, and other parts of the Empire overseas require to be developed. India has been given the status of a dominion in the many Imperial Conferences that have been held since the war, and I am confident that the problem of emigration from India will be dealt with the statesman-like attitude by all concerned with the solidarity of the Empire. The Central Labour Council, as proposed in this Memorandum, should make a careful survey of the possibilities of opening out avenues of employment of Indian labour in the tropical and sub-tropical zones of the British Empire outside India and should scrutinize the existing emigration legislations with a view to exercising an effective control over the system of recruitment and the conditions of life of Indian labour abroad.

*" Forced " Labour.*—Since the attention of the International Labour Office has been drawn to the subject of forced labour, the powers, which agreed to apply " the slavery convention " adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations, have been making serious investigations into the law and practice regarding forced labour in their respective territories. I am not aware of any reliable literature dealing with the conditions under which forced labour exists in India (including the Native States). The systems known as *begar* and *Kamiauti* really do come under the category of forced labour and are liable to great abuses. A detailed description of these systems is not attempted here and I would content myself with referring the Commission to " Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Hazaribagh (1908-1915) by Mr. J. D. Sifton, I.C.S." and to the observations on the *Kamiauti* system made by the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture in their Report (pages 434-35).

I should mention here that the employment of compulsory labour for public purposes is, of course, unobjectionable. At present it is confined to cases of emergency such as forest fires or imminent danger from floods to irrigation works. The clearance of silt deposits in certain canal tracts in the Punjab, and the upkeep of roads in certain parts of Bihar and Orissa, are other instances where under statutory obligation the village labour is employed. Personally I would like to extend this practice more widely than at present and thereby utilize the leisure of rural adult population for the benefit of their own community-life.

*Conclusion.*—It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that the Royal Commission on Agriculture is followed by a Commission to enquire into the existing conditions of labour. I am in entire agreement with the view that constitutional changes could not solve the fundamental problems of the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of India. The Agricultural Commission endeavoured to indicate the broad principles on which an agricultural policy for India should be based, and I am confident that Labour Commission will succeed in recommending ways and means by which the disruptive forces in the country may be counteracted by a new orientation of industrial relations. The ideal here is not merely to secure a fair deal for the humblest worker, but to make him an essential partner in the development of industrial regime in India.

**CHECKED**  
**2008-04**

*T. S. Trinwasa Sastri*